

# Safeguarding Policy

## Safeguarding Statement

Jesus talked of the kingdom of God belonging to children; he gave them status, time and respect. Jesus also showed himself to be compassionately on the side of those without power, reaching across social barriers with the inclusive love of God. A Christian approach to the safeguarding of children and adults who may be vulnerable asks both individuals and communities to create a safe environment for them, to act promptly on any complaints made and to minister appropriately to those who have abused.

This parish is therefore committed to establishing an environment where children and young people are nurtured and protected and all people, and especially those who may be vulnerable for any reason, are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety. In order to do this, we, as a parish are committed to working in accordance with the national legal and procedural framework for safeguarding children and adults who may be Vulnerable as laid down by Church of England policy and practice as implemented by the Diocese of Southwark.

### Vulnerability - who is included?

Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. At some time, we will all be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. Some of the factors that define vulnerability include:

- young people under the age of 18
- a sensory or physical disability or impairment
- a learning disability
- a physical illness
- mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute
- an addiction to alcohol or drugs
- failing faculties in old age
- a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity

### Who are the policies, procedures and guidelines for?

• They apply to all clergy and licensed ministers, all staff employed by the parish, and all paid or unpaid workers in parishes dealing with people who are listed above.

**In order to fulfil these requirements this parish has adopted policies for Safeguarding Children and Adults who may be vulnerable. We have appointed two designated Parish Safeguarding Officers to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement the contents of these policies and to ensure that the required procedures are followed.**

### **Document Statement**

**This document provides a basic summary of the safeguarding measures in effect within this church. A fuller description can be found within the document 'A Safe Church' a copy of which is available in the Parish office or online at:**

<http://southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/diocesan-policies-and-procedures>

### **The Position of this Parish:**

- The Parochial Church Council (PCC) recognises that the parish church has a privilege and responsibility to foster the personal, spiritual and social development of children and young people in its care and must have regard for their general welfare.
- The Parochial Church Council is responsible for the safety of children and young people taking part in activities on its premises, and in church sponsored off-site activities.
- In addition, and in accordance with Southwark Diocesan guidelines, the PCC appoints designated Parish Safeguarding officers (PSO), who will work in collaboration with the Vicar and the PCC to have an overview of the church's work with children, young people and other vulnerable people in this parish, and to be a point of reference for consultation and any concerns.
- The PSO will make and revise annually, a list of all paid staff and volunteers in church who have regular, direct contact with children, and ensure that all appropriate checks and documentation has been completed
- It is a requirement of this parish, as laid down by Church of England policies, that all workers, paid or unpaid, dealing with vulnerable people on a regular basis should be checked using the disclosure and barring service (DBS). If clearance is not granted only the diocesan safeguarding officer is notified so that he/she can take appropriate action. A clearance is deemed valid for 5 years and if a renewal is required a safeguarding officer will contact you before that time to arrange a new submission. In addition, references must be provided, and a confidential declaration must be completed. These steps must be completed before the applicant can commence work with potentially vulnerable people. If a person's circumstances do change at any time, that person must declare so immediately and give full details on a fresh Confidential Declaration Form. Uniformed Leaders are exempt from the Declaration providing they do not work with children or young persons in any other capacity and have completed their own organisation's safeguarding checks. The P.C.C. reserves the right to check with the appropriate uniformed authorities that their own form of declaration has been made.
- That all persons, paid or voluntary, should undertake the appropriate level of training as specified by current requirements of the diocese of Southwark  
Safeguarding Team

- In our recruitment of paid staff and volunteers, following Diocesan procedures in - ensuring careful selection and recruitment of ordained and lay ministers, voluntary workers and paid workers with children and young people, in line with safer recruitment principles and checks providing supervision, support and training
- When concerns are raised, following Diocesan procedures in responding without delay to every concern raised that a child or young person may have been harmed, or be at risk from harm; or about the behaviour of an adult or child working with the diocese and appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into child abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community challenging any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- Ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse ensuring that appropriate pastoral care is offered to any member of our church community against whom an allegation is made
- Following Diocesan procedures in ensuring, in partnership with the diocese and other agencies, that care and supervision is provided for any member of our church community known to have offended against a child or young person, or to pose a risk to them.

#### Register of Children Involved in Activities on Church Premises

A parent or legal guardian must complete a contact form for any child taking part in an activity on the church premises or organised by the church. The information required on this form is:

- Child's Name
- Date of Birth
- Address
- Telephone Number
- Name of Parents or Person with parental responsibility
- Alternative Contact in case of non-availability in emergency
- GP's Name, Address and Telephone Number
- Child's NHS number (can be found on Medical Card)
- Details of any Medical Conditions / Allergies
- Name, Address and Telephone Number of School which the child attends

These forms will be entered into a ring binder, which will form a Register, and will be kept with the Leader of the activity at all times

This Register should also be used in the event of an evacuation of the building / buildings.

- For the protection of children, young people and leaders, there will be at least two responsible adults present (ie. someone 18 or over), no matter how small the group.
- Where possible, the gender of the responsible adults will reflect the make-up of the group. Where this is not possible, meetings will take place in areas where doors can be kept open and activities are in full view.
- Leaders should avoid being left alone with a child, should this situation arise another Leader must be informed.

