

Three in One Parishes

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PROTECTION

POLICY

CHILDREN

AND

YOUNG PEOPLE

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A. CONTEXT

POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Three in One Parishes recognises its responsibility to make sure that appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The PCC aims to:

- **raise the awareness of all church members, and especially those who work with children and young people on behalf of the churches, of child protection issues;**
- **promote good, safe working practices and create a secure and caring environment for our children and young people;**
- **have a clear policy and publicise it to church members, children and young people's workers, the children, young people and their families and to other users of church premises;**
- **provide all who work with children and young people with appropriate training and support in following the policy and procedures for the protection of children and young people;**
- **raise awareness and recognition of signs and symptoms of suspected abuse, and provide clear procedures for church members, children and young people's workers, children, young people and families in reporting their suspicions.**

1. Principles

This Safeguarding Policy relates to all groups, paid church staff, voluntary church staff, authorised leaders, helpers and, where appropriate, voluntary children's workers under the age of 18 of The Three in One Parishes, with responsibility for working with children and young people below 18 years of age.

It follows guidelines on safeguarding issued by the Diocese of Birmingham and by the Church of England nationally, and seeks to reflect current best practice and standards.

The PCC regards children and young people as valued members of the church. It affirms as a fundamental aim of the church to help them discover and grow in faith in Christ within the love of God and in a safe and supportive environment.

The PCC emphasises that everyone has a responsibility to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children young people, and to report any abuse or suspected abuse if discovered.

The PCC will appoint a **Parish Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator (PSCC)** and appoint a PCC member to be a **Children's Advocate (CA)**

This policy, procedures and their implementation will be reviewed annually, accepted and recorded in the minutes of the Parochial Church Council.

Church leaders and all who work with children and young people will be required to work within this policy. This applies to all leaders and helpers of 16 years and over.

2. Objectives

To keep all children and young people, and all who work with them, safe from harm.

To ensure that every child entrusted to our care is never subjected to any form of abuse by members of, or visitors to the church or its groups and activities.

To ensure that procedures are known and followed by all who work with children and young people.

3. Working Policy

- All leaders and helpers aged 16 years of age and over involved in working with children and young people will be required to complete and sign a Bishop's Declaration Form. Two written references will be required and will be carefully checked.
- An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be required for all staff over the age of 18.
- Any staff under the age of 18 must not work with children unsupervised.
- All adults on site (including parents/carers who stay with their children) must be registered.
- All children must be fully registered, including emergency contact details. The registration form will include information about health issues and any other difficulties which may affect a child's ability to interact with others or participate in activities; such information will be kept in the strictest confidence.
- Staff should not enter a room alone with a single child.
- No staff may take children to the toilet.
- Staff must not give personal contact details to children (including phone numbers, addresses and email addresses).

- Staff must not accept personal contact details from children. Parents must supply the emergency contact details.
- All records are confidential and must be kept in a safe place.
- We will pay particular attention to children and young people who have special needs to ensure their full integration and protection in the church community.
- We will take seriously allegations of abuse and follow the appropriate steps outlined in this policy.

4. Those covered by the policy

All activities sponsored by the PCC are covered by this policy, including Sunday Club, Children's Choir, Children's activities during services, special activities such as Christingle Workshops and Nativity Plays.

Other adults, who do not specifically hold posts with responsibility for children or young, but who nevertheless may have contact with them when they are not under direct supervision by other adults, such as Church wardens, Deputy Church Wardens, Lay Readers, Sidespersons, Organists and Choir Members (where children are involved), ought also to complete the Confidential Declaration.

The PCC has a duty of care to advise individuals and organisations working with or running events involving children and young people who hire or use church premises of their responsibility for children's welfare. A copy of this Policy will be posted in a visible place on the premises and hirers made aware of it. Hirers/users should also sign a statement indicating their acceptance of the Parish Policy.

B. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Role of the Incumbent

- The Incumbent has ultimate responsibility for the safe recruitment of suitable people to work with children and young people
- The Incumbent is responsible for verifying the applicant's identity as part of the DBS checking process
- The Incumbent will be the first to receive any sensitive information disclosed on the Confidential Declaration Form or from a reference
- The Incumbent is responsible for the referral of any allegations of abuse to the appropriate Lead Services.
- The Incumbent will be responsible for liaising with the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser if needed
- In a period of interregnum the role of the incumbent is usually fulfilled by the Area Dean.

