

The Parish of All Saints Church Gosforth
Towards a Safer Church: Creating a Safe Space



PARISH SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

2024 edition

Further guidance can be found on the Diocesan website:

www.newcastle.anglican.org/safeguarding

or

The Church of England website www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding

The Church takes the safety of everyone very seriously and expects that we will all work within the Church Safeguarding policy. In particular, the Church expects anyone who becomes aware of a safeguarding risk or of abuse, to immediately raise this with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Incumbent or a member of the Parish Safeguarding Team

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Kath Davies

kathdavies2001@yahoo.com

07880 618911

Incumbent

Rev Canon Andrew Shipton

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0191 2845540

Domestic Abuse Advisor

Alison Charlewood

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All of the information in this set of guidelines is taken directly from the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook.

All Saints Gosforth



Policies and Procedures on Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- *To protect children, vulnerable young people and adults who access our services from harm. This includes the children of adults who access our activities.*
- *To provide our staff and volunteers, (as well as children, young people and vulnerable adults) with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and protection.*

Introduction

At All Saints Church, part of the Diocese of Newcastle, we are committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults and creating protective and supportive environments where all people, and especially those who may be vulnerable, are able to worship and pursue their faith journey in safety.

We follow the national legal and procedural framework for safeguarding children and adults, and Church of England policy and practice, and have fully adopted The Church of England's Safeguarding Policy for children, young people and adults.

NB Further information from our Diocese about safeguarding can be found on the relevant part of the Diocesan website. We hope that if you or anyone you know has been affected by abuse within the Church, we will be able to give you the confidence to speak out.

All Saints is committed to putting in place safeguards and measures to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place within the church and that all those involved will be treated with dignity and respect.

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any adult or child who accesses church or any of its functions.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers who act on behalf of All Saints and who come directly into contact with vulnerable adults and children.

Every individual has a responsibility to inform the designated person (the Parish Safeguarding Officer) in respect of safeguarding, or the incumbent of concerns relating to safeguarding.

The designated person (PSO) with the incumbent, must decide if the concerns should be communicated to other relevant organisations.

Policy Statement

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy 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.
- Ensuring a zero tolerance approach to abuse and neglect within the church.
- Caring pastorally and with dignity for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally and with dignity for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Ensuring the safety and well-being of people who do not have the capacity to decide how they want to respond to abuse that they are experiencing
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

In order to implement the Policy, All Saints will work to:

- Create a safe and caring place for all by promoting good practice and work in a way that can prevent harm, abuse and coercion occurring.
- Ensure that any allegations, disclosures of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the person experiencing abuse is supported.
- Implement processes which enable it to meet the requirements of the Multi-agency Safeguarding Adults policy and Child Protection Procedures
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that a Health and Safety Policy, procedures and Risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to preventing abuse and welfare of vulnerable adults and children

Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

NB **Each person** who works within this church community **will agree** to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This PCC appoints **Kath Davies** as the Parish Safeguarding Officer (**PSO**)

Incumbent: Revd Canon Andrew Shipton

Church Wardens: Nick Glover & Dana Corso

Date of APCM: 28th April 2024

Date this policy is to be reviewed annually and reaffirmed at the APCM:

Code of Conduct to be followed by all those undertaking volunteer roles at All Saints Church approved by the PCC 12th July 2021.

This code sets out the required expectations and commitment of all committee members and all who fulfil roles for All Saints Church. We seek to live out 'thoughtful, caring faith'.

As individuals, all agree to fulfil their roles and responsibilities whilst:

1. Developing /sharing /living the ethos and values of All Saints, always mindful of the responsibility to maintain and develop the mission and ministry and reputation of our church.
2. Adhering to All Saints policies
3. Working collectively
4. Considering how decisions affect All Saints
5. Standing by decisions
6. Expressing views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications both in and outside of meetings. Where decisions/actions are in conflict, to recognise the 7 Principles of Public Life [Ref 1](#)
7. Accepting that all have no legal authority to act individually, except when the PCC has given delegated authority to do so.
8. Supporting the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
9. Being prepared to answer queries from others in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, acknowledging the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
10. Observing complete confidentiality and maintaining confidentiality even after leaving the role.

As a PCC, we value the voices of all; evidence; expertise and our independence. We demonstrate trust, wisdom, kindness, justice, service, courage and optimism.

[Ref 1](#) **The Seven Principles of Public Life** – (originally published by the Nolan Committee)

Selflessness/Integrity/Objectivity/Accountability/Openness/Honesty/Leadership

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful

Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Code of Safer Working Practice - In the context of these guidelines a Church Officer is anyone volunteering in any capacity.

All those volunteering in roles within and on behalf of this parish.

