

The Bridges Group of Parishes: Safeguarding – Code of Safer Working Practice

Purpose of this Code of Safer Working Practice:

To ensure the effective implementation of the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy "Promoting a Safer Church" [October 2018]

Safeguarding Policy of the Church of England

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the safeguarding of children, both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principle first enshrined in the Children Act 1989: the welfare of the child should be paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and by supporting parents in the care of their children. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult or someone under the age of eighteen in a position of trust and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary. It is also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the Church learn lessons from the past. ["Protecting All God's Children" 2010]

As the local Church, each PCC will:

- Hold a register of every child involved with an activity when parents/carers are not present. This should include relevant information and consent forms, medical details and emergency contact name and telephone number
- Consider appropriate arrangements for the collection of children after meetings when parents/carers are not present
- Ensure adequate, appropriate supervision is available for regular meetings, outings or special events, including the transporting of children and young people when parents/carers are not present (See Appendix C for recommended staffing levels) & that written permission has been given.
- Have a first aid kit available on premises used by children
- An accident and incident logbook must be available and all accidents recorded
- Ensure all records are kept securely and confidential in line with legislation on Data Protection
- Be advised of the arrangements for any activities being held offsite
- Review this Code of Conduct annually; checking that all procedures including the DBS process and checks are up to date and making sure that those working with children, young people or in a position of trust have attended the training required
- Display the Childline and Family Lives telephone numbers on the noticeboard
- Make a copy of this Code of Safer Working Practice available on request

This Code of Safer Working Practice will be achieved through the provision of full support to everyone working with children and young people within the church, maintaining links with the local school, supporting parents as part of the ministry of baptism, giving young people a role in the church, working with non-church youth organisations in the area, attempting to connect the Christian faith with young people who do not come to church, and providing a budget for work with children and young people.

This Code of Safer Working Practice was reviewed & approved at the PCC meeting on

Signed: PCC Chair:

Incumbent:

Church Warden:

Parish Safeguarding Officer:

Good practice for adults working with children and young people

ALWAYS:

- Remember that you are seen as being in a position of trust and a role model for children and young people within the church and therefore should be mindful of your behaviour at all times
- Be aware of each individual's medical, dietary, educational needs and disabilities
- Maintain a safe environment, including the completion of a health & safety risk assessment
- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful
- Aim to work within sight of another adult
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet
- Organize toilet breaks for young children
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around
- Obtain written parental consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed before they are taken
- Obtain parental permission to have email addresses and mobile phone numbers for members of your group
- Be alert to the presence of strangers
- Challenge a fellow worker if you feel that their behaviour towards others is inappropriate
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult or the behaviour of another worker to your group leader and/or the Parish Safeguarding Officer

DO NOT at any time:

- Initiate physical contact - any necessary contact (e.g. for comfort) should be initiated by the child
- Invade a child's privacy while washing or toileting
- Play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- Use any form of physical punishment
- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child even in fun
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying
- Show favouritism to any one child or group
- Allow an individual to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature
- Use social media or phones to form inappropriate relationships or circulate inappropriate comments
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own
- Smoke tobacco in the presence of children
- Drink alcohol when responsible for young people
- Share sleeping accommodation with children
- Invite a child to your home alone
- Arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organized group occasions
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person
- Allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people or vulnerable adults

Guidance for responding to anyone who makes an allegation of abuse

Do

- Listen
- Take what is said seriously
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no')
- Remain calm
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding
- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your activity leader/ Parish Safeguarding Officer/ DSA and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where
- Check out what the person hopes to result from the disclosure
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next

Do Not

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information)
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Investigate
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made
- Do a physical or medical examination

Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or the statutory authorities
- Record the date, time, place, words used and how they appeared to you. Record the actual words used, including any swear words or slang
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions

Report

- If there is immediate danger to a child or adult contact the police
- Otherwise report to your activity leader/Parish Safeguarding Officer/incumbent immediately
- Within 24 hours the PSO/incumbent reports the concerns to the DSA
- The DSA will advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies within 24 hours
- If there is any doubt seek advice from social services or the police

Recommended staffing levels

The recommended minimum staffing levels for children's groups are given below. More help may be required if children have special needs, are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.

0 – 2 yrs	1 adult for every 3 children	1 : 3
2 – 3 yrs	1 adult for every 4 children	1 : 4
4 – 8 yrs	1 adult for every 6 children	1 : 6
9-12 yrs	1 adult for every 8 children	1 : 8
Over 12 yrs	1 adult for every 10 children	1 : 10

- Each group should have at least two adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.
- If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.
- Young people (under 18 years) who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding