

Christ Church Felixstowe

CHRIST CHURCH SAFEGUARDING POLICY for CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE and ADULTS

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1. Adoption of Safeguarding Policy.

Christ Church agrees to adopt and implement a safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adult policy for those at risk of abuse or neglect. We accept and endorse the guidance issued in the House of Bishops' Policy 'Protecting all God's Children'. We accept and endorse the 'Parish Statement of Safeguarding' as published by St Edmundsbury Diocese together with the accompanying 'Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults' document. We accept the documents 'Promoting a safer church – Safeguarding policy for children, young people and adults', and 'Church of England Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment', together with the safeguarding principles recorded therein. We accept the Diocesan safeguarding policy in regards to the recording and reporting of safeguarding incidents within the church or relating to a church activity. The Incumbent and Forum agree to give due regard to Safeguarding in all matters relating to the administration and activities of Christ Church Felixstowe.

Notes; We recognise the House of Bishops' Policy on Safeguarding Children and Adults and Diocesan Safeguarding guidance as being authoritative in matters of Safeguarding. The 'Parish Statement of Safeguarding' will be displayed in a prominent place in the Church. Where authorised by Christ Church Forum, this policy may be modified to meet local parish requirements so long as safeguarding principles are not compromised.

A Church Activity is one so authorised by the Forum and does not relate to any private arrangements made outside the Church.

2. Definitions and Principles

2.1 General Definitions

Christ Church Felixstowe is hereafter referred to as ‘the Church’ in this policy.

Any reference to the diocese website relates to St Edmundsbury Diocese Safeguarding website found at www.cofesuffolk.org/safeguarding

Any reference to ‘the Incumbent’ in this policy relates to the current serving Vicar of Christ Church.

The Incumbent and Forum have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the vulnerable in the Church community. In terms of safeguarding, the Incumbent and the Forum will strive to promote a safer environment for all in the Church community by ensuring there is a plan in place to raise general awareness of safeguarding and by promoting training where required to ensure that safeguarding is taken seriously.

The term ‘**safeguarding**’ covers vetting and recruitment, safer working practices, responding to concerns, working with partner agencies, dealing with allegations against those responsible for children or adults at risk and other matters that may be relevant. The term ‘child protection’ is used for responding to concerns where it appears that a specific child may have been harmed.

A child or young person is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. ‘Children’ therefore means ‘children and young people’ throughout this document. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age and is living independently does not change his or her entitlement to services or protection. Where either children or young people are mentioned in the text, both are intended.

An ‘adult at risk’ or ‘vulnerable’ adult is defined under Section 6 Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 as “...a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired...”

The term ‘Church Officer’ is used for anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid. The Forum must approve appointments to all church roles. Church officers are considered to be in a position of trust and given both responsibility and authority. Church officers are required to do such safeguarding training as the Diocese specifies (currently every three years) and undergo the specified recruitment process before appointment.

2.2 Statutory Definitions

There are many forms of abuse relating to children and vulnerable adults. These commonly include (but not exclusively consist of) physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, racial abuse and neglect. Adults may additionally be subject to psychological and financial abuse. The Church additionally acknowledges the principle of spiritual abuse as described by the Church of England.

The diocese training programme CO available on line gives a fuller description of what constitutes abuse both for children and adults.

2.3 Statement of Principles

The care and protection of children, young people and adults at risk involved in church activities 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. Safeguarding is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the Church.

The Church recognises that the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount and that we have a duty of care when they are in our charge. We will do everything that we can to provide a safe and caring environment when they are engaging in church activities.

Where conflicts of interest arise between the welfare of children and that of adults, it is the welfare of children that will be given priority.

We will carefully select and train all those with responsibility for children or vulnerable adults in line with safer recruitment principles.

We will respond without delay to every complaint (verbal or written) which suggests that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, co-operating with statutory agencies and the local authority as required.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to proper authorities, of any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.