Must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice, and body language is respectful.
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to about a personal concern.
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Sign and date the record.
- Obtain written consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored
- Administer any First Aid with others around.

In addition, for children and young people you must:

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around. Ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and its nature before the activity takes place

Must not:

- Invade an individual's privacy whilst washing and toileting.
- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group.
- Allow an individual to involve you in excessive attention seeking.
- Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults that may be vulnerable.
- Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person.
- Allow strangers to give children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable in. Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

In addition, for children and young people, you must not:

- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity).
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people.
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include adult family members/carers) outside organised group occasions

Acceptable Touch

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate.

The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

Always ask permission.

- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the church officer's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child or the adult, not the church officer.
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).

In addition:

- You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Ensure that church officers at all levels must take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be encouraged to challenge one another if necessary.

Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.

Accidents

Please record all accidents in the accident book which is kept next to the first aid kit on the shelf near the clergy vestry and inform a churchwarden.

What to do if you are told about or suspect abuse

It can take a great deal of courage for someone to talk to another adult about their abuse, because they are 'telling on' someone who is more powerful. People learn to be very good at covering up the abuse and are able to give plausible explanations for what has happened.

If a child talks to you about abuse it is because the child feels able to trust you. The child has spoken to you about an issue that is important. Children have confidence that adults can change things. If a child discloses abuse, remember that this may be the beginning of a legal process, as well as of a process of recovery for the child. Legal action against a perpetrator can be seriously damaged by any suggestion that the child has been led in any way

It is important to reassure a child or adult that it is right to talk about it, and that you will take everything they say seriously.

However, you cannot promise confidentiality.

The following guidance should be followed as far as possible:

Respond

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 Kath Davies (the Parish Safeguarding Officer) the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser 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.

Helpful things to say

- "Thank you for telling me this"
- "I will have to share this with someone else who can help"
- "You needn't tell me any more about it, I've understood what you're telling me"
- "I am glad you have told me, it is not your fault, I will help you"

Concluding the conversation

- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing to tell you
- You are taking what has been said very seriously
- You will tell someone who can help, straight away
- They are to try not to worry or feel they've done anything wrong

It is helpful to note if the person has told anyone else. The point of the conversation is to establish the barest account of the allegation. You do not have to believe it or disbelieve it, just note it accurately, and then refer the case onwards correctly.

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.

Quick Guide to Responding Promptly to Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations.

Concern / Allegation
 You suspect or witness abuse, or someone discloses information about a safeguarding concern or allegation

Emergency – Immediate
 If a child or an adult is in immediate danger or requires medical attention, call the Police and / or Social Services immediately on 999

Non-Emergency – within 24 hours
 Record and report to the Vicar or Curate or activity Leader. Agree who will inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DAS)

Record and report all information to the Vicar or Curate

Record and discuss with the DSA within 24 hours. She will provide advice and guidance.

No longer have concerns

Still have concerns about a child or adult

Still have concerns about a Church Officer

Record and inform Vicar or Curate of no further action / church support offered

Agree who will refer to child / adult Social Care and / or Police

Ongoing liaison with statutory agency

DSA convenes a core group within 48 hours

Refer to child / adult Social Care or Police within 24 hours

Share information and follow advice of child / adult Social Care and / or Police. Keep DSA informed

OUTCOME – may be one of the following

No further action. Disciplinary procedures.	Child / adult protection conference. Risk management	Criminal prosecution.
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Lone Working

- Who does this affect?
- Vicar, retired clergy, curate, reader
- Volunteers who come into church to sort out the flowers, cleaners, clean the brass or prepare the church for special services or events
- Church Guides
- Organists
- Those opening and locking the church
- Those carrying out maintenance in church
- Someone visiting people in their home
- Volunteers taking cash to the bank
- The Vicar working at home

Procedures When Working Alone

- People should not work on their own unless they have a means of communication and have notified a colleague of the details of the work being undertaken and agreed a procedure to ensure their safety is checked on. When working alone volunteers and staff should be alert to possible dangers and minimise them.
- Tell someone where they are working. Get them to check on you if you are not home when expected and if they can't contact you, to raise the alarm.
- Carry a mobile phone if possible.
- If working in church after dark and it is appropriate, lock the doors.
- Carry keys so they can leave by another exit if necessary.
- Report any defects to the building i.e. trip hazards etc. to the Churchwardens
- Report any incidents to the Churchwardens.
- Do not work at heights when alone; do not use power tools when alone, use safety guards on power tools – and do not use them when in the building alone.
- Choose different routes to the bank, when taking cash.
- Inform the Church Wardens or Vicar of any suspicious behaviour noted or any threats made.

Risk assessment

Use this to assess your environment, and your working practices, as well as for an instant assessment of a situation.

