The Parish of Rotherfield with Mark Cross

SAFEGUARDING POLICY
PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on 16th March 2026.

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our parish 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 parish.
- 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 PCC 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 Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer 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 parish 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.

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

This parish appoints Lyn Manuell as the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

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Section 1 - **Brief description of the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs and the positions of trust therein:**

- **Messy Church -** monthly afternoon of games, activities, songs, Bible Story, and a meal for all;
- **Breakfast Church -** monthly 8.15 Service where children access Bible Stories, activities and games. Refreshments are provided for all;
- **Family Service and All Age Worship -** monthly services adapted for all ages;
- **Separate space and toys for children to access at every service -** Left hand side of church as you enter. There are large cuddly toys for emotional support as well as a range of practical toys;
- **Craft Club -** regular meetings to make and create with simple tools and techniques;
- **Puppet Tree -** the puppet ministry team which comprises both adults and children performs at Family Services;
- **Sunday School -** held on selected Sundays of each month during morning service, encouraging learning through Bible stories and craft activities..

Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022 it is illegal (England and Wales)(Northern Ireland) for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision.

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our organisation but also to build an open culture where:

- those who lead do so by example
- they are committed to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles
- there are accountability structures
- there are codes of conduct
- the values of the organisation are embedded in its day to day actions and behaviours of its people
- there is open communication

Section 2 - Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child." As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

Section 3 - **Prevention**

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

To safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19.

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

· There is a written job description / person specification for the post

· Those applying have completed an application form

· Those short listed have been interviewed

· Safeguarding has been discussed at interview

· Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate

· A self-declaration form and disclosure and barring check (DBS) has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)

· Qualifications where relevant have been verified

· A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant

· The applicant has completed a probationary period

· The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Safeguarding training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Practice Guidelines

As an organisation / place of worship working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

We have specific good practice guidelines and forms, where appropriate, for every activity we are involved in.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their job role and out. They will also receive further training as necessary.

Through the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and Hub we will monitor compliance with all of our safeguarding responsibilities and activities, including safer recruitment procedures, training and DBS checks.

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Section 4

Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

- **Documenting a concern -** The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern as soon as possible to:

  Name: Lyn Manuell, Parish Safeguarding Officer. Tel. 07919 910033

  Email: safeguarding@stdenysrotherfield.org.uk

  The above is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

- In the absence of the Parish Safeguarding Officer or if the suspicions in any way involve the Parish Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to:

  Name: Adam Hardy (Deputy PSO as Lay Minister). Tel. 07969 512099

  Email: layminister@stdenysrotherfield.org.uk

  If the suspicions implicate both the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

  Emma Lambert – Chichester Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator
  Emma.Lambert@chichester.anglican.org or ring **01273 425 790**

  Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The Parish Safeguarding Officer should contact the appropriate agency or they may first consult https://safeguarding.chichester.anglican.org/advice/ for advice. They should then contact social services in the area where the child or adult lives.

- The Parish Safeguarding Officer may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern

  1. Chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.

  2. Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.

- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the absence of the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Chichester Diocese.
- The Leadership will support the Parish Safeguarding Officer / Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies https://safeguarding.chichester.anglican.org/advice/ although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will follow policy procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Parish Safeguarding Officer / Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Parish Safeguarding Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer / Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Parish Safeguarding Officer /Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or Chichester Diocese) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by Diocese of Chichester Safeguarding Team (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Parish Safeguarding Officer / Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by colin.perkins@chichester.anglican.org if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Parish Safeguarding Officer /Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively colin.perkins@chichester.anglican.org or his deputy victoria.taylor@chichester.anglican.org can be contacted for advice.

- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact colin.perkins@chichester.anglican.org or his deputy victoria.taylor@chichester.anglican.org and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Parish Safeguarding Officer, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The Parish Safeguarding Officer will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Service regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the parish.

Section 5 - Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on a risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the leadership and will be reviewed annually by the Parish Safeguarding Officer on behalf of the PCC.

Signed by: A. S. Hardy Position: Associate Minister (Reader)

Signed by: J. E. Hardy Position: Churchwarden

Signed by: K Varley Position: Churchwarden

Signed by: Position: Churchwarden

Date: 16th March 2026