*Note; Formal processes alone will not protect children or adults at risk of abuse. The Church community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary. We endorse the statement ‘**Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility**’.*

3. Recruitment Policy for Prospective Workers

The Church will implement the recognised procedure in relation to the recruitment of children and vulnerable adult workers. We will follow the guidance in the document 'Church of England Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment' which can be found on the Diocese website. Ancillary forms referred to below are based on this document.

Children and adult workers will be chosen carefully to provide the best quality care available. Any prospective worker must have been regular worshipper at Christ Church for at least 6 months before being allowed to apply for any church role. The recruitment process begins once authorisation from the Incumbent and the Forum has been granted and follows the following process which will be supervised by the PSO or nominated 'recruiter';

3.1 Application Form and Confidential Declaration

This form requires personal information and includes a self-declaration of matters which are relevant to those wishing to work with vulnerable groups within the Church. Completed forms remain 'confidential' and must be stored securely. All church workers responsible for children or vulnerable adults will be required to renew this declaration every 5 years.

3.2 Interview

The interview is an opportunity to assess a candidate's suitability for a role and identify any training needs in respect of the work being undertaken.

3.3 References

Two references are required to attest to a candidate's character and suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.

3.4 DBS Check

All those who regularly work with children and vulnerable adults should have enhanced DBS checks. Those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for DBS checks if subject to the ISA threshold. DBS checks are not required for volunteers working no more than one session per month, not being on a rota.

Note; DBS checks are subject to renewal every 5 years. The need for a DBS check relies on frequency and intensity which excludes the once a month helper and the 'holiday club' helper as long as the activity does not exceed four consecutive days in a month. Full details are held on the diocese website.

3.5 Training

The applicant will be required to complete the diocesan on line training package CO (see below) and will be provided with a copy of our church Safeguarding Policy to read. Failure to complete such training may make a person ineligible for their role.

3.6 Church Volunteer Agreement

The Volunteer Agreement specifies a role to which the applicant is to be appointed and is an agreement between the applicant and the Church. This document is binding in honour only; it is not intended to create a legally binding contract. It may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.

3.7 Appointment to a Role

The decision to appoint a volunteer worker to a role rests with the Incumbent (or Church Warden during an interregnum). If the decision is to reject the applicant's application the Incumbent should meet with them and explain the reasons. Where this occurs a record needs to be kept of the reasons for not accepting a candidate. Once the process is complete the applicant's name will be added to a list of 'Approved Workers' maintained by the Church Administrator.

3.8 Probationary Period

New volunteers will be subject to a six-month probationary period subject to the discretion of the Incumbent.

Notes; An integral part of the process of recruitment is the 'Application and Confidential Declaration' form. Where an applicant is later found to have misled the Incumbent or PSO acting on their behalf, this in itself will provide grounds to suspend a worker from their role pending consideration by the Forum and obtaining diocese safeguarding advice. 'Application and Confidential Declaration' forms will be securely stored as required by data protection laws for the duration of a worker's service and will be renewed every 5 years.

New applicants can only start 'work' on completion of the basic CO training course and by agreement of the Incumbent (or church Warden in their absence).

The Church accepts diocesan guidance on recruitment of ex-offenders.

A recruitment flow chart is available on the diocesan website.

4. Training Requirements for those in a Church Role

The diocese website contains details of both on line and face to face training packages commensurate with identified church roles. Details are contained in the document 'Diocesan Safeguarding Training Strategy 2017-2020'. Roles requiring training as prescribed include;

C0 Training

This module is the basic online course and is a prerequisite for all other modules.

Who - All persons holding a church role. The minimum age is 15 years.

C1 Online Safeguarding Foundation

This basic course explores safeguarding in context and equips participants with the skills and knowledge to know when and how to report concerns.

Who - Church Administration roles and all Diocesan staff/ Forum members, Volunteers and paid workers who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, Authorised Listeners, Spiritual Directors.

CO2 Safeguarding Leadership

This module equips participants to embed healthy safeguarding practice and to respond to safeguarding situations from a leadership perspective. This is face to face training.

Who - Church Wardens, Bell Tower Captains/Leaders, Pastoral Visitors, Youth and Children's work leaders, Music/Choir Leaders, and anyone who has leadership responsibilities/ leading activities involving children and/or vulnerable adults.

