



St Mark's Church

LEAMINGTON SPA

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE and VULNERABLE ADULTS IN OUR CHURCH

PARISH SAFEGUARDING POLICY

AND POLICY FOR RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

INDEX

Purpose of this guidance.....	2
Safeguarding Policy of the Church of England.....	2
Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse	5
Appendix 1 - Code of behaviour for adults working with children and young people.....	6
Appendix 2 - Guidance for responding to a child or young person who makes an allegation of abuse.....	8
Appendix 3 - Electronic communication.....	9
Useful telephone numbers	10
Other national helplines	10

Reviewed – September 2023

Review cycle – 3 years



Purpose of this guidance

To safeguard, care for and nurture children, young people and vulnerable adults in our church and in our community.

To inform those involved with children, young people and vulnerable adults in our church of the behaviour expected of them.

To set out the procedure for background checks of those involved with children, young people and vulnerable adults in our church.

To protect adult members of the church from malicious or false accusations of abuse.

Safeguarding Policy of the Church of England

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the safeguarding of children, both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principle first enshrined in the Children Act 1989: the welfare of the child should be paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and by supporting parents in the care of their children. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult or someone under the age of eighteen in a position of trust, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary. It is also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the Church learn lessons from the past. (Protecting All God's Children 2010)

What is abuse?

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 identifies four categories of child abuse, which are assumed to be forms of significant harm.

Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.

Sexual abuse - involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as

involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional abuse – is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may also involve: seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, for example in domestic violence situations; serious bullying (including cyber-bullying); causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child but it may occur as the sole or main form of abuse.

Who abuses children?

There is no 'typical' situation or environment in which child abuse may occur although many children are abused by parents. Children may also be abused in an institution or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger. Child abuse takes place in all areas of society, within all cultures and within all socio-economic groups. The majority of abusers of children are men; however women do abuse children and may collude with the abuser often through fear.

As a Church we will:-

Create a safe environment for children and adults by implementing the House of Bishops Safeguarding Policy Protecting All God's Children 4th edition 2010 and the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy 2016.

Ensure that all those working with children or vulnerable adults on a paid or voluntary basis are carefully selected, using the Disclosure and Barring Service as part of the safe recruitment process as outlined in the Diocesan Safer Recruiting Policy 2016.

Ensure that all those working with children on a paid or voluntary basis have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in their role, an identified line manager and a regular review of their role.

Encourage everyone within the church community, whether volunteer, paid staff member or visitor to understand and uphold the need to prioritise and champion safeguarding as part of the church's responsibility to respect everyone and create a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment.

Ensure that all who work with children and vulnerable adults or who are in a leadership role attend the annual training sessions provided by the Diocese.

Respond without delay to every complaint made that a child for whom we are responsible may have been harmed or is in significant danger.

Respond without delay to any allegations or concerns that are raised about the behaviour of any adult within our church.

Supervise and support any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, ensuring that this is done in line with the Diocesan guidelines.

Review this policy annually; checking that all procedures including the DBS process and checks are up to date and making sure that those working with children, young people or in a position of trust have attended the training required.

Display a copy of this policy on the Parish Notice Board, along with the telephone number for the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and a Child Line poster.

The PCC has identified the following activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults to which the Diocesan Policy statement 2016 refers:-

Guidelines apply to employees and volunteers who work with:

- Local schools
- Toddler Club (including Summer Fun)
- Sunday children's groups
- Pathfinders & Youth group
- Worship groups involving young people
- Vulnerable adults in the Pastoral Care team
- The housebound in administering Holy Communion

Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

We recognise that:

- all forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;
- all survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviour;
- working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

We will endeavour to respond to domestic abuse by:

In all our activities –

- valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

In our publicity –

- raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise, through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

When concerns are raised –

- ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;
- working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care –

- ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
- identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Appendix 1 - Code of behaviour for adults working with children and young people.

Always

- Remember that you are seen as being in a position of trust and as a role model for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church and should be mindful, therefore, of your behaviour at all times.
- To treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity and ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful
- Aim to work within sight of another adult and **never** lead one of the groups on your own. If it becomes impossible to find a DBS certificated colleague to help you, the group should be cancelled or should join another group where there is an adequate number of DBS certificated holders present
- Ensure that another DBS helper accompanies you if a child needs to be taken to the toilet
- Organize toilet breaks for young children
- Ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern, but **never** make arrangement to visit a child at home. The Children and Families Co-ordinator is the **only** person permitted to make such visits. Babysitting services should not be offered to individual families under any circumstances
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around
- Adhere to the guidance contained in the St Mark's policy on Photography and Sharing of Images and vulnerable adults. Obtain parental permission to have email addresses and mobile phone numbers for members of your group
- Record any concerning incidents using the pro-forma in the Diocesan Guidelines, date and sign the record and give it to your group leader
- Challenge a fellow worker if you feel that their behaviour towards children or young people is inappropriate
- Share concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker with the Children and Families Co-ordinator and/or the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Never

- initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact (e.g. for comfort, see above) should be initiated by the child
- invade a child's privacy while washing or toileting
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- use any form of physical punishment
- be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in fun
- touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively
- scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult
- permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying
- show favouritism to any one child or group
- allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature

- send emails or text messages to individual members of your group
- give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own
- drink alcohol when responsible for young people
- share sleeping accommodation with children
- invite a child to your home alone
- arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organized group occasions
- allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person
- allow strangers to give children lifts.

