

Safeguarding Children, Young People & Vulnerable adults Policy & Procedure

THE POLICY

The PCC of the Parish of St Mary's Church, Acocks Green gives the highest importance to the nurture and care of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We recognize our responsibility to guard against the possibility of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults by persons who may be acting in the name of our parish.

Children, young people and vulnerable adults are a crucial part of the life and health of any church. They need to feel valued through participation in ways which reflect and model the perfect relationship of the community of the Trinity. Here relationships are based on mutual trust, right relations and exchange between partners. In this shared life children, young people and vulnerable adults need to be able to build relationships of trust, to receive space to be listened to, to find a meaningful way to bring faith and their experience together for children and young people) as part of the preparation for adulthood, family life and their role in future life, where their distinctive approach is valued. This also applies to vulnerable adults within their understanding and capacity

Towards the establishment of best practice, the PCC has established the following guidelines for our children's and youth work.

Planning the work of groups including children, young people and vulnerable adults should...

- provide support for the volunteers through knowing what is expected of them. This is especially important for new volunteers who need to be built into the team and relate to others. They need to feel valued for the contribution they can make and not be taken for granted.
- allow the opportunity to think through and discuss how things have been going. Looking at future work may raise areas of potential difficulty, which can be dealt with in advance, thus minimizing situations where abuse might occur.
- create opportunities for volunteers to share informal communication, build a sense of value, unity and cooperation through sharing their experience in an open environment of trust.
- ensure that people are kept informed of on-going developments and lines of responsibility and communication within the group and with the church and our other activities.

- ensure that all volunteers have clear roles and are provided with support and supervision. In the event of a problem there should be a person in overall responsibility and a contact person.

provide a view of the work from a longer-term perspective to assess general issues of good practice.

- permit group leaders to create opportunities to observe those for whom they are responsible as they work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The PCC will through its officers and committees seek to prevent the situations where abuse of children may occur. We will:

Children and Young Adults

- provide a safe physical environment for work with children and young people - e.g. fire, hygiene, equipment, etc. Accident books will be maintained and accidents logged. The Church Wardens will act as Health and Safety Officers, as designated by the PCC, to monitor these aspects.
- think about access to our premises for children and young people; and arrangements/timings for dropping off and collecting to/from activities.
- familiarize ourselves with guidelines in "God's Children: Our Diocese" (GC:OD) and current legislation (children and young adults).
- plan activities which allow at least two adults to be present or at least within sight or hearing of another adult; referring to staffing ratios in GC:OD (Section 8.2).
- keep a clear record of members attending a group. (This is helpful for pastoral care).
- ensure that when transport is organized by the church there must be a minimum of two adults in each vehicle; referring to GC:OD (Section 8.9).
- have two or more adults when taking a group off church premises.
- contact the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser if a known abuser attends the church. Known abusers will not be allowed to work with children or young people.
- build in a process for review and training for volunteers.

Vulnerable Adults

- provide a safe physical environment for work with vulnerable adults - e.g. fire, hygiene, equipment, etc. Accident books will be maintained and accidents logged. The Church Wardens will act as Health and Safety Officers, as designated by the PCC, to monitor these aspects.
- think about access to our premises for vulnerable adults; and arrangements/timings for dropping off and collecting to/from activities.

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- keep a clear record of members attending a group. (This is helpful for pastoral care).
- ensure that when transport is organized by the church there must be a minimum of two adults in each vehicle;
- have two or more adults when taking a group off church premises.
- contact the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser if a known abuser attends the church. Known abusers will not be allowed to work with vulnerable adults
- build in a process for review and training for volunteers.

Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- a. Encourage volunteers to make time to talk with children, young people and vulnerable adults on an individual basis during group sessions, by finding space to one side of the general activity. children, young people and vulnerable adults need to know that adults are available and approachable.
- b. Place the Childline telephone number or number of a similar organisation on a notice board that is regularly seen by children, young people and vulnerable adults .(These are also displayed on our Safeguarding posters.)

THE PROCEDURE

Volunteers in children's, young people's and vulnerable adult's activities in St Mary's Church are appointed by the Incumbent or designated safeguarding officers. (NB. This procedure covers churchwardens and other church officers.)

Required Procedures for all Volunteers

Where a role has been assessed as meeting the requirements for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) volunteer will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service Application Form.

- Sign the declaration form.
- Produce their birth certificate for examination.
- Provide two references, (one personal and one with respect to their work with children and/or young people and/or vulnerable adults - unless they have not worked previously in that field).
- Complete a Disclosure and Barring Service Application Form.

Notes

Any information disclosed on the confidential declaration form that suggests an individual may not be suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults should be referred to the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser.

All documents to do with the volunteers under this policy will be kept confidential and in the hands of the Incumbent (or the Area Dean in the event of an interregnum). Together with all other records pertaining to the operation of this policy, these will be kept securely, confidentially and indefinitely.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

It is the duty of all volunteers to report any information relating to any child, young person and vulnerable adult who they think is being abused or is at risk of abuse to the Incumbent or designated Safeguarding officers. This applies whatever the situation in which the abuse or suspected abuse is thought to take place.

There may be occasions when such information, allegations or suspicions arise within the context of a priest hearing confession, when the Bishop may need to be alerted; referring to GC:OD (Sections 2.5(3) and 7.1).

NB. It is not the role of volunteers to do any investigation

- Allegations against a volunteer must be reported immediately to the Incumbent who will remove the volunteer from that position.
- Allegations against the Incumbent must be reported immediately to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser.
- All information concerning allegations or suspicion of abuse regarding children, young people or vulnerable adults, families and volunteers will be kept confidential to the person initially involved in reporting the concerns to the Incumbent or designated Safeguarding officers. The alleged abuser will not, in any circumstances, be approached by the person reporting the issue. All written documents concerning allegations will be kept confidential and only disclosed to the agencies responsible for child /young people/ vulnerable adult abuse investigation.

If You Suspect Abuse or an Allegation is made to You

- Do not delay. The responsibility of reporting children, young people or vulnerable adult thought to be at risk rests with the person who identifies the concern, no matter what their role in the church
- Consult the Incumbent or designated safeguarding officer
- Do not inform any other unauthorised people.

- Do not do any investigating yourself. Children's or adult Social Care Services deal with reported abuse and they will follow up every report. The police will also always be involved.
- Make an accurate note of your suspicions recording dates, times and places. Use the actual language used by the child, young person or vulnerable adult, not a tidied up version.
Once reported you will have no control over what happens:
- *You may be asked to attend a case conference.*
- *You must not take responsibility for making a judgment about the allegation. The child or adult will have needed much courage to get this far. The protection of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is the priority.*
- Expect to have to handle your own strong feelings. You may well need support
- In the event of an incident having occurred within church, different people must support the alleged victim and the alleged abuser. The Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor should be consulted for further guidance.

Pastoral Note

Support will be offered to adult abusers and also to those who have experienced abuse in the past as part of our calling to offer the love of God to all who seek it. Guidance in these matters is in GC:OD (Section 5).

Publicity and Review

Phone numbers for Childline (0800-1111) and the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (0808 800 5000) and Samaritans (116 123) Birmingham City Council (0121 303 1234 office hours or 0121 675 out of hours) and other help organizations will be posted where they can be seen by children, young people and vulnerable adults. All volunteers will have their copy of the Safeguarding Policy. Leaflets and appropriate training will be offered as needed.

The Policy will be reviewed and the PCC will minute each time that such a review has been undertaken.

***Policy created after consultation with Claire Wesley,
Bishop's safeguarding Adviser, July 2012,***

updated and Adopted by PCC

7th September 2017..... A J Bullock.....

Vicar & Chair of PCC