

P.C.C. SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

In accordance with the House of Bishops' Policy Statements 'Promoting a Safer Church' (2017) and 'Protecting All God's Children' (2010) and the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy 'Promoting a Safer Diocese' (2018) our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The PCC of this Church agreed and adopted the above Policy at its meeting on Wednesday 19 July 2019

We have appointed **Clare Almond** as our Church Safeguarding Officer who can be contacted on 020 7370 3418 and by email to clarealmond1@live.com

Other sources of advice, information and support are:

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers: 020 7932 1224

safeguarding@london.anglican.org

Thirtyone:Eight's 24-hour helpline: 0303 003 1111

Family Lives: 0808 800 222

Childline: 0800 1111

Copies of the Parish's Safeguarding Children and Young People's policy and Safeguarding Adults at Risk policy are held by the **P.C.C. Secretary, Mark Hodgkin**. The PCC shall review this policy annually. The next review will take place at the first PCC meeting following the APCM to be held on 26 April 2020

Signed:

Priest-in-Charge

Churchwarden

Churchwarden

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK

As a parish we are committed to facilitating an environment in which children, young people and adults at risk are able to worship and grow in Christ safely. Abuse and maltreatment of any form is entirely against our Christian teachings. In respecting the dignity and value of every person we are committed to:

- The care, nurture of and respectful pastoral ministry with all children and all adults
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are at risk
- Establishing safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment and a culture of 'informed vigilance' and action towards safeguarding all

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The principles below will guide all elements of safeguarding activity delivered by those at all levels within the parish:

- Pastoral care which is respectful and informed
- Timely safeguarding action – advice to be sought / action to be taken within 24 hours
- The involvement of others on a need to know basis only
- The early identification and management of actual or potential risks
- The discharging of duties to the highest level of Christian behaviour
- The active commitment of all in promoting and keeping our community safe

CODE OF SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

This code is provided by the Diocese of London Safeguarding team to provide a framework for safe practice in parishes. As such it will assist those working with children and adults at risk to do so safely and responsibly enabling each to monitor their own standards of integrity and good practice.

You should:

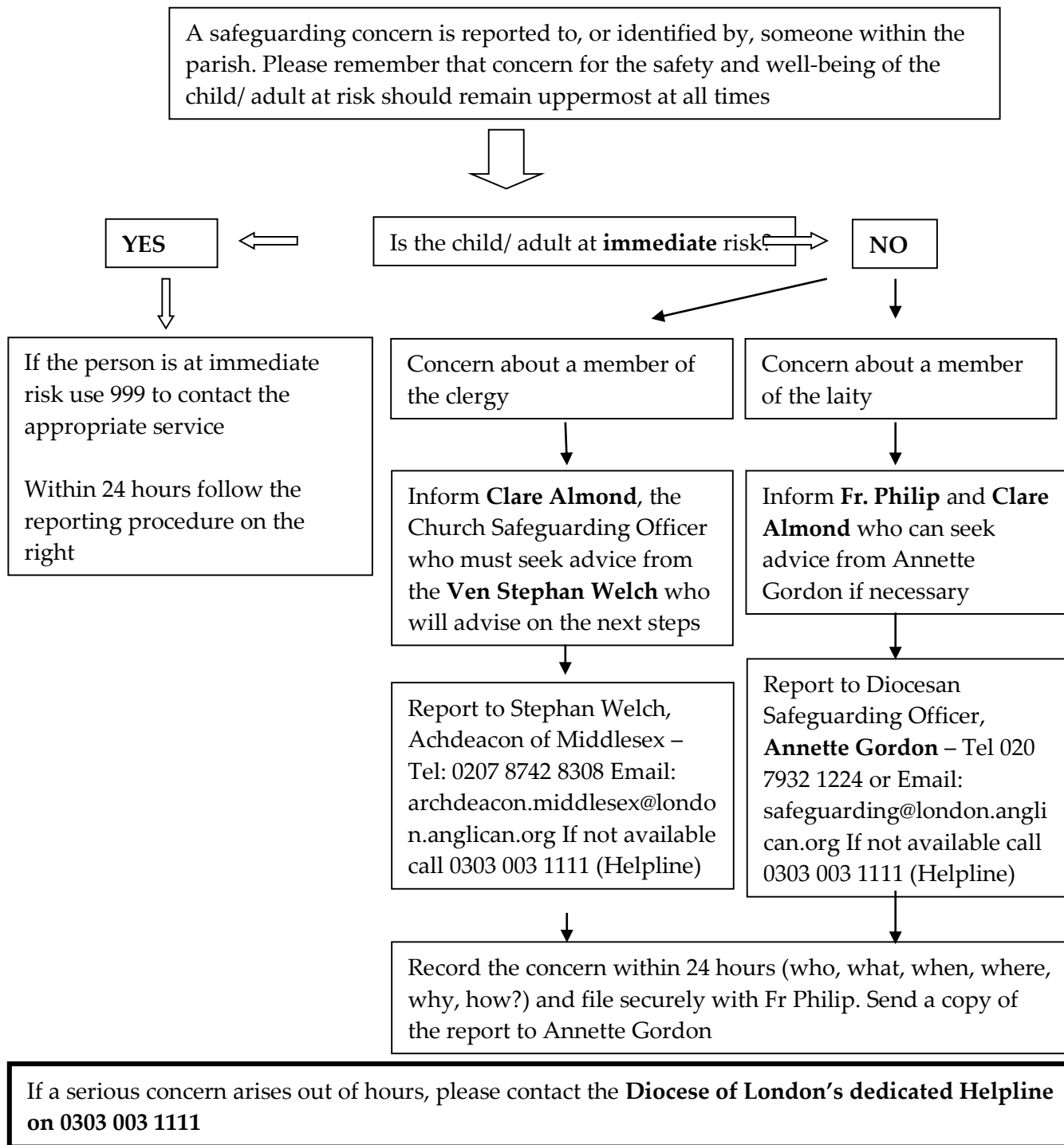
- Treat all children, young people and adults with respect and dignity, keeping your own language, attitude and body language respectful
- Actively communicate with children, young people and adults at risk and involve them in planning and running activities where possible
- Avoid being alone with a child and always aim to work within sight of another adult and keep others aware of your actions
- Develop a culture where workers, children and adults at risk feel comfortable to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviour in each other
- Make it plain who someone can speak to about a personal concern, and be proactive in addressing concerns and allegations
- Never use illicit drugs or alcohol when responsible for a child or adult at risk
- Keep physical contact specific to the needs of the activity and always seek permission first
- Obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed
- Never use rough play, sexually provocative words and games or any forms of physical punishment
- Never scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult or allow others to do so
- Avoid showing favouritism to any one child, adult or group or doing anything to reinforce their infatuations towards you
- Never give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own or allow unknown adults access to children
- Never share sleeping accommodation with children or invite them to your home alone
- Always operate within the Diocesan principles, procedures and guidelines, clarifying these when unsure.

The above set clear expectations of behaviour and codes of practice which serve to reduce the incidence of positions of trusts being abused or misused. More detailed guidance on safe working practices such as when to gain consent, working with and transporting children, can be found in the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan website.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

It is imperative that any concerns about children, young people and adults at risk are diligently and promptly responded to according to our procedures, recognising the sensitivity it may hold for those involved. Where there is a concern, this should be reported to the appropriate person or advice sought within 24 hours.

This flow chart shows the process to follow when a safeguarding concern is reported or identified, and from whom assistance should be should:



The 'Safeguarding' section of the Diocese of London website contains a wealth of guidance and information on safeguarding procedures. It covers guidelines for individual workers and group leaders also guidelines for good practice for church-sponsored activities for children and young people. The appendix section of this policy contains definitions and indicators of abuse against children, young people and vulnerable adults, and this forms an invaluable framework in determining what constitutes abuse.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS OR DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

If someone tells you about mistreatment or abuse or you have concerns about a child or adult at risk, your role is to respond sensitively and provide support. Listen carefully to what the person is telling you and if appropriate, discuss what the adult at risk wants to do about the situation. Consult with the Parish Safeguarding Officer in the first instance if the person is not in any immediate risk or in need of emergency assistance (this should be within 24 hours).

If there is any concern about an immediate risk to a child or adult at risk, or they need treatment or specialist help for injuries or their situation, you should contact the police, ambulance or social services directly. You should liaise with the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible to inform him / her about the situation and any action you have taken (this must take place within 24 hours).

Do:

- stay calm – the person concerned is likely to be anxious and in need of reassuring
- ensure that the person is safe from immediate risk
- listen positively to what they are saying and take it seriously. Try not to interrupt
- accept what is being said (this is not the same as deciding whether the allegation is true or not – others will address this later)
- avoid leading
- be aware of interpreting what the person is saying, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate or English is not their first language. Try to record what the vulnerable person actually says or shows you, in their own words or actions. If you do not understand fully, do not press the person to explain in detail if you believe the situation may be serious and warrant further intervention, especially by the police or social services. As long as you have a basic idea of what has happened, you can refer the matter to the appropriate person or authority

Do Not:

- press the person for more details; further details can be sought later by others
- stop someone who is freely recalling significant events; (for example, don't say 'Hold on we'll come back to that later,' as they may not tell you again)
- be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- do not promise to keep secrets; you cannot keep this kind of information confidential
- Contact or inform the alleged perpetrator or abuser about the disclosure or any intended action
- pass on the information to anyone other than those with a legitimate 'need to know,' such as the Church Safeguarding Officer or the Parish Priest

Remember:

- you must not attempt to deal with the problem alone
- the primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to share the information and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously – this should be done within 24 hours
- under no circumstances should anything be done that might be construed as an investigation of the allegation, as action of this nature may contaminate evidence should a formal investigation by either the police or local authority be instigated
- in the first instance the allegation or concern should be reported to the Church Safeguarding Officer and / or incumbent. If necessary he / she will liaise with statutory services
- failure to observe these guidelines may leave a vulnerable child or adult unprotected against further abuse

Record keeping

At the first opportunity (but always within 24 hours) make a note of anything that has been said to you by a child, young person or adult at risk or any other person in connection with any mistreatment or abuse. The use of diagrams or sketches is often really useful in trying to accurately record an injury, a situation or place etc. Date and sign your notes and keep them safe.

