

## PARISH SAFEGUARDING POLICY (EDITION 6, 2025)

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### Safeguarding in the Church of England

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. In adopting this local policy, St Mary's PCC notes its adoption of the Church of England's national policy statement, *Promoting a Safer Church 2017*, the practice guidance on *Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse 2017*, the Diocese of Durham's *Diocesan Safeguarding Policy 2025*, and the *Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance 2021*. This local policy is intended to provide a framework of local procedures to run these policies.

### Statement of Purpose

St Mary's PCC, and all who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults on its behalf, should work to ensure that all people are given the opportunities to develop wholeness as an individual within God's purpose for everyone. It is the responsibility of the PCC, and all who work with children and vulnerable adults on its behalf, to ensure children and vulnerable adults are protected from physical, emotional and sexual abuse, including protecting them from neglect and bullying. All people who participate in activities or groups provided by St Mary's Church should be able to do so enjoyably and in a safe environment, whilst being protected from harm.

The *Children's Act 1989* defines a child as anyone who has not reached their eighteenth birthday, regardless of whether they are living independently, in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in a prison or Young Offenders' Institute.

### General Principles

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the Parochial Church Council to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer, by consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, caring, practical and helpful support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.

- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.
- Ensure that all sacramental confessions heard in this parish are conducted in accordance with Canon Law and current guidance.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

The attention of the Incumbent, Parish Safeguarding Officer, Churchwardens and Volunteers is drawn particularly to the roles and responsibilities listed on pages 7 to 9 of the *Diocesan Safeguarding Policy 2025*.

### Activities for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

The PCC authorizes the following activities for children and young people:

- Altar Serving (suspended until the next review of this policy).
- Sunday School at the main Sunday Mass.
- Children’s holiday clubs.

The PCC authorizes the following activities for vulnerable adults:

- None at present.

### Staffing Ratios

There must be at least two adults (recruited according to Safer Recruitment Guidance, checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service and appropriately trained in safeguarding) present during activities for children. If the group contains girls or female young people, there must be at least one female leader present. The following ratios apply:

<i>Age of Children</i>	<i>Number per Adult</i>
0-1	3
2-3	4
4-8	6
9-12	8
13+	10

Parents and carers can only be included in these numbers if they themselves have been properly recruited, checked and trained. A minimum five-year age gap between child and adult volunteer is recommended.

### Registration and Parental Consent

All groups will keep a register of those who attended each session; in the case of Altar Servers, this can take the form of an annotated rota. A record of adult leaders who attended each session should also be kept. Parental consent forms containing up-to-date emergency contact information are to be completed for each child or young person, and must be available at all activities. These consent forms need to be renewed annually. Separate forms are needed for visits that take place away from church. The forms shall also allow parents to consent to photographs being taken of their child, requesting permission for the church to use photographs of their child in in-house or national media and social networking sites. No child should be identified by name on social networking sites.

### Home Visiting

Volunteers may be engaged in the ministry of visiting the sick or housebound. Such volunteers shall:

- Only initiate contact with an individual with their full knowledge and permission.
- Make an appointment so that people will have advance notice of their visit.

- Be clear with those being visited about the purpose of the visit and the limit of their relationship.
- Visit in pairs whenever possible. They shall never visit someone of the opposite sex on their own. If they do not have the luxury of taking a second person with them each time, nevertheless two people should always attend the first visit. This requirement may only be set aside with the permission of the Incumbent.
- Let someone know where they are going and when to expect them back.
- Not enter a property if they feel unsure or uncomfortable with the situation.
- Record visits in a notebook – date, times, people present, any concerns to pass on.
- Refrain, whenever possible, from receiving money or gifts on behalf of the church. If the other party insists, the gift should be noted in the notebook and passed on to the Treasurer without delay.

### **Checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service**

Based on current activities undertaken by St Mary's Church, the following personnel require DBS checks:

- Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Parochial Church Council members (*because the Sunday School and Holiday Club make them trustees of children's work*).
- Sunday School team and Holiday Club assistants.
- Servers (requirement suspended until the next review of this policy).

### **Safer Recruitment and People Management**

The PCC, in adopting the *Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance 2021*, notes that new volunteers for roles listed in this policy must be safely recruited. In particular, the PCC must:

- Nominate a Responsible Person (usually the Incumbent) and co-interviewer (usually the Parish Safeguarding Officer) for each new role for which volunteers are sought;
- Produce a written role description, person specification and application form for the role;
- Advertise the role appropriately and receive the written application form;
- Interview the candidates, including a safeguarding question, and examining the individual's motivations for working with the vulnerable;
- Take up references in a proportionate manner;
- Support and oversee those appointed by providing (i) an induction; (ii) copies of all appropriate policies; and (iii) regular meetings with a line manager.

### **Training and Support**

The PCC will ensure that volunteers are provided with adequate Safeguarding Training, as directed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. This training remains valid for three years. The PCC will ensure that refresher training is advertised to volunteers.

Based on current activities undertaken by St Mary's Church, the following personnel require training:

- *Leadership Course*: Parish Priest; Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- *Basic Awareness and Foundation Courses (online)*: Sunday School Team; Holiday Club Assistants; PCC Members; and Servers (requirement for servers suspended until the next review of this policy).
- *Safer Recruitment and People Management (online)*: Parish Priest; Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- *Domestic Abuse Course*: Parish Priest; Parish Safeguarding Officer.

**Induction Process:** All new workers will be informed about this policy and the policies endorsed at the top of this document. This will be done by Parish Safeguarding Officer. They will be expected to accept these policies before commencing work with the children, young people or vulnerable adults. New and existing PCC members will also be required to accept these policies.

### **Record Keeping**

The PCC shall ensure that up to date records are kept by the Parish Safeguarding Officer of:

- Those who have completed DBS checks;
- Those who have received safeguarding training;

- And records of safeguarding incidents.

These records shall be stored securely, access to them being appropriately limited, in accordance with the parish's data protection policies and Privacy Notice.

### Supervision of Safeguarding Procedures

The PCC will oversee, and annually review, this policy. Each year, the PCC will ensure that a Parish Safeguarding Officer is appointed. The Chairman of the PCC will ensure that a verbal safeguarding update is given at every PCC meeting. The PCC will also review its safeguarding procedures, together with this policy, annually. The Parish Safeguarding Officer will provide a written Safeguarding Report at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting each year.

A dated copy of this Policy shall be sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer after each review and approval.

This Policy has been read, reviewed and agreed  
by St Mary's Parochial Church Council

on (date):

2 SEPTEMBER 2025

Signed by the Chairman (signature):

K.G. McNeil

(print name):

FR KYLE MCNEIL

Policy to be reviewed not after (date):

30 SEPTEMBER 2026