Recommended staffing levels.

- The recommended minimum staffing levels for children's groups are given below. More help may be required if children have special needs, are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.
 - 0–2 years - 1 adult for every 3 children 1 : 3
 - 2–3 years - 1 adult for every 4 children 1 : 4
 - 3–8 years - 1 adult for every 8 children 1 : 8
 - Over 8 years - 1 adult for the first 8 children
 - then 1 adult for every 12 children
- Each group should have at least two adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.
- If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.
- Young people (under 18 years) who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.

Appendix 2 - Guidance for responding to a child or young person who makes an allegation of abuse.

- Listen to what they have to say and accept what you hear without passing judgement.
- Let the child or young person tell you their story and do not interrupt or ask questions.
- Reassure the child or young person that they are doing the right thing in talking about what has happened and that they are not to blame.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep e.g. not to tell anyone else.
- Tell the child or young person what you are going to do.
- Inform the incumbent or the parish safeguarding officer of the information that you have received without delay.
- Do not try to investigate the allegations yourself.
- If you are concerned about the immediate safety or well-being of the child or young person, contact the police or Children's Social Care immediately.
- Make careful notes of the incident as soon as possible, using the pro-forma in the Diocesan Guidelines. Include as much information as you have about the child or young person and their parent or carer. Write down exactly what the allegation was, what you did, who you spoke to, who else was present. Sign and date the notes, giving a copy to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and send a copy to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- Inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser of the incident at the earliest opportunity.
- DO NOT talk to the alleged perpetrator.

Appendix 3 - Electronic communication

Mobile phones, text messages and emails.

If you intend to communicate with young people via their mobile phone and/or email make sure that their parents or carers are aware of this and that they consent to you having the young person's mobile phone number and/or email address.

Text messages and emails are private by nature, so take care when you use this medium. Do not communicate with young people individually, always send group text messages or emails and send a copy to another leader. Save messages as text files to ensure an open record exists.

Make sure that your communication is such that, in principle it would not embarrass you for it to be seen by the young person's parents or church officials.

You should also be aware that a child may choose to disclose abuse to you through the use of electronic communication, in which case you should save a copy of the 'conversation' and refer to the guidance on what to do if a disclosure is made. Make sure you know how to do this before a situation arises.

Social Networking

Young people use social networking sites such as Facebook as part of everyday communication. Care should be taken when using Facebook as a way of communicating with young people – where possible set up a group site and only send group messages. DO NOT communicate with individual young people by sending private messages. This is like being in a room with them on your own with the door closed.

Chat rooms and instant messaging

Due to the potential for misuse by those who are a risk to children and the difficulties of managing the use of chat rooms and instant messaging, it is strongly recommended parishes do not communicate in this way with young people.

What to do if you have concerns.

Concerns could come to light if you become aware that:

- a leader or helper is e-mailing individual children or young people.
- a leader or helper is text messaging individual children or young people.
- a leader or helper is communicating with individual children or young people via instant messaging or chat rooms.
- a leader or helper is showing children or young people sexual pictures from the internet.
- a leader or helper is using a mobile phone or digital camera to take photographs of individual children or young people.

Such concerns **must** be acted on. While this may cause anxieties, a decision not to pursue these concerns could lead to failures in safeguarding a child or young person and adequately supervising the adult.

You must immediately refer your concerns to the Incumbent, Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser who will advise you on what action is needed and offer support.

Please note that making, downloading and/or distributing indecent images of children is a criminal offence. If you become aware that this is happening, you must report it to the police and inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at the earliest opportunity.

Useful telephone numbers

Kelly White Parish Safeguarding Officer	safeguarding@st-marks.net
Sarah Price Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser	02476 521345 07950 382934 (Mon-Fri) safeguarding@covcofe.org
Warwickshire Children's Social Care	Office hours: 01926 410 410
Emergency Duty Team Warwickshire	Out of hours: 01926 886 22
Warwickshire Police	01926 415 000 / 101 if dialling from Warwickshire. In an emergency 999
NSPCC	0800 800 5000
CRASAC (Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre), P. O. Box 2464, Coventry CV1 1ZA	Helpline 02476 277777 24 hour answer phone. www.crasac.org.uk helpline@crasac.org.uk
Rape or Sexual Abuse Support (RoSA) – Warwickshire	Telephone: 01788 551 151 E-mail: support@rosasupport.org Website: www.rosasupport.org

Other national helplines

The following national helplines are also available:

- Childline – 0800 1111
- Stop it Now – 0808 1000 900
- NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood) – 0808 801 0331
- Samaritans – 116 123
- Family Lives – 0808 800 2222
- National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247
- Action on Elder Abuse – 0808 808 8141