



SAFE FROM HARM POLICY

Christ Church Downend, Diocese of Bristol

Published: February 2016
Review Date: February 2017

PRINCIPLES

A core principle of caring at Christ Church Downend is that we accept and value one another in recognition that Jesus inspires us to care for those who are in need, sometimes marginalised, vulnerable and, often ignored by others. 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 developing this safeguarding children and adults policy in line with the Diocese of Bristol policy we hope to reflect that we are all in need of protection from harm and that as a Christian community it is the responsibility of every one of us to protect those less able to protect themselves.

We are working within the Principles of the House of Bishop's Policy for Safeguarding (contained within '[Protecting All God's Children 2010](#)'), the requirements of Working Together 2015, and the Care Act 2014.

We understand that the safeguarding and protection of children, youth and adults at risk is everyone's responsibility, not just parents, Guardians and Carers. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults at risk. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and prepared to report concerns and take actions if necessary.

PURPOSE

The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with all adults, young people and children is a priority. This policy provides guidance for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults who are vulnerable - adults who are understood to be those who are 18 or over, who have needs for regular care and support for basic living needs such as personal care and communication, who are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and who as a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation. It is the duty of the church to protect children, young people and adults who are vulnerable from any harm of a Physical, Emotional, Sexual, Financial, Organisational, Discriminatory, Neglectful nature or as a result of Modern Slavery. Types of abuse are detailed in Appendix A.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

Those who work with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults, and those who supervise those workers who are eligible for a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check, will be required to undertake that check prior to starting in any role whether employed or voluntary within the Diocese of Bristol. In relation to those employed by the Parochial Church Council as 'Head of Ministry', the Incumbent has delegated responsibility from the PCC to ensure safer recruitment of those appointed to these roles. The Incumbent will follow the Safer Recruitment and Employment Contract Policies as agreed and implemented by the Parochial Church Council. The Parish Safeguarding Adviser is available to advise/support the process.

When there is a potential new volunteer/leader, the relevant Head of Ministry will need to send out a 'safeguarding recruitment pack' which consists of:

- Application form
- Job Description
- Confidential Declaration form

These need to be completed, signed and returned to the Head of Ministry. The prospective volunteer / leader must provide details of two referees. The Head of Ministry will need to send out a request for the two references. On receipt of these completed references, if all is satisfactory for the recruitment to the leadership/volunteer role, then the Head of Ministry can forward the person to the Parish Safeguarding Administrator to follow due DBS process. On receipt of DBS satisfactory clearance, the Head of Ministry and another church representative can hold an interview with the prospective leader/volunteer to complete the safer recruitment process. During this interview, the Head of Ministry is responsible for explaining in full the Job Description and Safeguarding responsibilities. A decision about the person's suitability to the role is made and communicated.

Confirm in Role: The person must only be confirmed in role and able to start once the whole process is complete. This includes receipt of satisfactory references and DBS disclosure certificate seen by the Head of Ministry and any risk assessment required having been completed. The PCC must then be informed that the person has been recruited and this information must be recorded in the PCC minutes. A review is held after a probation period, of no more than six months. Heads of Ministry have responsibility for the supervision and training of leaders/volunteers in their team. Equally, Heads of Ministry have responsibility for the completion of risk assessments for all activities. All confidential documentation is stored in locked cabinets in the Church Offices.

Decision not to appoint: Where a person is deemed not to be suitable for a role following receipt of references and a DBS disclosure having been obtained, the person must be informed in writing by the recruiter of the decision and the reasons for this.

Welfare of children and young people

1. At least two vetted people will be responsible for and attend each meeting of young people, preferably one of each sex for mixed groups, where possible. All groups will run in accordance with the Christ Church Safe from Harm procedures.
2. One to one work with young people is only permitted under the terms of the TaG Mentoring Scheme (Appendix B). This relates to young people age 14 + and is reviewed annually.
3. All staff and volunteers will be expected to adhere to the Information Technologies Policy: I want to communicate safely (Appendix C).
4. Confidential information will be stored securely.
5. Outside organisations booking church premises for activities involving unaccompanied children will be required to provide evidence of their own Safe from Harm Policy. Casual Users hiring Christ Church premises must be informed that they take responsibility to ensure the safety of any children and young people in their care.

STAFF AND HELPERS UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE:

Age of staff and volunteers: The minimum age for a worker is 16 as this is the minimum age for obtaining a DBS disclosure. It is essential that the level of maturity and experience of a person of 16 plus is assessed during the recruitment process. It would be usual to expect any person aged 16-18 to require supervision to work well and safely whilst they build their knowledge and experience (the same could be said of those 18+ entering a new role). Where people under 16 assist in activities as helpers they should be supervised by another named worker and never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care of children. They must not be included in staff/child ratios.

REPORTING CONCERNS

At Christ Church there is **no** tolerance of behaviours that place others at risk; these include behaviours such as hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, sexual intimidation/harassment/abuse, discriminatory comments and actions, bullying, financial misconduct.

At Christ Church, when there is a concern, suspicion or, evidence of harm of a child, young person and/or adult who is vulnerable, we will respond without delay by contacting the Parish Safeguarding Lead on 07753 233952 (between 9am-5pm). If not available, please contact the Bristol Diocese Safeguarding Adviser on 0117 9060132 (between 9am-5pm). During 'out of hours', please contact the local police on 101 or, Local Authority on 01454 866000 (children) or 01454 868007 (adults).

