

St Giles, Packwood

## Safeguarding Policy

### Introduction

The PCC (Parochial Church Council) of St Giles, Packwood cares deeply about the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in church activities. The PCC will lead by implementing this policy. It is recognised that Safeguarding is the responsibility of the whole church. Everyone who participates in the life of the church has a role to play in promoting a safer church for all.

### Policy Framework

This policy implements the expectations of the Church of England for PCCs expressed in *Promoting a Safer Church; House of Bishops policy statement (2017)*. This House of Bishops policy statement is readily available online. Search for "Promoting a Safer Church 2017".

In particular, the PCC will:

- Promote a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church
- Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Respond to those that may pose a present risk to others

### The Church Building

We commit to providing a safe physical environment. The risk assessment of the building is reviewed annually and approved by the PCC.

A basic first aid kit and accident book is available.

We will check that outside organisations using the church premises for activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults have their own safeguarding policy.

## Church Officers

A Church Officer is anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator is Claire Hill of 165, Station Lane, Lapworth, Solihull B94 6JH (Tel: 01564 782218). Claire will also act as Parish Domestic Abuse Contact - see the Parish Statement on Domestic Abuse.

The Parish Identity Verifier is Sophie Mathieson of 44, School Road, Hockley Heath, Solihull B94 6RA (Tel: 01564 783267)

The Priest-in-Charge acts as the PCC Safeguarding Lead.

## Policy on use of Social Media

Use of Social Media on behalf of the Parish must be approved by the PCC. The Parish has a website and parish officers use email and WhatsApp. These are the only forms of Social Media authorised by the PCC.

## Safe Recruitment

We commit to the safe recruitment of all new and current Church Officers who have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The following assessment has been made of the Church Officer roles in the parish to determine appropriate DBS checks and safeguarding training requirements.

### **Safe Recruitment - Requirements for Church Officers at St Giles, Packwood**

<b>Role</b>	<b>DBS Check</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Priest-in-Charge	Enhanced, regulated	Leadership	Diocesan DBS check
Reader	Enhanced, regulated	Leadership	Diocesan DBS check
Safeguarding Coordinator	Enhanced, regulated	Leadership	
Churchwarden	Enhanced, not regulated	Foundations	
Tower Captain	Enhanced, regulated	Foundations	
PCC member	Enhanced, not regulated	Foundations	
Sides Person	None	Basic Awareness	

DBS checks are made on appointment and renewed every three years. Diocesan procedures will be used.

Safeguarding Training is given on appointment and refreshed every three years. The terms Leadership, Foundations and Basic Awareness refer to different levels of Church of England safeguarding training.

Church Officers will be given clear instructions and information in respect of their role, adequate resources and support and regular opportunities for review.

The PCC has implemented CofE's June 2021 "Safer Recruitment & People Management" document such that all DBS checks are on a three-year cycle.

### **Policy Statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders**

We are committed to the fair treatment of our current and potential employees, volunteers and office holders, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are exempt from the Rehabilitations Act 1974 using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), we will comply fully with the *DBS Code of Practice* and *House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment & People Management* guidance.

We are committed to equality of opportunity for all applicants and aim to select people for roles with us based on their skills, abilities, experience, knowledge and, where needed, qualifications and training. We will consider applicants who have a criminal record on their individual merits.

For roles covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act we will not ask an applicant to disclose any criminal history that is spent. We will only ask an applicant about their unspent criminal history.

For roles that are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act we will ask applicants to disclose all criminal history, spent and unspent (other than protected cautions and convictions). Where we wish to select the person for the role, we will ask them to apply for a DBS check appropriate to the role.

Where criminal history, or a potential risk of harm, has been disclosed in the recruitment process we will refer this information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for a risk assessment. The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer will advise whether the person may be offered the role. The relevance of the nature of the criminal history to the role applied for will always be assessed and an application will not automatically be refused just because criminal history has been disclosed.

We will only submit an application for a criminal record check to the DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the role. For those roles where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.

We will ensure that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders and eligibility of a role for a criminal record check.

This policy will be made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process.

### Informing

We commit to informing the whole church community about our safeguarding policy. The policy will be available on the parish website. A copy will be displayed in church. Copies of the policy will be specifically passed to the Church Officers identified above.

We will ensure the children, young people and vulnerable adults know who they can talk to if they have any concerns. A "Need to Talk" poster will be displayed on the main noticeboard in church.

### Church and non-church activities authorised by the PCC

The PCC does not authorise any church or non-church activities which are aimed primarily at children, young people or vulnerable adults. The PCC recognises that children and vulnerable people may attend church services. They should be accompanied by parents or carers. They will be treated with respect and their dignity maintained.

### Responding and Reporting Cases of Abuse

We recognise our responsibility to always respond to and report abuse in whatever context, inside or outside the church environment and will always listen to and take seriously any child, young person or adult who reports that they have been abused.

If there is an immediate danger or if medical attention is required we will immediately call the emergency services 999.

We will always report allegations of abuse and concerns about a child, young person or a vulnerable adult to the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator (unless the allegation is against the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator) and to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser. The Parish

Safeguarding Coordinator understands that safeguarding concerns or allegations must be reported within 24 hours to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser.

We will always report all allegations of abuse against Church Officers to the appropriate statutory agency and to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and co-operate with any investigation.

Serious safeguarding incidents must be reported to the Charity Commission, through the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and Diocesan Secretary. In accordance with CofE procedures the PCC delegates the reporting responsibility to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and the Diocesan Secretary. The PCC appoints the Priest-in-Charge, Churchwardens and Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator as a PCC Trustee Reporting Sub-Group to make any such reports through the Bishop's safeguarding Adviser and Diocesan Secretary, to cooperate with investigations and to report back to the PCC. A member of the Sub-Group will not be involved in its discussions if that person is implicated in the serious incident.

We will keep all records in relation to safeguarding concerns, allegations and the recruitment of volunteers and paid workers securely.

#### Dealing with Known Offenders

We will inform the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser, and ensure appropriate supervision, of anyone who is known to have offended against a child, young person or a vulnerable adult who attends worship or activities organised by the PCC. We will follow all recommendations of the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser in this regard.

#### Safeguarding Action Plan and Training Plan

The PCC maintains a *Promoting a safer church action plan* through the on-line Safeguarding Dashboard, maintained by the Priest-in-Charge and the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Updated versions of the action plan are to be presented regularly to the PCC. The PCC adopts the action plans.

#### Safeguarding Records

Safeguarding records are stored and retained in accordance with the relevant CofE policies and in compliance with GDPR. The Priest-in-Charge maintains a locked fireproof box of records at Lapworth Rectory. In the event of a clergy vacancy this box, and the key, will be passed to the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator.

## Review

The policy will be reviewed each year to ensure that the policy is working effectively, that the identified Church Officer roles are still appropriate, and to ensure that it meets all current legislation, House of Bishop's and Diocesan policies and practice guidance.

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The above policy was approved by the PCC on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025, subject to:

- 1) Further consideration of the risk assessment is required.
- 2) The policy needs to reflect the pastoral visiting done by the church.
- 3) The policy needs to take account of school visits, like that of November 2023.
- 4) It is likely that the "Need to Talk" poster is in need of renewal.