

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, STUDHAM

SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parochial Church Council:

- Recognise their responsibility for all church activities with vulnerable people and complete the required safeguarding training.
- Create a safe and caring place for all. Everyone has different levels of vulnerability; each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives. Everyone should be offered respect and given inclusion and empowerment within the church.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the Rector and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse. The Rector maintains a list of leaders and helpers of all children's activities.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse. See Annex B for guidance.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Rector, Parish Safeguarding Officer, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately. See Annex B.
- Offer support, informed help and safety to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Reviewed January 2024
Next Review January 2025

Each person who works within this church community must agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

The PCC appoints Meg Bender as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Signed:

Date:

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SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND
VULNERABLE ADULTS: ANNEX B

1. Responsibilities and Guidance

The following procedures will be followed at all times:

- a) the Rector and the Parish Safeguarding Officer have responsibility for dealing with any allegations;
- b) the PCC adhere to the diocesan guidelines on safer recruitment and domestic abuse;
- c) the Rector has responsibility for the recruitment of volunteers and will seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should an application be received from an ex-offender;
- d) everyone who works as leader or helper with children, young people and vulnerable adults, obtains an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and undertakes the training required by the Church of England's framework for safeguarding training (January 2022);
- e) the Rector retains confidential records of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and all other safeguarding documents which are stored securely at the vicarage. During a vacancy all documents would be passed to the Parish Safeguarding Officer who would ensure they are given to the new incumbent;
- f) all leaders/organisers of groups/activities are responsible for the implementation of this policy and procedures;
- g) the PCC will advise any outside groups using the church premises of their safeguarding responsibilities.

2. Guidance on Dealing with Incidents or Allegations of Abuse

Leaders and helpers may receive an allegation of abuse or may become aware of a possible abusive situation:

- a) DO believe the person making the allegation. An allegation may not be substantiated but the overriding priority must be to safeguard the individual making the allegation;
- b) DO be supportive, listen carefully and do not show disbelief or disapproval;

- c) DO NOT promise to keep an allegation confidential – suspected abuse must be reported;
- d) DO NOT conduct an investigation – this is the job of professionals;
- e) DO make a factual written record and sign and date it;
- f) DO immediately inform the Rector or the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The Rector or Parish Safeguarding Officer must immediately contact the Safeguarding Team at the Diocese:

- Jeremy Hirst, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA), telephone 01727 818107 and 07867 350886; e-mail safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org or
- Dave Adams, Assistant DSA, telephone 01727 818104 and 07469 351357.
- Warren Lucas, Assistant DSA, telephone 01727 818106 and 07311 310545

If there is a safeguarding serious incident, the DSA, will report the incident to the Charity Commission on behalf of the PCC.

3. Minimising Risk

- a) a minimum of two leaders/helpers, preferably one of each sex, must be available during meetings of groups/activities;
- b) groups must never be left unattended;
- c) groups shall maintain a register of attendance and where appropriate, the contact details of parents/guardians;
- d) written consent must be obtained from parents/guardians for activities outside normal group meetings.

4. Important Contacts

Police emergency	999
Police non-emergency	101
Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire	0300 300 8142

Signed:

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ANNEX C USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Alongside the Parish Link website (under the editorship of Les Randall) we also use social media: Facebook and YouTube. The benefice Facebook account is curated by Glenda Cox, the benefice administrator, in conjunction with the Rector, Revd. Canon Nicola Lenthall. Requests to post church-related information on Facebook can be made to Nicola or Glenda. The YouTube channel is used for worship services, which are currently only posted by Nicola Lenthall.

The PCC adhere to the national Church of England social media guidelines. In the use of social media accounts, we agree to the following and ask all those who engage with our accounts also to agree to them.

Be safe: the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. Any concerns must be raised with the Rector, the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Be respectful: content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful must not be posted or shared.

Be kind: everyone must be treated with kindness, assuming the best in people. If there is a criticism or critique to be made, consideration must be given as to whether it should be said and to the tone.

Be honest: people must not be misled about who is posting material and who is engaging with an account.

Take responsibility: everyone is fully accountable for the things they do, say and write. Shared text and images can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place. If there is uncertainty, it should not be posted.

Be a good ambassador: personal and professional life can easily become blurred online, so caution must be exercised before making a post.

Disagree well: some conversations can include robust disagreement. In expressing a disagreement the church's values must be applied.

Credit others: the work of others must be acknowledged and copyright respected. Sensitive or confidential information must only be released with care.

Follow the rules: the terms and conditions of the various social media platforms must be adhered to. Any comment that breaches their policies should be reported to the respective company.

Signed:

Date:

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Policy for Responding to Domestic Abuse

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. The PCC are committed to attending the appropriate training course(s) and 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;

Reviewed: January 2024

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- identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone, please contact Revd. Canon Nicola Lenthall on 01582 872223

Other Sources of Help:

National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 2000 247

Samaritans 116 123

Restored Relationships 0203 9003 930

Mankind (supporting men) 01823 334244

Signed:

Date: