

**ST HILDEBURGH'S CHURCH**

**PARISH OF HOYLAKE**

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE  
& VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

**Revised July 2023**

## 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.

## 1. What is abuse?

There are 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.

Financial abuse of vulnerable adults, can occur through family members or carers. Vulnerable adults can face all the abuses listed above in their own home or a care home.

## Who abuses?

There is no 'typical' situation or environment in which child or vulnerable adult abuse may occur although many are abused by family members. Children and vulnerable adults may also be abused in an institution or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely by a stranger. Abuse takes place in all areas of society, within all cultures and within all socio-economic groups.

## As a Church we will:-

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.

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 every two years (or earlier as guidance changes); 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.

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:

- Holy Trinity Primary School
- Mums and Tots
- Sunday Voyagers
- Youth Club
- Messy Church

- Community Lunch
- Parish Lunch
- Vulnerable adults in the Pastoral Care team
- The housebound in administering Holy communion

Signed:

Jane Langley

On behalf of the Churchwardens, Incumbent and PCC

## Appendix 1

Code of behaviour for adults working with children and young people and vulnerable adults.

### 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.

**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 Hildeburgh'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 Parish Safeguarding Officer

### **DO NOT at any time**

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

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 yrs 1 adult for every 3 children 1: 3

2–3 yrs 1 adult for every 4 children 1: 4

3–8 yrs 1 adult for every 8 children 1: 8

Over 8 yrs 1 adult for the first 8 children then

1 adult for every 12 children

Each group should have at least two adults.

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, young person or vulnerable adult who alleges abuse.**

- Listen to what they have to say and accept what you hear without passing judgement.
- Let them tell you their story and do not interrupt or ask questions.
- Reassure them 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 them 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 wellbeing of the child, young person or vulnerable adult contact the police or Children's Social Care immediately.
- Make careful notes of the incident as soon as possible. Include as much information as you have about the 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, young person or vulnerable 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

Peter Ham Parish Safeguarding Office	<a href="tel:07444884879">Tel:- 07444884879</a> <a href="mailto:safeguarding@sthildeburgh.org">safeguarding@sthildeburgh.org</a>
Sean Augustin Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser	Tel: 01928 718834 x259 (9am – 4pm, Mon - Fri) <a href="mailto:safeguarding@chester.anglican.org">safeguarding@chester.anglican.org</a>
Out of hours diocesan safeguarding advice	<i>Thirtyone:eight</i> Tel: 0303 003 1111
Wirral Children’s Social Care	Office hours: 0151 606 2008
NSPCC	0800 800 500