



**SAFEGUARDING POLICY  
FOR  
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH SAWTRY**

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## The Diocese of Ely's Safeguarding Policy

### *Foreword from the Bishop of Ely*

The protection and nurture of vulnerable people in our community is a commitment that needs no introduction or explanation in this Diocese. We strive together to follow the example of Christ in reaching out to all people, in all circumstances, with a special compassion for those who may have nobody else to speak up for them.

The formation of the new Diocesan Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults has been a long process, peppered with changes in Government policies and consultations about what should and should not be included. There has been much reflection and discussion with the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Group about how to make our policy a practical working tool for those involved in this complex area of ministry.

I am happy to be able to commend our new Safeguarding Policy to you at last. I hope that all the work that has gone into making the relevant parts of it easy to access, as and when you need them, will pay off in confidence and surety of purpose in our work with children and adults across the Diocese.



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR ALL SAINTS' CHURCH SAWTRY**

### **Introduction**

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the protection of children and young people both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principle enshrined in the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004, that the welfare of the child is paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and by supporting parents. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and wellbeing of children. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or young person or about the behaviour of an adult, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary.

### **The Principles of Our Policy**

We are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of children within our church community. We will respond without delay to any complaint that a child or young person for whom we are responsible may have been harmed in our care, taking advice as necessary from statutory agencies, and we will fully co-operate with statutory agencies during any investigation they make into allegations concerning a member of the church community. In addition, we will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult whose life has been affected by abuse.

In fulfilling our responsibilities in child protection, we will seek to create a culture of 'informed vigilance' where the welfare of the child is paramount. We will pay particular attention to children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities, to ensure their full integration within the church community.

Health and Safety policies are in place, and we have provided appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish.

The Church wishes to welcome and support all members of its community. Those who have a history of offences against children and/or who may pose a threat to them will not be permitted to work with children but will be supported pastorally. Where necessary, an agreement of appropriate conduct will be drawn up between the member and the incumbent, with the help of the Bishop's Adviser.

### **Recruitment**

We accept the prime duty of care placed upon the incumbent and parochial church council to ensure the well being of children and young people in our church community. Therefore we will carefully select and train ordained and lay ministers, volunteers and paid workers. Recruitment will include Disclosure and Barring Service checks for each person involved in working with young people under the age of 18.

We will follow recommended safeguarding practice in the appointment of all these workers, and for anyone who is in a position of authority. They will be appropriately trained and supported.

### **Reviewing and Implementing Our Policy**

We will review the implementation of our child protection policy, procedures and practice every year. All those who work with children have been given a copy of this policy and good practice guidelines, and have agreed to follow them.

### **Significant Harm, Children in Need and Definitions of Abuse**

'Significant Harm', which is a term from the Children Act 1989, is the trigger for action by safeguarding agencies. You do not have to have proof that harm has taken place

already – if you feel that something is happening that could lead to significant harm, this is grounds enough for action.

If you are worried about possible harm to a child you should always seek advice. You can talk to your safeguarding co-ordinator in the first instance, or contact Sarah King (the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer) or Yvonne Quirk (The Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser) if you are unsure whether or not a child should be referred. All agencies working with children would rather spend time looking at something that does NOT require action, than missing something that does. So you will not be blamed for making a mistaken judgement about a child's situation.

All agencies, statutory and voluntary, are required to work together for the protection of children. If a child is at risk of significant harm, an inter-agency meeting may be called to decide what to do. Any siblings or close contacts of the child will also be considered, as what is happening to one child often shows a risk to other children in the family or close circle. A plan may be made in which all agencies involved with the family - and this might include the church - agree what they will do to safeguard the child(ren). The list of children for whom a plan is in place used to be called 'the child protection register'.

In some cases, the child's situation won't meet the threshold for a child protection, plan, but might instead lead to the child being registered as 'a child in need'. This is another term that came to us from The Children Act 1989. Again, all agencies will be asked to work together to try and improve the situation for the child and family so that things don't deteriorate into a child protection case.

Remember, you do not have to have proof that abuse has happened and you should certainly not investigate where there are suspicions of abuse. Your trigger for action is a concern that something is going on for the child that MIGHT lead to significant harm, even if that harm has not already happened.

In considering whether a child might have been abused, these are the definitions (from 'Working Together, 2010') that are currently used by the agencies in child protection work:

**Physical Abuse:** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.

**Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as the overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or a young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or

watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **What to do if a child tells you about abuse**

Most children find it very difficult to talk about what has happened to them. If a child has summoned up the courage to talk, and has chosen you as the person s/he is going to tell, it's important to listen carefully. Now is not the moment to ask the child to come back at a more convenient time, or to start an investigation. Simply, listen. Try to let the child go at his/her own pace. Don't ask questions, don't jump in to fill awkward silences; the child might need this silence to process what's going on inside his/her head and your questions could confuse and divert the flow. Show that you are keeping up, and understanding what's being said: nod encouragingly, make eye contact, repeat back the last thing said, and so on. If the child is really struggling to keep going, or you don't understand something, use the TED formula:

- **Tell**
- **Explain**
- **Describe**

For example, 'Can you tell me about that?....Could you explain what you mean?....I'm not sure I understand; describe that to me...'

Let the child talk for as long as s/he needs to. Once you know that this is a child protection matter, you don't need to gather any more details: it is time to pass on what you have been told to a skilled, experienced person who can best help the child.

However difficult it is to believe what you are hearing, it must be taken seriously; at the very least, keep an open mind. It is devastating to a victim of abuse when the person s/he has chosen to tell refuses to believe what is being told. Be prepared to believe the unbelievable and accept the unacceptable, while somehow remaining calm and open-minded; that's the real skill of responding to people who tell you about abuse.

Thank the child for telling you what has happened, and reassure him/her that s/he has done the right thing and that you will do your best to help. Explain that this kind of thing has happened to lots of other children before, and that's why there are people you can talk to who will know what to do. Never promise not to tell: you will probably have to share the information to keep the child safe, and there may be other children at risk.

What happens next depends on the individual circumstances in which you find yourself and it is not possible to give exact advice. But here are some things to try and keep in mind:

Is the child safe to go home, or is s/he in immediate danger? A police officer, once called to the scene, can act without a court order to prevent a parent removing a child from your care; a social worker cannot. Outside this emergency situation, it is usually best to take a bit of time to make sure the child is safe and looked after, and call your

local children's services team. Gather as much background information about the child as you can. The full name, date of birth, address, the names of parents and other children in the family are basic essentials, if you have them. Make sure the child knows what you are going to do, and respect his/her right to be involved in an age-appropriate way. Whoever you call, ask advice about what to do next, and write down what they say.

Who else needs to know what you have been told? Your Vicar and/or Safeguarding Co-ordinator should have the right training and skills to help you, and should be told unless there is a reason not to. But remember that child protection information is always handled on a 'need to know' basis. Sometimes you will be sharing just a part of what you know eg the PCC should be told that safeguarding procedures have been followed, but they don't need to know the names and details of those involved.

Make a written log of everything that has happened as soon as you can: date it (day, month, year), sign and print your name and keep it safe until it is needed by those who are handling the case. There is a logging form in Section 5 that can help you.

Does the alleged abuse involve a worker or volunteer in the church? Report the allegation to the Police or Social Care and/or the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser, who will advise and support you and work with the appropriate agencies outside the Church. Never try to handle an allegation within your own church.

Who can support the child, and you, until this case is resolved? Help the child choose someone s/he feels comfortable with, and choose someone to support you, too (it doesn't have to be the same person).

### **Responding to allegations of abuse that happened a long time ago ('historical abuse')**

Sometimes, a child cannot talk about abuse s/he has suffered until many years later. This is especially true of sexual abuse, where a child feels ashamed, or thinks no-one will believe what s/he says. These cases are described as 'historical' and they are taken just as seriously as 'live', new cases. If someone has sexually abused a child, it is highly probable that there will be other victims; if the abuser is alive, whatever the age, s/he is likely to pose a risk to other children, now and in the future. Police and Social Care are well used to dealing with historical allegations. Contact the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser for advice and support in how to proceed.

Historical allegations of sexual abuse can come as a complete shock to members of the family and community around the alleged abuser. They may refuse to believe the allegation, and can place intense pressure on the alleged victim to withdraw what has been said and on other people not to believe him/her. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should ensure that all those involved have access to support, which can come from inside or outside the church circle (but not usually from the same person, as there may be conflicts of interest).

### **Further Information:**

The House of Bishops document, 'Responding well to those who have been sexually abused' (2011) Working Together (2010 edition) - details of the roles of each agency in safeguarding children.

### **Guidelines for Work with Children and Teenagers**

Avoid working in one-to-one situations with children wherever possible. Make sure there is another adult within earshot. Try to have a man and a woman at each mixed-age

activity. Adults leading a session with children should not smoke or use alcohol or illicit drugs.

Those undertaking one-to-one counselling or pastoral work must adhere to the highest standards of conduct in the relationship with the child, and should have received appropriate training. Know your own level of competence, and do not step beyond it; if a situation becomes difficult, seek advice straight away. Be clear at the start what you and the child are planning to achieve by meeting, and the limits of what you can offer. Meet at an agreed time, in a place that affords an ability to talk confidentially without being secretly 'tucked away', and let a colleague know what you are doing. At the first meeting, explain that the conversation will be confidential unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the person is being harmed themselves, if they are harming others or if they know that a child or young person is being harmed, the information will have to be passed on. If this level of confidentiality is not acceptable to the child, try to arrange access to an appropriate anonymous telephone helpline; don't be tempted to promise absolute confidentiality.

When working in sensitive situations or 1:1, always keep a written record of the session, properly dated (including year). Where there are potential safeguarding/child protection issues, always make a written record (include date, time and signature), and seek advice.

Socially acceptable physical contact between adults and children in a public place is quite proper and appropriate where it can be readily seen by others and is not hidden away. Physical contact with children should be:

#### Minimal

- Intended to meet the needs of the child rather than the adult
- Understood and welcomed by the child
- Open to the scrutiny of others

It is important to respect each child's sense of personal space. Avoid playing rough games with children or making provocative or 'teasing' comments, even in fun.

It is equally important not to be paranoid about responding to a child who is clearly in need of physical contact eg when injured or distressed. Use cautious common sense, and welcome a shared scrutiny and support ethos in the workplace.

Keep an up-to-date register of all children attending a group: home address, telephone number and names of parents/carers should be included.

The ratio of adults to children must be sufficient to ensure safety and comply with the requirements of the Children Act 1989. These requirements are particularly relevant to work with children under the age of eight. If you are providing care for young children, particularly in a group that runs for two or more hours per day for more than five days a year, you will usually need to register the group with Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education). Some groups e.g. sports clubs that exist only to teach one specialist activity, do not have to register. But the rules are quite complicated, and if you are unsure about whether the group needs to be registered or not, always check. You can call Ofsted's helpline on 0845 601 4771, or speak to the Diocesan Children's Adviser.

All U18s (except where an U18 is married) need to provide a parental consent form when they join a group or activity.

Children may attend worship or other activities unaccompanied by an adult. Where this is the case, try to establish if parents know where the child is and what time s/he is expected home. If necessary, encourage the child to leave at the appropriate time to get

home for this deadline. If a child is joining a regular activity, record his/her name, age, and address on a registration form and ask the child to bring it back signed next time. Make every effort to establish contact with the parents, particularly of a younger child, by sending information home or providing a church telephone number or e mail address for them to call. No child can be taken on a trip away from the church site without a parental consent form.

The premises used should be safe and well maintained. Particular consideration should be given to safety checks of play equipment, furnishings, fire alarms etc. Seek advice from the Diocesan Children's Adviser if necessary on the latest Health and Safety regulations, including appropriate risk assessments for activities and outings. Keep a suitably stocked First Aid kit always accessible during children's activities (special children's First Aid kits are available from most major retailers of pharmaceutical goods). Make sure that all planned activities, on or off site, are covered by an adequate insurance policy.

Workers must be receptive to what children and teenagers in their care have to say. If a child makes a complaint or an allegation about the behaviour of an adult within the church or the community, listen carefully without making a judgement on how plausible what you are hearing might be. If a complaint is made about someone in the church, this must ALWAYS be referred outside the church for advice about how to proceed. Contact the Diocesan Children's Worker, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer or the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser.

### **People to Contact**

We have appointed a Safeguarding Co-ordinator to take responsibility for supervising our Safeguarding Policy.

This person is: Cheryl Elmer

Telephone: 01487 832780

Email: cheryll.e@btinternet.com

## **ALL SAINTS PARISH CHURCH SAWTRY Safeguarding guidelines - Good Practice**

1. You should avoid wherever possible being left alone with a child, unless others nearby can easily observe you.
2. A child should not be given a lift in a car without another adult present.
3. Two leaders should be in attendance at all sessions. Should a leader fail to turn up, you should contact a Churchwarden immediately. Ask the parent to wait with the child until the situation has been rectified.
4. The standard ratio for Discoverers is 1 adult to 8 children, with a minimum of two adults present at all times. For the choir two adults should be present.
5. Physical contact is socially acceptable in a public situation; however it should not take place when an adult and child are not easily seen by others. It is important to respect privacy of individuals and leaders should avoid playing rough games or making provocative comments even in fun. Physical punishment i.e. smacking must never be used for correction of bad behaviour.
6. A register is to be maintained along with the personal details i.e. telephone number, address and parent or carer's name and any health problems.
7. Consent forms must be completed for all children and young people other than one off visits. Ensure a contact telephone number is obtained for all occasional and one off visitors.
8. All activities should be reviewed and whenever necessary the correct precautions taken to ensure the children are safe at all times i.e. if using candles please have a damp towel available to extinguish risk of fire.
9. If an emergency occurs at the Church, it is to be vacated immediately, and those present should go to the Rectory. One leader should ensure all children and adults are accounted for by checking the register. The other leader should then obtain appropriate help.
10. First aid, in the event of a minor cut, etc, first aid equipment is available in Church. All accidents are to be reported to Alison Scott (or the leader in charge) and entered in the Accident Book as soon as possible.
11. If a disclosure is made to an adult or abuse suspected (mental, physical or sexual) please report the matter immediately to our Child Protection Officer- Cheryll Elmer or the Rector.

**These guidelines are to protect the children and the adults.  
A copy of the full Diocesan Guidelines can be found in the Vestry.**

**Updated .....**

**January 2015**

## **Safeguarding Statement for Children and Vulnerable Adults**

The parish of All Saints' Sawtry is committed to safeguarding all those who attend the worship and other activities that we offer. We follow the House of Bishops' Policy, 'Protecting All God's Children' (2010), and the Diocese of Ely Policy and Procedures (2012). We seek to create a culture where everyone is included, respected, listened to, and taken seriously. We accept the prime duty of care for children and vulnerable adults, and have appointed a safeguarding co-ordinator to ensure that what we do is informed by up-to-date policies and procedures from local and national authorities.

Our safeguarding co-ordinator is: Cheryl Elmer

And she can be contacted on: 01487 832780 or Email: [cheryll.e@btinternet.com](mailto:cheryll.e@btinternet.com)

We follow recommended safeguarding practice in recruiting, training and supporting our ordained and lay ministers and our volunteers. Recruitment includes Disclosure and Barring Service checks for those working regularly or substantially with children and/or vulnerable adults. Health and Safety policies are in place and we have provided adequate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish. All those working on behalf of the parish have agreed to comply with the safeguarding policy and with the good practice guidelines for their work.

We respond without delay to any complaint that a child or vulnerable adult in our care may have been harmed by the behaviour of an employee or volunteer working on behalf of the church. We always seek advice on such matters from outside this church, and we will co-operate with statutory agencies during any enquiries they need to make into allegations against a member of the church community. During those enquiries we will do our best to ensure that those making an allegation, and those against whom an allegation is made, are supported appropriately.

We seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to any child or adult whose life has been affected by abuse, whether the abuse was recent or long ago. Where there is a current risk to vulnerable people that has not yet been brought to light, we support the person who has suffered abuse in taking information to the appropriate agencies.

This church wishes to welcome and support all members of its community. Those who have a history of offences against children or vulnerable adults, and/or who may pose a risk to them are offered a supportive agreement to help them take part in church life; they are supported pastorally, and boundaries are set to protect those who might be vulnerable within the church. Confidential safeguarding agreements are the responsibility of the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and the incumbent, who work together.

We regularly review and update our safeguarding policy, and we welcome comments from those using our services on how we could improve our awareness and safeguarding practices.

The next review of the policy is due: January 2016