C3 Safeguarding

This module equips those licensed by the Bishop, both Clergy and Laity, to embed healthy safeguarding practice and to respond to safeguarding situations. This is face to face training.

Who - Clergy, Licensed Lay People and Parish/Benefice Safeguarding Officers

Notes; On completion of an on-line training input an electronic certificate is generated. A copy of this should be forwarded to the PSO who will update records. Where a person fails to complete training for their role in a reasonable time the

matter must be brought to Forum to discuss and to consider if that person should be allowed to continue. The Church of England is expanding this scheme in the coming years. The Church will follow additional guidance as it becomes available.

5. Responsibilities and Safety- Children

The Church accepts that, through its workers, it is responsible for children who are entrusted to our care by their parents: in the church building; on church property and other premises being used; and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organised by the Church. However, the Church is not responsible for private arrangements made by parents.

Children's workers have a duty to exercise adequate supervision at all times when a child is in their care. They are responsible for the child from the time they arrive at the place of activity or the meeting place, throughout the session until the end time stated on any advance information, or the child is collected by a known adult.

5.1 Principle Roles

Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).

The PSO is appointed to work with the Incumbent and the Forum to ensure the implementation of the safeguarding policy and that all safeguarding concerns are properly addressed. The PSO must ensure that any concerns about a child or an adult at risk are appropriately reported both to the statutory agencies and to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The PSO will act as the Church DBS administrator. A full role profile can be found on the diocesan website. A deputy PSO may be appointed with approval of the Forum.

Children's Co-Ordinator

A Co-ordinator holds either sole or joint overall responsibility for a number of groups. A person is to be appointed to this position by the Incumbent with the approval of the Forum to whom they are responsible. A Co-ordinator must be an adult (i.e. over 18).

Team Leader

A Team Leader is responsible for the smooth running of a particular church group. This involves organising session leaders, helpers, rotas and group activities. Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that material used for teaching is both age appropriate and Bible based. Where a social media site (ie Facebook) is utilised by a Team Leader for the sole use of that group they must ensure that all on- line interaction between 'users' is carefully monitored by them and remains appropriate. Team Leaders are to ensure that all matters of a safeguarding nature are brought to the attention of the PSO. Team Leaders are responsible primarily to the Incumbent and the Co-ordinator.

Session Leader

A Session Leader assists the Team Leader in the day to day running of a particular group. They are responsible for delivering the teaching that happens in the group session and for any emergencies. At least one Session Leader must be in attendance when the group meets. Session Leaders must be adults. A Session Leader is responsible primarily to the Team Manager.

Helpers

A Helper may assist a Session Leader in the running of a group session. They must always be supervised by a Session Leader. A young person of 14 years plus may act as a Helper if deemed responsible by the Incumbent and with the agreement of Forum, but once they reach the age of 18 they must follow the recruitment policy for prospective workers detailed above.

Occasional Helpers

Are those who help occasionally, namely not more than once every month, and not being on a rota. Occasional Helpers will normally be 14 years or above. Occasional helpers will not be responsible for a group and will always be supervised by a Leader.

Parent Helper

A parent helper is solely responsible for the supervision of their **own** children within a group and must not be asked to assume responsibility for other children in a group where they are in attendance.

Note; The posts of PSO, Co-ordinator, Team Leader and Session Leader are only open to Covenant Members of the Church.

5.2 Keeping Records

Appropriate records should be kept for each child/youth group. These records include the following;

A registration form detailing all children regularly attending a group.

A list of workers for each group and their assigned role.

Name, age, date of birth, and address and contact details for each child.

A parental consent form signed by the parents or carers for their children covering the normal activities of the group.

Attendance records for meetings.

Risk assessment (s) for activities.

A record of any accidents or injuries which occur. (To be recorded in the accident book stored in the first aid box).

A record of any disciplinary action taken against a child giving reasons.

The Team Leader will keep such records for a period of seven years.

Where a safeguarding issue is deemed to have occurred a detailed record must be made as soon as practicable and signed and dated by the author. (The Incumbent or PSO must be notified of any such occurrence as soon as practical).

Notes; Where consent is required this must be obtained from a parent or person with parental responsibility. Consent should be in writing for any specific activity. Parents/Guardians must be informed in advance of any trip using the 'Parental Permission Slip for Activities and Day Visits' form. A child may only be allowed to take part, if the completed and signed consent slip is received. Sufficient details of any activity should be given so that the parent/guardian can make an informed decision. All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely.

5.3 Staffing Levels

The Church agrees to comply with the following staffing levels for church activities;

0–2 years 1 person for every 3 children
2–3 years 1 person for every 4 children
3–8 years 1 person for every 8 children
over 8 years 1 person for the first 8 children and then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children

Each group should have a minimum of two adults and it is recommended that a gender balance be maintained if possible.

Young people aged 16 or 17 may help with groups but must be supervised by an adult worker and cannot be counted as part of the staffing.

5.4 Physical Contact Advice

Be careful about any physical contact that may be misunderstood by a child.

Avoid being alone with a child where others cannot see your activity.

Keep everything public -a hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.

Touch should be related to the young person's needs, not the worker's.

Do not make your own assumptions about a child's needs.

Touch should be age-appropriate and initiated by the young person rather than the worker.

Avoid any physical activity that is, or could be interpreted as, sexually stimulating.

Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have apart from when exceptional circumstances exist – ie when they need medical attention.

Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact and be free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood.

Particular care needs to be taken by workers around children who are known 'attention seekers'.

5.5 Prohibited Activities

Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.

Never make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person even in 'fun'.

Never use physical chastisement at any time.

Never use disparaging statements to a child that are calculated, or have the practical effect of diminishing their self-esteem.

Never invite a young person to your home alone or arrange to meet a young person alone even at their own request - always invite a group or ensure that someone else is in the house and make sure that parents/guardians know where their child is.

Never allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged or play in the vicinity of toilets.

Male workers should not accompany small children to the toilet or change nappies (except their own children).

Never engage in texting or social networking with a child or young person other than as necessary to fulfil the function of your post.

Photographs of children, named or unnamed shall not be posted on the Church website without written authority from a parent or guardian. Photographs will only be posted if deemed 'appropriate' by the Incumbent.

Guest Speakers should not be left unsupervised with children.

5.6 Good Practice

Leaders should complete a risk assessment for the group for whom they are responsible and review and update regularly.

Aim to be a positive role model and set a good example.

In the event of an accident, inform the parents and fill in the accident book.

Obtain parental permission for activities on child registration.

Photographs of children not to be taken without parental permission.

Know who the parents/carers are, especially if one parent does not have a right of access. Aim to build good relationships with them.

Watch out for the 'hurt' child. Be aware of any excessive injury and make gentle enquiries. Do not be afraid to ask open questions but listen carefully to what the child tells you.

Report any safeguarding concerns to the Team Leader, PSO or Incumbent.

Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional. If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.

Maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.

Leaders to ensure a safe environment for children and young people. This includes supervising any potentially dangerous equipment and maintaining a tidy 'clutter free' space. Leaders should ensure that all equipment is tidied up appropriately afterwards with reference to safety and leave the building as they would wish to find it. All equipment should meet adequate safety standards, should be regularly maintained and removed from use if inadequate until fixed.

At all times at least two workers should be with any age group of children.

One to one situations should be avoided wherever possible.

In the case where a small child needs accompanying to the toilet the female worker should take them. If this then leaves one worker alone with the group the leader should then ensure if possible that another worker with another group is within the vicinity by opening a door etc.

5.7 Special needs

Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child's parent. Disability legislation requires organizations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children.

5.8 Guidelines for Discipline

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.

Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding and pray for the young person. Work on each child's positives, do not compare them with each other, but encourage and build them up, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.

Build healthy relationships with young people and be a good role model.

Take care to give quieter and well-behaved young people attention and don't allow some young people to take all your time and energy.

Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said – this avoids manipulation.

NEVER smack or hit a young person and don't shout – change voice tone if necessary.

Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, a respect for property, and make sure the young people understand what action will be taken if not kept.

Be pro-active and encourage each other to be pro-active and not wait to be told to deal with a situation.

Separate young people who have a tendency to be disruptive when together. Give them a chance, warn them, and only separate if they are disruptive, as a last resort.

5.9 Transporting children on behalf of The Church

Transport, travel or escort arrangements to or from church activities are the responsibility of parents if they make informal arrangements among themselves.

They are the responsibility of the Church if part of a church activity and organised by a church officer. It should be clearly understood by all concerned at which point responsibility for the child is passed from parent to a church officer and at which point it is returned to the parent.

The team leader must ensure the below instructions are complied with.

Drivers

All those who drive children on church-organised activities should have held a full and clean driving licence for over two years. Drivers who are not children's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process and require Forum approval.

Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the Team Leader and the PSO. Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children.

Drivers must always be in a fit state; not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; and not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.

Private car

Children and young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or guardians. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity. All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church activities.

All cars that carry children must be in a roadworthy condition. All children must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat belts, additional children should not be carried. At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number.

There must be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an **emergency** a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car. Transporting children on behalf of a church is a regulated activity and DBS checks are required

5.10 Notes Specific to the Creche (under 3 years)

Toileting policy – If a child requires toileting while attending crèche, including nappy change, a helper will ask the parent or guardian to come and attend their own child. Only in very exceptional circumstances where the parent or guardian is otherwise unavailable and in order to prevent harm or discomfort to a child, will two helpers work together to complete toileting on the parent's behalf.

5.11 Home / Cell Groups

Home groups for young people or for mixed-age groups need a degree of adult supervision if these groups are to be recognised by the Church. There must be a suitable trained and appointed leader for each group. Leaders must observe the diocesan code of safer working practice. Mixed-age home groups should include members named and recruited as responsible for safeguarding children in the group.

5.12 Sleep-overs

Where a Team Leader in consultation with the Incumbent considers it appropriate to share sleeping accommodation with young people at camp or 'sleepovers', there must be at least two leaders (these being male leaders with male youngsters, female leaders with female youngsters).

5.13 Health and Safety

Health and Safety should be managed as part of all activities. A First Aid box should be obtained and maintained on site. An accident book should be maintained at all places where children's activities take place. Buildings should be checked for health and safety regularly and the results noted and reported in writing to the Forum. All workers supervising children should familiarise themselves with fire exits and the procedure for evacuating the church or other building in use.

5.14 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments of new and existing activities should be made, in order to identify hazards and take action to minimise risk. The same approach should be taken if buildings are hired or let for church activities involving children. Risk assessments should be made covering outside activities including travel arrangements. If specialised activities are to be undertaken, appropriate instructors should be engaged and their credentials confirmed. However, even when specialised instructors are involved, the Church retains the duty to supervise children.

6. Responsibilities and Safety- Adults

6.1 General Statement.

The Church is committed to respectful pastoral ministry to all adults within our church community. We are committed to the safeguarding and protection of adults at risk of abuse or otherwise vulnerable. We will carefully select and train all those with any pastoral responsibility within the Church. We will respond without delay to any complaint made that an adult for whom we were responsible has been harmed, co-operating with police and/or the local authority in any investigation. We will seek to offer informed pastoral care to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate healing ministry. We will challenge any abuse of power by anyone in a position of trust. We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a vulnerable person.

Notes; Human beings are, by their very nature, subject to the chances and changes of this world. Each one has strengths and weaknesses, capacities and restrictions. At some time everyone will be vulnerable to a wide range of pressures, concerns or dangers. No one is 'invulnerable'; some people may consider themselves to be

strong but, when circumstances change, strengths can quickly disappear. Some people by reason of their physical or social circumstances have higher levels of vulnerability than others. It is the Christian duty of everyone to recognize and support those who are identified as being more vulnerable. In supporting a vulnerable person, we must do so with compassion and in a way that maintains dignity.

6.2 Pastoral Workers.

The Church recognises that Pastoral Workers perform a vital function in the church which by its very nature brings them into contact with vulnerable people in situations where they themselves might be at risk from the very person they are seeking to help. In order to mitigate this risk the following qualifications are required;

- a volunteer must be a covenant member, and
- must have been in church attendance for a minimum of two years, and
- must have completed training as prescribed by the diocese, and
- have Forum approval.

It is strongly recommended male Pastoral Workers engage with male clients and female Pastoral Workers with female clients. In the case where a person's sexuality is in doubt further guidance should be sought from the Incumbent or PSO.

6.3 Respecting Rights

The Church strives to be a place where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. Christians are called to support those at the margins; those less powerful, and those without a voice in our society. The Church can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability.

Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers.

We should note that a person who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity;
- have their privacy respected;
- be able to lead as independent a life as possible;
- be able to choose how to lead their life;
- have the protection of the law;
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background;
- be able to use their chosen language or method of communication and be heard.

Notes; Vulnerability is not an absolute; an individual cannot be labeled as 'vulnerable' in the same way as a child is regarded as such. Childhood is absolute: someone who is not yet eighteen years of age is, in the eyes of the law, a child; this is not the case with vulnerability. Some of the factors that increase vulnerability include:

- *a sensory or physical disability or impairment;*
- *a learning disability;*
- *a physical illness;*
- *mental ill health (including dementia), chronic or acute;*
- *an addiction to alcohol or drugs;*

- *the failing faculties in old age;*
- *a permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma.*

7. Action where Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed.

Information including a flowchart for making a referral can be found on the diocese website under safeguarding concerns.

Where allegations are made against a church officer the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor must be informed. The Church will follow diocesan safeguarding guidance in such circumstances including whether a person should be removed or suspended from their role or not.

Suspension should not be seen as indicating the guilt or otherwise of a person about whom an allegation is made. Suspension is a neutral position adopted to protect both the complainant and respondent pending any investigation or reporting process.

7.1 Receiving Reports of Abuse

If a person tells a member of the clergy or accredited lay minister, a paid staff member or volunteer that they know or suspect that a member of the clergy or accredited lay minister, a member of the paid staff or a volunteer is guilty of abuse, then it is imperative for this to be taken very seriously. The personal cost to someone of making such a complaint may be very high, and it is very important to make the person feel that they are respected and listened to. The temptation to become defensive about the person being accused or about the institution of the Church must be resisted.

Anyone who receives an allegation of abuse must keep detailed records of what they are told, what they observe and their responses. They should record the content of all conversations, face to face or by telephone, all decisions taken and the reasons for them, and should retain all correspondence and other papers. The records should be dated and all papers retained indefinitely. Cases involving a lapse of many years are often heard in both criminal and civil courts. The police can require records to be produced in evidence.

7.2 Disclosure by a child or an adult or a third party.

Allegations may be made by children or on their behalf by parents or carers or others in whom they confide. Allegations may also be made to Childline, the NSPCC, Social Care Services or the Police.

If an adult speaks about concerns for a child who is not part of the church community, they should be supported to make a referral to Social Care Services.

If an adult speaks of concerns regarding a child or the behaviour of an adult within the Church community the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must be informed and a referral made to the Social Care Services. No attempt should be made to investigate the matter at church level.

Parents of children who have been abused may report cases to church officials but express reluctance to take matters further because of not wanting to involve their children in court procedures. They should be urged to discuss the matter with social care services or the police. If a church officer becomes aware of any abuse or alleged abuse perpetrated against a child they should ensure that it is reported to social care or the police, irrespective of whether the parents' consent or not; this is essential in order to safeguard other children.

If a child makes an allegation about an adult who is not part of the Church community, for example a member of the family, a teacher, a scout leader, or any person in a position of trust, a referral must be made to social care. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be informed so that advice and support can be offered.

If an adult discloses abuse that happened to them when they were a child, the wishes of the adult will be a consideration. A referral to the police will not always be necessary unless the individual wishes to report the offence; however, they should be encouraged and supported to do so. However, if the alleged abuser is still working with, or caring for children a referral to the social care services will be made by the person hearing the complaint or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser who must in any case be informed.

