

Parish of Rottingdean
St Margaret of Antioch
The Green
Rottingdean
Brighton BN2 7HA
Registered Charity 1138715

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

In our Parish Safeguarding Statement, placed on our website and in the porch of our church, we say that we want everyone who visits us to feel safe and welcome. This applies to those who regard the church as their spiritual home by regularly attending worship services with us, and the many others who find themselves within the building for social and community activities. It also applies to people who visit us as part of their time in the village of Rottingdean. Our Safeguarding Policy is the means by which we make that happen.

Who we are

We are a worshipping community in a suburban, downland village on the edge of the City of Brighton, but distinct from it in structure and culture. The village has a population of approximately 3,200, with a significant number of seasonal visitors. We are the Church of England presence within this community, while also attracting a number of worshippers from surrounding areas, including the City of Brighton. The church is a Grade 2* listed building, made of flint. It has been expanded over the centuries but there has been a church building here since the 13th century.

The congregational role currently stands at around 137 (April 2019). We have several generations of worshippers from the very elderly to the very young.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility for ensuring that we have an appropriate Safeguarding Policy within the church. The Safeguarding Officer is the person appointed by the PCC to make this operational.

The definition of safeguarding

Our working definition of safeguarding is protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. We would take this further and state that our intention is that all our parishioners and visitors feel safe from physical, psychological , sexual and spiritual abuse, regardless of age, sex, gender (including gender reassignment), sexual orientation , ethnicity or disability.

The legal and ecclesiastical underpinnings of the Policy

There are a number of international and UK laws which guide and underpin our Safeguarding Policy, the main ones of which are:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The Children Act 2004
- The Human Rights Act 2010 - this is the foundation act to those listed below
- The Equality Act 2010*
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005

* We acknowledge that the Church of England has certain exemptions from the Equality Act at present, particularly in relation to marriage and civil partnerships.

We will ensure that all directives and guidance offered by the Diocese of Chichester are followed to the best of our knowledge and ability. We will comply with Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on

safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). Above all, our policy will comply with the guidance contained within the Church of England Parish Handbook (October 2018).

Children

We accept that it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to ensure the safety of our children, by developing a culture of awareness and by following designated procedures. In England, a child is a young person under the age of eighteen. We acknowledge it is everyone's responsibility to keep our children safe, but some individuals more directly involved with children, such as Children's Church leaders will have more specific responsibilities. In recruiting any individual to work with our children, in any capacity, paid or voluntary, we will ensure that the Diocese of Chichester Safeguarding procedures are followed as laid out in the Simple Quality Protects (SQP) Framework. This means that they will be appropriately interviewed, references will be sought and the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service clearance will be obtained. On successful completion of these measures , Children's Workers will be issued with the Diocesan Code of Behaviour towards Children. Implicit in this is the directive that no adult within the Church community will be on their own with a child or young person under 18. There will always be another adult with the vicinity.

Education

Everyone working with our children will complete the appropriate modules of education in Safeguarding as directed by the Diocese of Chichester Safeguarding Team.

Bullying

We will develop a policy which will set out how are Church will respond to and prevent bullying and cyberbullying. It will be clear that bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour.

Raising concerns

There will be clear information displayed by notice in the entrance porch to the church on who to contact regarding any concerns about unacceptable or uncomfortable behaviour towards children and adults. This will also be clearly accessible in the church website (www.stmargaret.org.uk). The Safeguarding Officer's contact details will also be displayed on the weekly newsletter, freely available to all who visit the Church. Concerns may be reported to the Vicar or the Safeguarding Officer.

Acting on concerns

In the event that we become aware of concerns about the welfare or safety of a child in our care , the Diocese of Chichester Safeguarding protocol will be followed. This means that such concerns will be reported by the Safeguarding Officer or the Vicar of the parish, to the relevant statutory authority, and the the Diocesan Safeguarding Team immediately informed. Under no circumstances will any parishioner, the Safeguarding Officer or the Vicar investigate these concerns themselves.

Complaints

Should anyone have any complaint about the way a concern is dealt with by us, this should be addressed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (01273 421021).

Adult Safeguarding

We acknowledge that there is an essential difference between safeguarding children and safeguarding adults, in that adults have rights of self-determination. Adults may choose not to act to protect themselves, and the law will only intervene in rare circumstances (Mental Capacity Act 2005). This requires our approach to be one of listening and directing where required. Some aspects of our policy, as in respect to bullying and cultural awareness, remain the same, but some demands will be different in response to specific need. People we will specifically consider at risk of marginalisation or bullying include:

- **Frail, older adults with care and support needs**

We are aware that a significant number of our parishioners fall in to this category. We will ensure that everyone who ministers to any individual in their own home, by offering pastoral support or taking communion, is checked via the Disclosure and Barring Service and given appropriate education. We will also ensure that the environment is as safe as possible within church buildings , and that assistance is provided to access these. We will inform ourselves about dementia awareness and will attempt to provide a dementia - friendly church. We will treat people with care and respect, acknowledging their right to make decisions about their level of participation in church activities. While we will mitigate physical risk as much as possible , we acknowledge that participation should be as a consequence of informed individual decision-making..

- **Adults with a disability**

We acknowledge the range of disabilities which impact upon the life of many who attend our church, for worship and/or social occasions. These may range from situations giving rise to physical limitations, sensory disabilities such as hearing and vision loss, learning disabilities and neuro-diversity such as

autism. We are aware of the limitations imposed on us all by the nature of our old , listed church buildings and will attempt within these limitations to make our church as disability -friendly as possible. We will seek advice from those who live with forms of disability to see how we might best achieve this. When required, we will seek professional advice from the Diocesan Disability Adviser and others expert in this area. If and when changes to church buildings are proposed , we will seek advice as to how best to meet everyone's needs

- **Lesbian , gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex+ (LGBTI+) individuals and families**

We acknowledge and welcome the diversity of people and their families within our parish. We will support all families, however constructed.

We will follow the Church of England's Pastoral Guidelines (Church of England 2019) for living well together. These are to acknowledge prejudice, speak into silence, address ignorance, cast out fear, admit hypocrisy and pay attention to power. We acknowledge that if we adopt these principles, we will improve life for everyone in our church community. We will accept the challenge of openness this will require.

- **People from different ethnic groups**

In similar fashion, we recognise and welcome the increasing diversity of our community in race, colour and ethnic origin. We will make every effort to make real the principle that all are welcome, and involvement in every level of parish level is encouraged.

- **People experiencing domestic abuse**

We recognise that domestic abuse is a potential threat to people of all genders and sexualities. We acknowledge this to be an issue where the church can be a positive supportive and influencing force. We will follow

Diocesan guidelines by appointing a volunteer worker to take the responsibility for education and support regarding domestic abuse issues.

Allegations of historic abuse

We accept our responsibility to past generations of church attenders. If made aware of any such claims, we will listen carefully and make every effort to encourage and support claimants to contact Sussex Police.

We will respond appropriately to those who have committed sexual offences wishing to join our church, by following the House of Bishops' guidelines and taking advice from the Diocese of Chichester Safeguarding Team.

Conclusion

By the means outlined here, we will make our community at St Margaret of Antioch a safe and welcoming place where everyone can fulfil their potential and grow in faith as a valued member and beloved Child of God.

Jan McFadyen, Safeguarding Officer,

On behalf of the PCC.