

# *Keeping one another safe at St Thomas'*

1. St Thomas' and St Alban's churches are committed to safeguard anyone who is vulnerable in all they have to do with us – whether members, visitors or people who receive our ministry.
  - a. This is a short summary of how we make sure we do that – for more details ask to see a copy of the PCC's policy on safeguarding, which is available in church and is reviewed each year.
  - b. It's important to realise that at different times and in different situations any of us may be 'vulnerable'; children are vulnerable because of their age and position in society; some adults are considered particularly vulnerable because of age, disability, isolation or other reasons.
2. We will treat everyone with respect and with care for their safety.
  - a. We will make sure that those leading church activities with vulnerable people have been checked with the DBS (which discloses relevant police records) and have been trained in safeguarding to an appropriate level.
  - b. We will remember that spiritual care must always be respectful and offered without pressure or coercion.
3. We keep a register of groups and activities in church working with vulnerable people, and of how they ensure the safety of those taking part.
4. The church councils have overall responsibility for safeguarding.
  - a. At every meeting this is on the agenda, even if there is nothing to report, to make sure we always remember how important it is and don't miss anything.
  - b. Each church has a named co-ordinator, whose name and telephone number are on the noticeboard. Any non-emergency concerns about safeguarding in church should go to them or the Rector or Vicar.
5. Beyond keeping one another safe, we are committed to making our church life open and welcome to everyone regardless of ability. If you need help to take part in church activities, please ask!
6. Where we become aware of a concern over safeguarding, we will always act sensitively but will pass on information to the right people – we won't try to investigate ourselves. A flowchart is available on each church's noticeboard showing how we decide to pass on information and to whom.
7. We value the work done by many people, mostly as volunteers, in our church life. If you take part in ministry with vulnerable people, we have to exercise particular care in helping you to do that safely and in a way which helps you to do so confidently.
  - a. We will provide role descriptions to help you understand what you are offering to do!
  - b. We will ask you to fill in a short application for the role – we'll help if you like.
  - c. We will ask you to put us in touch with two people who we will ask to give a short reference for you, and to apply for a disclosure from the DBS. Again we will help with this if you like. Only the safeguarding co-ordinator will see the disclosure, and all we record is its reference number and the date it's issued.
  - d. We will link you to any safeguarding training you need to have before you start the role.
  - e. We will name someone who will help you to become confident in your role, and hope that in turn you will be able to help others.
8. We encourage church members to undertake appropriate safeguarding training if they are involved, or would like to be involved, in work with vulnerable people. Please ask the clergy what is available.
9. We work within guidelines from the Diocese of Lichfield and the Church of England nationally. As these guidelines develop, our policies will develop to keep in step.
10. Everyone who works with vulnerable people on behalf of the churches will sign to say that they have read and will work within our safeguarding policy.