

THE POLICY STATEMENT OF KNEBWORTH PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL (PCC) FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND FOR ADULTS WITH VULNERABILITIES

Knebworth PCC, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the protection of children and young people both in society as a whole and in Knebworth. The PCC will implement the principles enshrined in The Children Act 2014 that the welfare of the child is paramount. Knebworth PCC will encourage best practice 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 faiths to promote the safety and well being of children and young people. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or young person or about the behaviour of an adult, and will work with the appropriate statutory body when an investigation into child abuse is necessary.

DEFINITION

The Children Act 2014 defines a child as someone who has not yet attained his or her 18th birthday. The term 'child' therefore includes 'young person' throughout.

ROLE OF PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for ensuring that the PCC complies with the safe recruitment process as outlined below.

The Safeguarding Officer should collate and clarify the precise details of any allegation or suspicion, and pass this information to the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser. On occasions it may be necessary to inform the local Children's Services or the Police immediately. A list of contact numbers can be found on the 'Promoting a Safer Church' poster on our noticeboards. In this event the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org) must be informed as soon as is practicable. Under such circumstances, due consideration should be given to seeking medical attention as a priority.

It is important to remember that while it may be right, depending on the circumstances, for Church members to ask a few questions (please see page 5 below), no one within the Church should become involved in investigating, which is a clearly defined legal obligation placed on the local authority and Police. Any concerns about a child or the conduct of an adult towards a child, or children, should be referred to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, who should then consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

SAFE RECRUITMENT

As described above, one of the ways that children and young persons are protected from harm is to take care over the way adults are appointed when they are likely to have contact with children. All such applicants, whether voluntary or paid, should:

- have a defined role
- complete an application form
- be interviewed
- name two referees, one of whom should be their current employer, or previous church (it may be desirable to check the authenticity of the person purporting to be a referee. This need not be a lengthy process: often, a single telephone call will suffice)
- be given appropriate training, guidance and supervision.
- Complete the online C1 safeguarding course

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS) CLEARANCE

If the decision is made to appoint, the appointee should complete a disclosure at Enhanced Level.

WHO SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO DBS CHECK?

All people employed or working as volunteers, or in paid employment, who may come into regular and direct contact with children during their work or activities (including residential activities), or have a duty of care or responsibility for children. Examples of this will include activities in which both children and adults participate.

Good practice is that there should be a ratio of the number of adults in proportion to the number of children as stated by the House of Bishops. In any case there should be least two adults present supervising children. These adults should be DBS cleared at enhanced level.

There will be instances where parents remain present throughout the activity. In these circumstances the supervisors should be DBS cleared.

CONFIDENTIAL DECLARATION FORM

The first step in the DBS clearance process is to complete a Confidential **Self-Declaration** form. The purpose of this is to give the applicant an early opportunity to disclose any convictions or cautions, and to discuss in confidence anything that may cause embarrassment. It also encourages honesty and integrity from the outset.

DBS work for the diocese is undertaken by Thirtyone:Eight (previously CCPAS)

A caution or conviction does not necessarily bar a person from working with children; this will depend on all of the circumstances. A system is in place where positive disclosures are considered by a panel, who will advise on the suitability of the person to the post for which they are applying. Further details can be obtained from the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser.

The applicant should complete an online version of the DBS Application Form with details supplied by the Parish Safeguarding Officer. A "Guide for Applicants" will be provided, explaining the process in detail, and outlining what identification documentation is required. Assistance can be given for those who do not have access to the internet or who are not confident with this. The applicant should give the required identification documentation to be examined by the designated Parish Safeguarding Officer or Priest in Charge.

Further, general information is available by visiting the DBS website: www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview

No person should take up the post until suitable references and DBS results have been received.

PLEASE NOTE: A directive from the House of Bishops means that DBS checks should now be renewed every 3 years. (A 2 year period to ensure all DBS re-checks are brought in line with the new 3 year requirement has been granted until January 2024)

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS: PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

These are just some of the categories of abuse:

PHYSICAL ABUSE

This can range from excessive smacking to inflicting injuries so serious that the result can be permanent disability or death.

Physical abuse involves hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, punching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical injury 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. This was formerly referred to as Munchausen's syndrome.

The symptoms manifest themselves as bruising on areas of the body where it would be difficult to have occurred accidentally, fractured limbs etc. Children can also be withdrawn, fearful, and aggressive.

It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive or definitive list, neither should one single symptom be seen as indicative of abuse; all known facts need to be considered.

