

Safeguarding Policy

St Nicholas Church, Wickham

The parish of St Nicholas, Wickham takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm, and has produced the following safeguarding policy and underpinning procedures in order to set out the standards we wish to uphold.

This policy applies to all church officers and is informed by and supports the House of Bishops' and Diocesan policy and practice guidance. The term 'parish' is used to denote the PCC and Incumbent who together are responsible for ensuring the safety and protection of all vulnerable groups involved with the church. It is also the responsibility of all church officers to assist the PCC in this endeavour.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.
- All children and adults with vulnerabilities, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- Partnership working is essential to good safeguarding practice.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to without delay.
- All church officers have a responsibility to report concerns to their Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).
- Church officers must receive support and training to be aware of and understand best practice, and how to manage any welfare or safeguarding issues that may arise.

1. Promoting a safer environment and culture

We will ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to safeguard vulnerable groups in order that they can participate fully in any pastoral, social and other PCC endorsed or approved activities and events, safe from harm and abuse.

The following activities and events have been identified as those which are associated with vulnerable groups and run in the name of the church:

- *All Clergy, Ordinands and Readers (administered by the Bishop's Office)*
- *Safeguarding Representative*
- *Churchwardens*
- *All members of the PCC*
- *Verger*
- *Those licensed to administer Home Communion*
- *Pastoral Visitors*
- *Parish Administrator*
- *Children and Youth Ministry*
- *Ducklings Toddler Group*
- *Musical Director (if young people or adults who may be at risk of harm attend)*
- *Bell Tower Captain (if young people or adults who may be at risk of harm attend)*
- *Lunch Group Leaders*
- *Men's Breakfast*
- *Care Home Visits organiser*
- *Drivers organised by Church led Activity Leaders*
- *Mother's Union Leader*

For these activities and events we will:

- Designate a Group Leader
- Ensure an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to children, taking into account the nature of the activity, the venue and the age, gender and needs of participants.
- Ensure adults do not work alone with children and young people

- Obtain parental/guardian consent for attendance at groups and trips, use of images and transporting children in private cars
- Ensure unaccompanied children are taken care of by a suitably appointed adult and endeavour to establish contact with the parent or carers to gain their consent to their child's attendance
- Ensure no child or young person is invited into the home of a church officer unless the reason for this has been approved and agreed with parents and the PCC.
- Ensure pastoral carers do not misuse or abuse the trust that is bestowed upon them
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out before the activity/event takes place, and these are reviewed regularly
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC
- Ensure that all activities and events which are not run directly by the church but which take place in church buildings or grounds comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance

2. Safer Recruitment

We will select, vet and train all church officers working or volunteering with vulnerable groups in accordance with the House of Bishop's and Diocesan safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

We will:

- Ensure we have clear role descriptions and/or person specifications for all posts working or volunteering with children and/or adults
- Ensure all church workers and volunteers with children and adults complete and sign an application form and confidential declaration before appointment
- Ensure we take up written references and carefully check the applicant's right to work in the UK before appointment
- Seek an enhanced DBS check for anyone eligible before appointment
- Ensure that all applicants with children and adults are interviewed
- Offer support and training after appointment

- Provide a written behaviour code for all workers with children and/or adults
- Ensure all church leaders and those who work with children and/or adults complete appropriate safeguarding training at least every three years.

3. Responding to safeguarding concerns

We will ensure that anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with legislation, statutory and national safeguarding policy and procedures.

We will:

- Appoint at least one lay Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) for children and adults
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to cover if the PSO is not available
- Develop a written procedure for dealing with abuse and allegations and make this available to all church officers
- Clearly display contact details of the PSO and the Diocesan Safeguarding team, as well as local and national services available to get help with safeguarding issues
- Store personal information and safeguarding records securely and ensure information needed in an emergency is readily available
- Ensure all church officers are aware of their responsibilities in regard to the recording, storage and sharing of information

4. Support for Victims and Survivors

We will ensure that those who have suffered abuse will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and taken seriously.

5. Known Offenders

Separate policy to be adhered to.

6. Data Protection and Retention

Separate policy to be adhered to.

7. Managing risk

When it is known that a member of the church community may pose a risk to children and/or adults, we will consult without delay with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser so that a safe course of action in accordance with national and local safeguarding policy and procedures is followed, in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies.

8. Lone Working Policy

Lone Working Policy to be adhered to. Risk assessments to be provided in each instance:

Verger

Flowers

Administrator

9. Social Media and Mobile Phone

The Diocesan Social Media policy must be adhered to with local benefice links / accounts named once created. The named person will be a church officer. Procedures must always be followed for any safeguarding risks.

Monitoring and Review

This safeguarding policy and the following underpinning procedures will be available to all church officers, parents and participants

- *[Procedure for dealing with safeguarding concerns and allegations](#)*
- *[Health and Safety Policy](#)*
- *[E-Safety Policy](#)*
- *[Guidance for those who exercise pastoral care](#)*

This policy will be reviewed annually by the PCC and amended as appropriate.