

St. Andrew's Church Biggleswade

Children,
Young People
and
Vulnerable Adults
in Our Care

St Andrew's Safeguarding Policy

APRIL 2023

Introduction

“People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them “let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it and he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”

Mark: 10, 13-16

We as members of St. Andrew’s Church, Biggleswade, care about and wish to support, the children and young people of Biggleswade and the surrounding area. We value the opportunity to offer activity, to offer guidance and nurture and share the love of God in support of their development.

This we do by offering activity-based groups, holiday clubs, youth events and nurture activities linked to our church services. To these groups we invite all young people from Biggleswade and at times, involve others from the surrounding area. We do not set any specific entry criteria but we do expect an acceptable level of behaviour and respect for the beliefs of the Church.

This document sets out the policy of St. Andrew’s towards this important work. This policy is fully in line with St Albans Diocesan safeguarding policy. It includes appointment procedures for leaders as well as guidance for the operation of groups. It covers all activities that are organised in the name of St. Andrew’s with the agreement of the Parochial Church Council.

Reflecting the importance attached to this work, the PCC has appointed a Safeguarding team to oversee adherence to safeguarding policy within the Parish. This includes a Parish Safeguarding Officer to oversee any disclosure incidents a small team of lay representatives, the PCC Youth coordinator and a DBS “recruiter” who will assist in the recruitment process and manage the submissions to “*thirtyone:eight*”, St Albans diocese appointed DBS agents.

We thank God for our children and young people, and seek to learn more about God through each one of them. We pray that God will watch over them and us, that He will guide us in our nurture and that each child will valued as one of His Children.

Signed:

.....(Churchwardens)
On behalf of the PCC of St. Andrew’s Biggleswade

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Children's Groups

This policy covers all groups and activities organised in the name of St. Andrew's and with the blessing of the PCC that involve children or young people while unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. The following is a list of those groups and activities that exist at present but does not preclude additional future groups and activities.

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| St. Andrew's 16+ | Crèche |
| St. Andrew's 14+ | Sunday School |
| St. Andrew's 12+ | |
| St. Andrew's 10+ | |
| St. Andrew's Holiday Club | Servers |
| St. Andrew's Choir | Bell Ringers |
| St. Andrew's Band | The Room & Cupboard |
| | Chatroom |
| Children Preparing for Communion and Confirmation | |

In addition to these groups, St Andrew's also includes four uniformed organization. These are part of St. Andrew's and to them we extend the spirit of this policy but the onus is upon them to have their own guidelines and policy statements to cover the issues of this policy.

| | | |
|------------|--|----------------|
| These are: | Biggleswade 1 st Guides | (St. Andrew's) |
| | Biggleswade 1 st Brownies | (St. Andrew's) |
| | Biggleswade 1 st Rainbow Guides | (St. Andrew's) |
| | Biggleswade 2 nd Rainbow Guides | |

Group Procedures

For groups of children four years of age and younger, and for Sunday morning activities there should always be more than one adult leader and one should be female. All other mixed gender groups will normally have present, one leader of each gender. Whilst the group is running the leaders will avoid being left alone with a child. Young leaders (under 18) will not normally be left in the sole charge of a group of children.

Activities

The activities of the various groups are wide and varied some taking place on the Church premises whilst others are off-site. Group Leaders will obtain consent from a Parent/Guardian before involving any youngsters in either off-site activities or activities which are liable to fall outside the Church's Insurance.

Registration

All young people involved in any of the groups will be asked to register as a member of that group and as such their names will be recorded within the group records.

Visitors

From time to time groups will want to involve visitors within their programmes and it will be the group leader's responsibility to ensure these people are escorted at all times during their visit.

Best Practice

We at St. Andrew's will attempt to implement and adhere to "best practice" in matters relating to the operation of our youth and young people's activities. In terms of child protection policy our guidance is from St Albans Diocese, who in turn use the services of Churches Child Protection and Advisory Service (CCAPS). Supporting information will be communicated to the groups from time to time through the Youth Co-ordinator.

Leadership

All new group leaders will be appointed using Safer Recruitment principles in accordance with the following procedure. The Leaders of any particular group will take responsibility for that group but they will need assistance and therefore a leadership structure is shown below.

Leaders

As already stated Leaders will be appointed through the appointment procedure and will take full responsibility for both the children and others leaders within their group.

Assistant Leaders

Assistant Leaders will be used in most groups and whilst they will perform many of the functions of a Leader they will be responsible to and under the supervision of a Leader. Assistant Leaders will be appointed via the appointment procedure. Assistant Leaders may occasionally run a group in the absence of the Leaders.

Young Leaders

Young Leaders (16 – 18 years of age) will be asked to follow the full appointment procedure, including the DBS check. We will allow Young Leaders to work with children under the supervision of a Leader. We recognise that Young Leaders are covered by this Policy as young people in their own right and we will therefore treat them as in our care whilst they are working.

Databases

The PCC holds details of young people who have registered for our Holiday Club. Group records are also held for other groups and events. The Lead recruiter on behalf of the PCC will hold records of all leaders who have worked with children and young people from the acceptance of this Policy. This information is only held for use by the Church and will not be passed to any third party. The Church is registered as required under the Data Protection Act.

Intimate Care

From time to time it is necessary for children's and youth leaders to provide intimate care which may involve:-

- Supporting a child or young person with dressing/undressing
- Providing comfort or support for a distressed child or young person
- Cleaning a child or young person who has soiled him/herself, has vomited or feels unwell.

If it is necessary to provide this level of care we will always ensure that every child or young person is treated as an individual and that care is given as gently and as sensitively as possible by, wherever possible a leader of the same gender. All matters concerning intimate care will be dealt with confidentially and sensitively and the child or young person's right to privacy and dignity will be respected at all times.

If it is necessary for leaders to aid a child or young person in getting dressed or undressed leaders will always encourage children to attempt undressing and dressing unaided in the first instance and only help if strictly necessary.

Where children require physical support, we will always keep physical contact to a minimum.

When a child or young person is found to have wet or soiled themselves, we will take action to help the child or young person deal with the situation themselves and provide the required support that they agree to and that helps them to restore their dignity.

If intervention is necessary we will always be conscious that we may be invading the child or young person's privacy and will always respect the child or young person's wishes and feelings. Physical contact will be kept to the minimum possible to carry out the necessary cleaning.

In all cases where intimate care is required it will take place with two leaders present, of wherever possible the same gender as the child, and, through consultation, in full agreement with each other.

Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding Officers

The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for handling any disclosures made by young people or for receiving any complaints made against Leaders, Assistant Leaders, Helpers or Young Leaders and acting in conjunction with the Youth Co-ordinator, Incumbent and Churchwarden's, and, if necessary, the Bishop's representative to investigate and where possible resolve the problem. All information received during this process will be kept secure and confidential.

DBS Lead Recruiter

The DBS Lead Recruiter is responsible for managing the DBS process in conjunction with Churches Child Protection and Advisory Service (CCAPS), St Albans Diocese, chosen agents. All information received during this process will be kept secure and confidential. The Lead Recruiter (or recruiter) will send for references (refer to Step 2 below).

Recruiter

It may be necessary from time to time to appoint further recruiters, these will work in support of the Lead Recruiter.

Safeguarding Team

A safeguarding officer will be appointed annually by the PCC and a supporting team who will be available to support and discuss safeguarding matters as they may affect the Parish.

Appointment of Leaders – Safer Recruitment

The protection of children and young people in our care relies heavily on the leaders of the groups. The following procedure is to ensure to the best of our ability, that the leaders we appoint to run our groups are suitable for the role.