2. Role of the Parish Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator (PSCC)

- The PSCC is responsible to the Incumbent and the PCC
- The PSCC has an essential role in relation to child protection and should be a lay person interested in taking best care both of the children and young people and the people working with them and should have some understanding of child protection issues
- The PSCC will be the Parish's representative on all matters relating to the protection of children and young people and will help develop a culture of 'informed vigilance'
- The PSCC, via the Bishop's Advisor for Children's Ministry, will be kept informed of developments and training events regarding child protection and, in collaboration with the Children's Advocate will cascade information in respect of Diocesan and local parish policy developments, and training opportunities for children's workers regarding child protection and safe practice
- The PSCC, in collaboration with the Children's Advocate, will provide support and/or advice to the Incumbent and to all children's workers regarding concerns about the welfare of specific children or young people within the parishes or about the behaviour of specific adults within the parishes
- The PSCC will ensure that, where appropriate, situations are referred to the relevant Lead Agency, that the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Advisor is informed and the Incumbent is kept informed of any concerns and specific advice given to the children's workers or volunteers where concerns exist
- The PSCC will access specific advice from the appropriate Lead Agency should the need arise
- The PSCC will be responsible for keeping records maintained and up to date, relating to: activities involving children or young people, those appointed as children's workers or volunteers, dates showing when safe recruitment procedures have been completed and training completed by all children's workers and volunteers re child protection issues
- The PSCC will ensure that a parish child protection policy is in place, is in line with diocesan policy and is reviewed and updated when necessary, but at least annually
- PSCC will monitor training given to all children's workers/volunteers in relation to child protection
- The PSCC will ensure that all information relating to prospective children's workers/volunteers and specific child protection matters is treated sensitively and confidentiality is maintained at all times
- The PSCC will ensure that all sensitive/confidential information is stored securely in church or parish premises
- The PSCC will liaise with the Parish Health and Safety officers to support children's workers in ensuring a safe environment and practices

3. Role of the Parish Children's Advocate (CA)

- The Parish Children's Advocate will be a member of the PCC and will be someone who can be a voice speaking on behalf of the children and young people. The CA will report to the PCC on matters which affect children and young people, representing their views and needs with regard to mission, ministry, worship and pastoral care and this might include being someone that children and young people feel they could go to with concerns, or even to disclose abuse.
- The CA will co-ordinate with the PSCC, having regular contact with those who work with young people, training volunteers and in improving awareness of children's issues throughout the church community.

4. Recruitment and support of Children's and Young People's Workers

- All those working with children and young people and those, (e.g. churchwardens) whose position or office enables them to have regular contact with children in the course of their duties, including the PSCC and the CA will be checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This applies to people who are paid and to volunteers. Checks will be renewed periodically in line with Diocesan guidance.
- The PSCC will advise as to whether checks should be Enhanced or Enhanced Plus.
- All those working with children and young people or applying to work with them, will be required to sign the Confidential Declaration. This declaration is confidential, and will be kept by the incumbent and his/her successors indefinitely. A new Confidential Declaration will be completed when a DBS check is renewed.
- The PSCC will keep a record of all who work with children and young people, including their names, addresses and telephone numbers, and the organisation or activity in which they are involved. The PSCC should also keep details of those who have completed their DBS check and who do not regularly help with groups. These people, with their permission, may be asked to help, on occasion, with groups who require an additional helper – for example due to sickness or anticipation of higher attendance than usual e.g. for a Baptism and holiday club.
- If any response in a completed declaration form, or if anything arising during the recruitment procedure, reveals any possible cause for concern, reference will be made to the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser, and if appropriate to the Bishop.
- Children's and young people's workers will be provided with appropriate training in child protection issues and in safe and good practice, and the creation of a safe, secure and caring environment.
- During an interregnum, the Area Dean will hold the confidential Declaration Forms and individual records from the parish, and will oversee the procedures with regards to new volunteers and workers. Leaders of children's and young peoples' organisations, or else the churchwardens, should contact the Area Dean if recruitment of helpers is proposed during an interregnum.

- DBS checks will generally be renewed every three years for paid employees and every five years for volunteers, or sooner if there is any cause for concern.

C. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- At least two adults (18+) must be present with any child or group of children. No adult should be expected to work with children alone.
- All adults working with children or young people will follow Health and Safety Procedures and seek to make the premises for activities safe for children.
- First aid kits are kept on the premises for minor emergency use. Staff may deal with minor injuries if they feel confident in doing so and these should be recorded in the Church accident book and also reported to parents/carers.
- If an ambulance is required, parents must be contacted immediately. Incidents must be recorded in the church accident book.
- Children and staff should be briefed on the procedure in the event of a fire. Staff will marshal children to the emergency exit and assemble either on the front lawn or the car park where a register will be taken. Nobody will re-enter the building until the fire brigade have confirmed that it is safe to do so.
- Fire exits are the front door and the exit from the main hall.
- Activities and premises will be risk assessed.

D. RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

- The wellbeing of the child is paramount at all times.
- Take time to listen to the child and believe what they are saying.
- Do not ask leading questions.
- Be honest with the child and do not promise confidentiality.
- Should a concern be expressed by or about a child (a disclosure), it must be reported as soon as possible to the PSCC or the Incumbent, who will then take advice from the relevant agency.
- Should there be a complaint of abuse by a leader within the church it must be reported immediately to the PSCC or Incumbent, then to the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Advisor and, if appropriate, a Lead Agency (the Police, Social Services or NSPCC).
- Should there be a complaint of abuse by a member of the clergy or licensed staff it must be reported immediately to the PSCC or a Church Warden, then to the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Advisor and, if appropriate, a Lead Agency.
- Should there be obvious concerns about a child's wellbeing, or should a child make a disclosure of abuse outside the church organisation, the PSCC or Incumbent must be informed. They will then take advice from the relevant agency. All contacts with

external agencies made by other staff or volunteers must be immediately reported to the Incumbent or the PSCC.

- Anyone connected with the church may seek advice from the Bishop's Child Protection Officer or agencies.
- **IMPORTANT**
Clergy, Licensed Staff, Diocesan Officers, leaders and helpers are **NOT** authorised to investigate allegations and must **NEVER** attempt to do so. Only the Lead Agencies (Police, Social Services and NSPCC) are authorised to make enquiries into allegations and to investigate child protection cases. This is for vital legal and evidence reasons.

E. TRAINING

Training will be made available to all volunteers and staff who come into contact with children and young people at The Three in One Parishes' churches. Records of attendances at training sessions will be kept.

Guidelines regarding good practice are given later in this policy.

F. GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- Avoid private one-to-one situations. If a child or young person requires prayer or counselling, another adult should be within calling distance and their presence known to the young person.
- Treat all young people with dignity and respect, taking care to use appropriate language, tone of voice and body language.
- Whilst showing warm support and comfort to a child or young person, adults must be aware that any physical contact should take place in a public place.
- Physical contact should be age appropriate and any action that could be misunderstood must be avoided. Adults should be sensitive to children's and young people's individual and personal space.

Further points

- Parental consent must be sought before photographing children and young people. Photographs are for the sole use of the Three in One Parish's churches. They must not be posted on social media.
- All staff should take extreme care when using social media and approach this with the utmost professionalism. Users of social media must think carefully about the boundaries between personal and church life, and remember that much of the content of these sites, including comments from users are public.

- Special care must be taken with children, young people or vulnerable adults with special needs. Leaders should take particular advice from parents or carers about how to relate to and care for them.
- The churches are open to all people and this may include known abusers, therefore we should all be vigilant.
- If any church member needs has any matter of concern which needs raising, they should initially contact Lisa Wilcox (St Nicholas, Curdworth), Gordon Butler (St John the Baptist, Middleton) or Judith Williams (St Chad, Wishaw).

G. COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy should be made available to all Children’s and Young People’s workers, parents of children and young people, users of the church premises and church members.

This policy will be reviewed in January 2017.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

On behalf of the Three in One Parishes PCC.

FURTHER NOTES

- Many of the points covered in the above policy also apply to vulnerable adults. A policy for the care and protection of vulnerable adults will be prepared as a companion to this one.
- A lead person will be appointed to oversee issues relating to vulnerable adults. This could be the same person as the PSCC. The CA could also be the advocate for vulnerable adults if necessary.
- The names of the PSCC and CA will be added to this policy when they are appointed.