You should aim to:

- note what the people actually said, using their own words and phrases wherever possible
- describe the circumstances in which the disclosure or concern came about.
- note the setting and anyone else who was there at the time.
- separate out factual information from your own opinions. It is acceptable to record opinion but you must make it clear that is what it is.

Church workers should consider keeping a daily record of pastoral encounters to include: date, time, place, purpose and actions to be taken. Suspicion of abuse or mistreatment should be recorded and responded to in line with the Diocese of London Safeguarding Policy.

- any record should be factual and avoid rumour or opinion.
- records concerned with abuse should be kept indefinitely (at least 50 years).

The publishing, sharing or keeping of personal data or images should follow the appropriate legislation and policy.

SUSPECTED OR KNOWN ABUSERS

Research from the Lucy Faithful Foundation has indicated that a higher proportion of convicted offenders against children may be found in church congregations than in the population generally. It is therefore probable that congregations will have people who have abused children among their worshippers, some of whom will be known. Not all will have committed sexual offences; some will have been guilty of neglect, physical or emotional abuse. They may still present a risk to children. The church's duty to minister to all imposes a particular responsibility to such people. However, this must not compromise the safety of children.

The term 'suspected abuser' is used here to refer to those who have been the subject of allegations which have not been formally substantiated but which appear to be reasonably well founded. The term 'offender' applies only to those who have a conviction or who have accepted a caution, reprimand or warning for a criminal offence. Note that acceptance of a caution is an admission of the offence and is, therefore, equivalent to a conviction.

For the purpose of work with children or adults at risk, no offence is considered spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. It is the policy of the Church of England that all people with positive criminal records checks should undergo a risk assessment from suitably qualified persons. The nature of the assessment should be proportionate to their role and the matters disclosed. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team should always be involved and will in certain cases commission a formal risk assessment. In the case of complex or borderline cases, these may be referred to a diocesan case management group. Old, minor and unrelated offences will not prohibit otherwise suitable people from work with children.

As well as people with convictions against children there are others whose position in a congregation may need to be carefully and sensitively considered to decide whether they pose a risk to children. This would include people convicted of violent or sexual offences against adults, including: domestic violence; people involved in drug or alcohol addiction; adults with a mental disorder or special needs which might, for any reason, result in erratic behaviour. It would also include those who do not have convictions or cautions but where there are sound reasons for considering that they might present a risk to children. A protocol for 'Managing Offenders' will be completed for those with cautions or convictions. A 'Covenant of Care' agreement will be completed with those who may potentially present a risk to children / adults at risk even where they have not been cautioned or convicted of an offence.

APPOINTING WORKERS – SAFER RECRUITMENT

When the P.C.C. comes to recruit people to positions within the parish (including voluntary posts) we will ensure that 'Safer Recruitment' practices are followed, especially for those working with children, young

people and vulnerable adults, using the guidelines in the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and the Diocesan Confidential Declaration form.

EXTERNAL GROUPS HIRING THE CHURCH HALL

The duty of care for children, young people and vulnerable adults is a requirement not just for St. Stephen's own groups and organisations, but is also expected by the P.C.C. of those hiring our Church Hall.

Any group hiring our premises will be asked to read a copy of this safeguarding policy, and to sign that they have read it and will fully abide by it as part of the hire agreement.

REVIEWING THIS POLICY

This Safeguarding Policy will be review annually, and will next be reviewed 6/20

APPENDIX – SAFEGUARDING OFFICER – ROLE DESCRIPTION

The Church Safeguarding Officer(s) will oversee the implementation of the Diocesan Safeguarding policy, along with its associated policies, procedures and guidelines in their parish. They will ensure that all allegations or suspicions of abuse are taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner.

Main responsibilities

- Be a source of support, advice and information on all matters of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in the parish.
- Be the first point of contact for children, vulnerable adults and other members of the congregation regarding suspicions of abuse and other safeguarding concerns.
- Respond to all safeguarding concerns in line with the Diocese Safeguarding Policy, reporting these concerns to the Diocese Safeguarding Team and liaising with the NSPCC Helpline and the Local Authority as needed.
- Keep the parish priest informed of all concerns, responses and activities relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Raise the profile of safeguarding in the parish, ensuring that it remains a high priority on the PCC's agenda and report on any issues or concerns with the implementation of the safeguarding policy.
- Ensure that the requirements for CRB disclosures are met for the appropriate roles.

Those suitable for the role of Church Safeguarding Officer

The person appointed to this role should be a regular member of the church who can demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults of all cultural backgrounds and abilities and have a good awareness of Diocesan policies and procedures, statutory legislation and guidance. Some training in safeguarding and child protection is needed when accepting the role. Where this cannot be evidenced it should take place within 3 months of being appointed and be updated at least every three years.