Application Procedure

The Youth Co-ordinator, together with an existing Leader and the DBS Recruiter, will instigate the application process, acting as the "Appointment Team".

Referral Process

If, at any point the application is referred (i.e. if the Appointment Team are concerned in any way about the application), then the application will be considered in light of the evidence of the concerns, by the Incumbent, the Churchwardens and the Safeguarding Officer, whose decision will be final.

Appointment Procedure

Potential leaders will be discussed initially with the Youth Co-ordinator who will initiate the process.

If at any point in the process there is concern or an unwillingness to proceed the application will be referred (see referral process above).

Step 1 – Application and Declaration

The applicant will first be considered by the Appointment Team. This initial step will determine whether this person is suitable to be a leader at St. Andrew's. Having decided to proceed, then the process will continue as follows.

Step 2 – References and self-declaration

Each applicant will be asked to complete a Self-declaration form, to supply two referees and give their permission for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to be carried out.

The self-declaration form provides an opportunity for an applicant to declare any previous history prior to a DBS check being completed.

Two references are required for each applicant. References should be from the following sources, (in priority order).

- Previous Vicar, if new to the parish Family (i.e. less than one year).
- Person in authority, at the most recent previous Children's/Youth establishment.
- Employer.
- A known or established member of the Church.

Once received, references will be reviewed by the DBS Recruiter. Any ambiguities or vague statements will be clarified with the referee and a record kept of the conversation.

If any problems or doubts are highlighted or the applicant remains vague then the application will be referred (See above).

Step 3 – DBS Process

In accordance with "Protection of Children and the Criminal Records Bureau: Advice for Parishes", as issued by the Diocese of St. Albans. A check will be made for any convictions for criminal offences against children or young people, through the Criminal Records Bureau.

Once the DBS certificate has been issued The DBS Recruiter will be notified by the CR system that a satisfactory "Clear" has been received (procedure as above) and therefore confirm that the Appointment Team can proceed with the appointment.

In the event of a "blemished Disclosure" the DBS recruiter will inform St Albans Diocese safeguarding advisor, and await advice before referring the results of the process to a panel consisting of the Incumbent, Churchwardens, Youth Co-ordinator and the Parish Safeguarding Office (as appropriate), who will decide whether the appointment is appropriate. All associated documentation will then be sealed and kept in a secure location.

Step 4 – Interview (*as appropriate*)

Once both Steps 2 and 3 are satisfactorily complete, the Appointment Team may now talk to the applicant with a view to understanding their strengths, weaknesses and motives for working with children and young people. If the team has any doubts, then the application will be referred.

Step 5 – Appointment

The applicant will now be informed that they can take up their role and be given an outline of their responsibilities including any specific tasks or duties as appropriate. The applicant will be asked to read this policy and to take on board any guidance issued with regard to dealing with children and young people as described above in this Policy.

All Group Leaders will be given access to a copy of this Parish Policy. All leaders will be briefed on Best Practice and Emergencies Procedures.

Step 6 – Register

The Lead Recruiter will now enter the successful applicant onto the register of Leaders. The register will hold name, address, telephone number and e-mail address, but will not include the confidential information obtained during the appointment.

Emergency Procedure

We care about children and young people that we work with and as part of that care we will follow the emergency procedure below.

In the Case of an Accident

The name of the child or young person and circumstances of the accident, together with any signs of injury will be recorded in the Accident Book. The Incumbent will then be informed.

The Parents/Guardians will be informed of the injury and advised to seek professional help if they are in any doubt as to the health of their child or young person.

In the Case of a Disclosure by a Young Person

If a child or young person confides in a Youth Leader, or a Youth Leader discovers signs of abuse, or an accusation is made against someone of abuse, then the following procedure will be followed.

If a child or young person confides in a Leader then the Leader should inform the child or young person that they cannot maintain the confidence and that they will have to tell someone about it, but that they will be discreet.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer will be informed immediately along with Incumbent, or in his/her absence, a Churchwarden. Parish Safeguarding Officer, Incumbent or Churchwarden will in turn inform the Bishop's Representative and the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

Any Leader accused of an incident will immediately be suspended from any activity that involves contact with children and young people until the situation has been investigated and resolved.

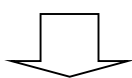
End

Original August 2002
Revised February 2012
Revised April 2014
Revised July 2016
Revised to include Vulnerable Adults July 2018
Reviewed and minor word revisions December 2019
Reviewed 2020
Reviewed 2023

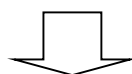
APPENDIX A

Flow Chart of Recruitment Process

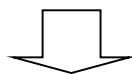
- Youth Leader agrees with Youth co-ordinator (PCC) that new leader is required.
- A suitable person is sought for the role.
- Youth co-ordinator in conjunction with Vicar, Church Wardens and PCC as necessary will agree nomination.



- Youth Co-ordinator informs DBS recruiter that person wishes to join the team.
- The DBS recruiter will then email the person the initial consent and self-declaration form.
- The applicant will sign both the consent and the self-declaration, nominate two referees and return all to the DBS recruiter.



- The DBS recruiter will go "online" and verify the items of identification that the applicant has shown her.
- The DBS machine will then rumble!
- The applicant will be able to track progress "on-line"



- The Applicant and the DBS recruiter will be notified when the process is complete.
- The applicant must register within 14 days of completion that they wish to have their certificate updated. This we understand will allow you to port to other organisations and will reduce the amount of effort required at renewal.
- The Group leader will confirm to the applicant what is required of them and inform them and the Youth Co-ordinator of their start date.

Appendix B : Reference Form

Dear

I am contacting you as your name has been given to me by the above named person as a referee in connection with their application to become part of St Andrew's Children's/Youth Team (for Role Description see below).

Please can you confirm to me the following in relation to their application to carry out the role described below:

- 1) The length of time you have known the applicant
- 2) The capacity in which you know the applicant
- 3) That they are of good and honest character
- 4) They are suitable for working with children and young people

If you are happy to act as referee please copy, paste and complete the following statement into your reply.

"I confirm that I have known..... for years, in the capacity of I find them of good honest character and recommend their suitability for working with children and young people. Signed by this email. Name date"

If you are not happy to act as a referee please copy and paste the following statement:

"I am sorry I am not happy to recommend the above person for the role described (please expand if you are able)"

Many thanks.

Lead Recruiter
St Andrew's Church Biggleswade

Object of the Role

To work with children and young people, in conjunction with the group leader to provide a variety of activities in a welcoming, safe and Christian environment.

Tasks

Children and Youth work at St. Andrew's will involve activities both on and off site. At all times we expect our Children and Youth volunteers to:

- respect the Christian faith and values;
- adhere to this safeguarding policy;
- fully participate in the programme of activity;
- care for the wellbeing of each child or young person in a Christian manner;
- maintain the discipline and behaviour of the group, to be vigilant and risk-aware;

- look after the equipment and buildings belonging to St. Andrew's Church and to leave these tidy, clean and safe at the end of each session.

Appendix C

Policy for Safeguarding Adults when they are Vulnerable.

We are pleased to welcome a number of vulnerable adults as regular members of our church family.

- We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that all adults should be offered respect and given inclusion and empowerment within the Church.
- We are committed to implementing a safeguarding policy for adults deemed vulnerable following the Church of England Policy on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (Promoting a Safe Church 2006) and being responsive to local parish requirements.
- We will review and endorse all safeguarding policies regularly so that all are aware of their responsibilities.
- We will carefully select those working with vulnerable groups and these workers will be given appropriate support and opportunities for training.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, if there is information that a vulnerable adult for whom we are responsible may have been harmed.
- This Parish will co-operate fully with the statutory agencies in every situation and will not conduct its own investigations.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any adult who has suffered abuse.