SEXUAL ABUSE

This category involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

It is almost impossible to recognise symptoms of sexual abuse which will result in abnormal medical conditions. It requires highly experienced medical professionals to diagnose abuse, and recent controversy within the medical profession simply emphasises the difficulties in this highly sensitive area.

Notwithstanding medical symptoms, the child may present as being withdrawn, fearful of adults, show inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age, extreme exposure or preoccupation with genitalia, unexplained sums of money, or gifts.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the need of another person.

It may involve serious bullying causing people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation, or corruption of people.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone. It may feature age related or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on them.

These may include interactions that are beyond the person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the person participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

Domestic abuse can have significant negative effects upon children living in an abusive household.

It is very difficult to recognise physical signs of emotional abuse but it may manifest itself by the child/adult lacking in self-confidence, as a result of constant criticism, poor interaction between parent and child, developmental delay, communication difficulties, self-harming etc.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person'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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home, or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to the child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect is usually obvious. The person will be inappropriately dressed for the weather conditions, dirty, unkempt, poor personal hygiene, low weight and height for age, poor skin, and hair condition, constant hunger, voracious appetite, hiding food etc.

To emphasise again what has been previously stated, the indicators of abuse outlined above must not be taken in isolation. The list is not definitive, neither is it exhaustive.

Any concerns about a child or the conduct of an adult towards a child should be reported, as described above to either the designated Safeguarding Officer, the incumbent, or the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser.

Please do not allow this reporting procedure to be delayed. On very exceptional and rare occasions, medical attention or immediate Police attendance may be needed.

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Spiritual Abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice by:

- The misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline.
- Oppressive teaching.
- Obtrusive or forced healing and deliverance ministries or rituals.
- The denial of the right or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

An example: It might be seen in a leader who is intimidating and imposes their will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or wrath of God if disobeyed. They may say God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or, more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE

Discriminatory abuse, including racist and sexist abuse, exists when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups.

Examples:

- Unequal treatment
- Inappropriate use of language: racist remarks, sexist remarks, derogatory remarks or verbal abuse.
- Humiliating behaviour
- Lack of respect towards a person's culture
- Comments about disability
- Bullying or other forms of harassment
- Deliberate exclusion

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Harassment and bullying – however rare - will not be tolerated in the Parish. All complaints of harassment and bullying will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Bullying and harassment includes any behaviour which an individual or group knows, or ought reasonably to know, could have the potential effect of offending, humiliating, intimidating or isolating an individual or group to the extent that it causes actual harm or distress to the target(s), normally but not exclusively, after a series of incidents over a prolonged period of time.

Lack of intent does not diminish, excuse or negate the impact on the target or the distress caused.

The fuller policy has been accepted by the PCC and is available in another document.

INHIBITORS TO REPORTING ABUSE

It is appreciated that for a lay person to report what they suspect to be abuse of a child or concern around an adult's conduct towards a child, or children can be a daunting experience.

Concerns such as: What if I am wrong?; the social standing of the person concerned within the community; the impact on the family concerned; the impact on the church community; are questions raised by those considering referring abuse.

To balance some of these concerns it should be remembered that children very rarely lie about abuse.

Professionals from all agencies involved in safeguarding children will have undergone specialist training. They will be well experienced and will act with sensitivity and discretion.

The aim of professionals is not to remove children from the family unit but to work with the family. Removal of a child happens in rare and exceptional circumstances.

If reporting suspicions of abuse is difficult for an adult, then please consider the trauma a child faces in such circumstances. An abuser will have conditioned and groomed the child, using threats and fear to prevent disclosure. The child will have had to overcome all of these inhibitors, and built up sufficient trust and faith in an adult to disclose to them.

HANDLING A DISCLOSURE

The reality is that incidents of abuse of a child by an adult within a church setting are, thankfully, rare, but you may have concerns for a child or family within the wider community. The following guidance applies to equally to both.

INVESTIGATION OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

It is essential to remember that it is not the responsibility of anyone within the Church to investigate. Safeguarding protection investigations can be sensitive and complex, and require a great deal of expertise and experience. Normally the Church requires that any concerns are reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, and to the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser.

Certain circumstances may dictate that the local authority social care or the Police should be contacted first. In this instance the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser should be informed at the first opportunity.

QUESTIONING

Some questioning may be necessary to establish basic facts. Use only open questions. It is important to emphasise that any questioning must be kept to an absolute minimum.

SOME DO'S AND DONT'S

DO listen without interruption to what the child/adult is saying.

DO reassure the child/adult that they are not to blame and they are doing the right thing by telling.

DO stay calm.

DO be honest and tell the child/adult what will happen next.

DON'T make promises to the child/adult. As an example do not tell them that you will keep secret what has been said.

DON'T interrogate the child/adult, as stated above it is for others to investigate.

DON'T criticise the alleged perpetrator.

DON'T ask leading questions, for example, "Was it your dad that caused that bruise?"

WRITTEN RECORDS

A written record of disclosure or concerns you may have relating to a child or adult should be made, based on what you have seen or heard. Use the exact words used by them.

In the event of a disclosure from a child, a record of the conversation should be made as soon as is practicable. These should be kept safe. It may be that the police will need to have these.

Confidential records will be maintained of information and consent forms from parents/guardians of all children. These will contain contact and medical details as appropriate to enable proper actions to be taken in emergency situations and should be considered mandatory for children who attend Junior Church or JAM groups.

TEACHING SKILLS AND TRAINING

Children and Youth leaders will be encouraged to keep trained and up to date with their teaching work and skills as appropriate to ensure the most effective teaching is carried out.

Parish Statement on Domestic Abuse

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.

Parish Statement on Recruitment (Ex-offenders)

The Parish uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess an applicant's suitability for positions of trust. It undertakes to treat fairly all applicants for such positions. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

We are interested in creating an inclusive society and are committed to equal opportunity. Therefore, where people have committed an offence, the nature and circumstances of that

offence will be taken into consideration. In line with the DBS Code of Practice, the parish policy is that the following should be considered:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or the other relevant matters
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us.

- The Parish is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers, or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- We actively promote equality of opportunity for all and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualification, experience and potential.
- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after it has been determined that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For such positions, all job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, all applicants must complete a Confidential Self -Declaration Form. This allows applicants to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the process. The Declaration will be retained by the employer or the parish.
- We ensure that those who are involved in the recruitment process are aware of the legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, eg the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or a voluntary post.

We undertake to seek the advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment or a voluntary position.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone about any part of this Safeguarding policy please contact, our Safeguarding Officer; details at the end of this document.

Details of who to contact are also displayed on the noticeboard of both our churches on a poster entitled 'Promoting a Safer Church'

Policy for Safeguarding Children

Parish of KNEB WORTH in the Church of England Diocese of St Albans.

²
This Policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council Meeting held on 21st March 2022

- We are committed to implementing a safeguarding children policy and accepting the Church of England Policy Protecting All God’s Children (4th edition 2010) and to be responsive to local parish requirements.
- We will review and endorse the safeguarding policies annually so that all members are aware of their responsibilities.
- The highest standards will be maintained in all the Church’s contacts with children and young people and adult volunteers will be given appropriate support and opportunities for training.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made that a child or young person for whom we are responsible may have been harmed.
- This Parish will co-operate fully with the statutory agencies in every situation and will not conduct its own investigations.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse.
- We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.
- The PCC acknowledges its responsibility for all work with children and young people done in the name of the Church and requires all those engaged in such work to be properly appointed and supported in accordance with the Church of England Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment (January 2022).

We have appointed as our Parish Safeguarding Officer

Penny Paton
01438 313241
Email: knebworthparishchurch@gmail.com

Signed Priest in Charge
..... Safeguarding Officer

This Policy document was reviewed and approved by Knebworth Parochial Church Council on 21 March 2022.

The Policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary, and approved by Knebworth Parochial Church Council before the end of March 2023.

Policy for Safeguarding Adults when they are Vulnerable

Parish of KNEBworth in the Church of England Diocese of St Albans.

This Policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council Meeting held on 21st March 2022

- We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that all adults should be offered respect and given inclusion and empowerment within the Church.
- We are committed to implementing a safeguarding policy for adults when they are vulnerable accepting the Church of England Policy on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (Promoting a Safe Church 2006) and be responsive to local parish requirements.
- We will review and endorse all safeguarding policies annually so that all members are aware of their responsibilities.
- We will carefully select those working with vulnerable groups and these workers will be given appropriate support and opportunities for training.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made that a vulnerable adult for whom we are responsible may have been harmed.
- This Parish will co-operate fully with the statutory agencies in every situation and will not conduct its own investigations.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any adult who has suffered abuse.
- We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended in a manner which could affect adults who are vulnerable.
- The PCC acknowledges its responsibility for all work with vulnerable people done in the name of the Church and requires all those engaged in such work to be properly appointed and supported in accordance with the Church of England Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment (January 2022).

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