Once a concern has been identified, a referral made, and an investigation instigated, the Church will follow diocesan safeguarding advice throughout the process.

7.3 Practical Ways to Respond to a Disclosure (child or adult)

Keep calm

Be attentive and listen carefully to what is said.

Do not interrupt a person giving you their account.

Show acceptance of what they say.

Clarify anything you have not understood without probing.

Tell them you will need to let someone else know in order to keep them safe.

Never push for information.

Let the person know what you are going to do next – be honest.

Thank them for telling you.

*Note; there is no excuse for abuse even when someone has broken a rule.
Be aware the abused may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
If a person (child or adult) decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen. However still notify the PSO.*

7.4 What to do once a Disclosure has been made.

Make detailed notes as soon as possible. Write down exactly what the referrer told you using **their own words**, and what you said in reply. Record what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of the activity or circumstances surrounding the disclosure). Record all relevant dates and times of when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes securely, even if these have been typed subsequently. Treat all written records as 'confidential'.

Notify your Team Leader if present and report your discussion as soon as possible to the Incumbent or PSO. If the latter is implicated, report to the Church Warden and/or Deputy PSO or directly to statutory authorities.

*Note; The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must still be notified. **You must not discuss the content of a disclosure with anyone else.***

In the case of a disclosure by a young person, the team manager (or senior worker present) must consider whether or not it is safe for that person to return home. Parents not believed to be the source of risk must be told about the disclosure in order they safeguard their own child. However particular care should be taken before returning a child to a domestic situation where they may be at risk of ongoing abuse. On occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action and contact Social Care Services or Police safeguard the person involved. The parent or guardian must be notified of any disclosure made by a child as long as they are not implicated personally.

Public contact numbers

A referral may be made direct to Social Care Services via Customer First on **0808 8004005** (8am – 6.45pm Mon to Fri). As an alternative in non-urgent cases, social services can be informed by e-mailing customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk.

If an emergency use the 999 system for police assistance, or if police are required but the matter is non-urgent contact 101.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (lines free and open 24 hours).
Phone if you are worried about a child.

Child-line: 0800 1111 (lines free and open 24 hours). Phone if you are child or young person and are worried about anything.

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247 ((lines free and open 24 hours).
Phone if you are experiencing domestic abuse.

Samaritans Helpline: 08457 90 90 90 (open 24 hours). Phone if you feel you are struggling to cope and need someone to talk to.

Action on Elder Abuse Helpline: 080 8808 8141 (Monday to Friday 9-5pm).

Church Officer contact numbers including that of the PSO is displayed in Church.

8. Miscellaneous Items

8.1 Working with Offenders

Where someone attending the Church is known to have abused young people, whilst extending friendship to the individual, the Incumbent and PSO will meet with that person and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. They will not be permitted to have any involvement in the young people's work. Where a victim to abuse is in the Church as well as the offender the advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should immediately be sought.

8.2 Insurance

The Church takes responsibility to ensure that adequate insurance is provided for public liability in respect of all its recognised workers and children engaged in approved church activities.

8.3 List of pre -printed forms available to Team Managers

Child/ young person emergency contact form – diocese website

Parental Consent form - church administrator and diocese website

Photo permissions form adults - church administrator and diocese website

Photo permissions form children - church administrator and diocese website

Recording form for Safeguarding Concerns - diocese website / PSO

Parental Permission slip for activities and day visits – church administrator

Children and youth group registration form – church administrator

Risk Assessment – church administrator.

Note; where forms are not available for the purpose required consult the PSO.

8.4 Authority

This policy is authorised by the Church Forum and is registered with the Diocese Safeguarding Office.

This policy can only be changed by approval of the Forum. The PSO shall review annually with the Incumbent the implementation of safeguarding policy in the Church and consider if it remains fit for purpose.

Non-Compliance with this policy will automatically mean that the person will not be allowed to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults within church activities.