- No child or group of children or young people under 16 shall be left unattended at any time.
- No person under the age of 18 years shall be left alone in charge of children of any age.
- If children are going to be taken off the premises for any reason, written permission must be obtained from the parents or legal guardian on each separate occasion.
- Parents must always be informed if their children are to be transported in a car or other vehicle, and persons transporting children in a car must make sure that their insurance covers transportation of children on this basis.
- When an outing takes place involving children and young people unaccompanied by their parents, the responsible leaders must compile and take with them a list of all such children and young people, together with photocopies of the contact forms pertaining to them. A copy of the list and of the contact forms, must be kept available in the parish for the duration of the outing, in the custody of an identified contact person who is available at a telephone number in case of emergencies. That contact person must be informed of the safe return of the outing.

#### Physical Contact with Children and Young Persons

- For their own protection as well as that of the children and young people in their care, paid and volunteer Leaders must so far as possible avoid all unnecessary physical contact with children and young persons in their care. A well-meaning friendly hug, arm round shoulder, pat or other form of touching can easily be misunderstood or misinterpreted.
- Although uniformed organisations such as Scouts and Guides have their own clearly defined Child Protection Policies drawn up by and overseen by their appropriate authorities, they are still required to abide by this Child Protection Policy
- The situation is not so clear in cases of other voluntary groups who, for instance, hire the Community Centre on an ad hoc basis. The PCC will draw to the attention of such groups the church's Child Protection Policy and ask that they take appropriate steps to protect the children in their care.

#### Organisations Using Church Premises (Excluding the Uniformed Organisations)

Groups booking the church premises must sign a form acknowledging their own responsibility for all children attending the function.

### Procedures to be followed in the event of a safeguarding incident

#### In the event of an allegation of abuse or suspicion of abuse

- If a child or adult on a child's behalf confides a story of abuse, or if a Leader suspects abuse, the following procedures must be followed.
- Where a child has confided a story of abuse, it is important to listen and reassure the child. Get as much information as you can without appearing to interrogate or lead the child. Reassure them that they have done nothing wrong and that they are brave to have told you about this and that you will need to talk to somebody who can help and protect them from further abuse. Again, do not quiz the child as this could compromise the investigation and possible legal proceedings. Remember, we are not experts in this field! Say nothing to the parent/carer unless the information has come from them, as this could jeopardise any subsequent or place the child in danger. Sometimes, children will preface their disclosure by asking you not to tell anyone else. We can not promise total

confidentiality to children - it could be wrong and potentially dangerous not to report the situation.

- The adult confided in, or whose suspicions have been aroused, must make careful notes of what was said, times, dates, names etc., and make sure that these notes include the child's full name, address, telephone number, date of birth, and name and address of parent/guardian. Then speak immediately to the Vicar or Parish Child Protection Representative. In their absence, contact the
- Wherever possible, the Vicar and Child Protection Representative acting together, will make their own assessment of the situation and may decide to contact the Bishop's Adviser for Child Protection, to plan possible lines of action. Again, in the absence of both the Vicar and the Child Protection Representative, their role will be assumed by the Rural Dean. If none of the Bishop's Advisers for Child Protection can be contacted, the Duty Social Worker in the Local Authority's Social Services Department will be contacted to discuss concerns. In an emergency, the Vicar or parish Child Protection Representative (or Rural Dean) will make immediate referral to the Police or Social Services Department, and will inform the Bishop's adviser about the referral.
- Do not approach the child's next of kin. It will be for Social Services (in consultation with the Police where necessary) to agree the appropriate person to make contact with the child's parents/family.
- Any subsequent action by the Church after referral must only be as agreed by Social Services or Police, and on the advice of the Bishop's Adviser.

#### Allegations Against a Church Employee, Volunteer or Leader of an Activity on Church Premises.

- There are occasions when children or young people accuse clergy or other adults, of abuse. In some cases those allegations are false and unfounded. Regrettably, however, in some cases the allegations are true.
- Allegations of abuse concerning a church employee, Volunteer or Leader can be particularly distressing and need to be handled sensitively and professionally. Children who report that they have been abused must be listened to and heard, whatever form their attempts to communicate their worries take, Listened to means just that; on no account should any judgement be made or opinion expressed, or suggestions be made to children as to alternative explanations for their worries.
- Procedures and Guidelines are in place within the diocese. A written, dated record must be made of the allegations as soon as practicable (and certainly within 24 hours), and a report made to the Bishop's Advisers on Child Protection,
- Normally the Vicar and the Parish Child Protection Representative will take the lead in liaising with the Diocese and the external agencies as appropriate, If however, the allegations are against either one of them, then the other will act alone. If they are both subject to the allegations, then the Rural Dean, as a neutral outsider, or if the Rural Dean is Vicar of this parish, then the assistant Rural Dean will take on the responsibility.

## Safeguarding Contacts

Rev Canon Charles Pickstone (Parish Priest) 020 8698 2871

### Parish safeguarding Team (St Laurence Catford):

Peter Charles (Safeguarding Lead) 07938 157382

For enquiries concerning Disclosure and Barring applications contact  
Esme Alexander or Peter Charles

For enquiries concerning Safeguarding Training contact

Lesley Ikehuna

For enquiries concerning Health and Safety contact

Robert Green

All can be contacted via the Parish Office 020 8698 9706

### Diocese of Southwark Safeguarding team

Emergency Contact numbers

02079399423 (office hours)

07982279713 (at other times)

For all other enquiries the team can be contacted on 0207 939 9476