Christ Church acknowledges the difficulty for all parties involved when incidents happen within the church community and need to be dealt with in a formal manner. In these situations, the church will endeavour to support each person in realistic ways and within the limits of our expertise and gifting. Where appropriate, the church will refer individuals to those who are trained and/or have the expertise to meet specific needs.

In certain circumstances, Christ Church will aim to facilitate reconciliation. However, the church will be mindful not to put any individual at risk of harm during this process.

Christ Church cannot be responsible for incidents or concerns arising outside of church or church led activities, but will endeavour to provide appropriate advice and refer on to the relevant authorities to ensure the safeguarding of the whole Parish.

Christ Church does not investigate current allegations of abuse to a child, youth or vulnerable adult but refers on to the appropriate statutory authorities for multi-agency response.

If it comes to the attention of any member of Christ Church that a child has experienced abuse in the past, this information will be passed to the statutory authorities for their records and consideration.

If it comes to the attention of any member of Christ Church that an adult has experienced abuse in the past, the adult's wishes will be taken into account and the adult encouraged to report this information to the relevant authorities. If it is established that others may be harmed then this information will be forwarded to the relevant authorities by the Parish Safeguarding Lead (Safeguarding Records Practice Guidance).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

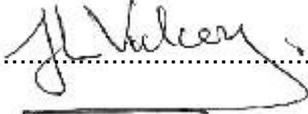
This Policy can be read in conjunction with the following appendices:

- APPENDIX A: Types of Abuse
- APPENDIX B: Youth Mentoring – TaG/Leaders’ Code of Conduct.
- APPENDIX C: Information technologies Policy: I want to communicate safely
- APPENDIX D: Domestic Violence and Abuse
- APPENDIX E: Definition of Spiritual Abuse

Please also refer, on a regular basis, for safeguarding information on the Bristol Diocese Website: <http://www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/>

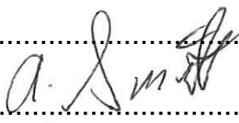
This Policy was adopted by Christ Church Downend at a Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting on:

Date: 17 February 2016

Signed (Incumbent Vicar): 

Print Name (Incumbent Vicar): _____ Revd Jonathan Vickery

Date: 17 February 2016

Signed (Church Warden): 

Print Name (Church Warden): Andy Smith.....

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis (next review February 2017)

APPENDIX A: TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse and/or exploitation can reveal itself in any of the following ways:

- **Spiritual harm** – not allowing access to worship, cutting off contacts from a church/Christian community, misuse of authority in the name of the church (see Appendix E for definition of Spiritual Abuse).
- **Physical harm** – can include hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, assault, wrong use of restraint, mishandling of medications.
- **Sexual harm** – can include sexual intimidation/harassment, use of social media for sexual exploitation, forced use of pornography, and any sexual act not consented to or not able to be understood.
- **Emotional harm** – such as the use of threats, harassment, persistent bullying aimed to undermine and shame, the use of social media to upset, harm and undermine confidence.
- **Neglect** – withholding essential provisions for physical, mental and social needs, ignoring needs, restricting access to support and friends.
- **Organisational abuse** – restricting residents' access to their property, money; rigid times for meals/drinks/bedtimes; dangerous and incompetent professional practice leaving residents at risk of significant harm; evidence of physical, sexual, emotional harm as a result of the direct actions of responsible adults.
- **Financial** – can include stealing, borrowing money and not repaying it back, forcing a decision about a will or consent, not passing on benefits or gifts, accessing bank accounts under false pretences.
- **Domestic violence and abuse** – see Appendix D for further information.
- **Discrimination/ Modern Slavery** on the basis of religion, race, colour, ability/disability, sensory difference, age, gender, class; discrimination of any kind.

Other groups who may be considered as 'vulnerable' include those who are homeless, those who are seeking 'asylum' in this country, those who are bereaved, those who have spent periods of time in prison and their families, those who are survivors of childhood abuse, those who are perpetrators of abuse.

APPENDIX B: YOUTH MENTORING

TaG (Training and Growth)

We are blessed at Christ Church with an ever growing, enthusiastic group of young people who are keen to learn, grow and participate in the life of God's Church. There are many ways in which we can encourage their growth in faith, and this scheme provides one very focussed way of supporting them on their journeys.

What is TaG?

TaG stands for Training and Growth and was initially developed in Salisbury Diocese by the senior youth worker at St Paul's Salisbury.

'TaG is an innovative way of growing real, independent, thinking disciples. It's about taking the young person from where they are to where they'd like to be, as together they work through the issues with their mentor, explore opportunities for growth, and pray and meet together. And even more essentially, it's a chance for them to do business with God, allowing Him to shape them to be more effective for Him.'

Christian mentoring is an intentional relationship where a more experienced believer seeks to be used by God to grow the mentee holistically through sharing their life experiences and resources with them.

TaG provides the structure to enable this to happen by asking the young person to consider their development under three headings of Personal, Spiritual and Abilities. Having considered these areas of their lives, mentees make themselves accountable to their mentors, who in turn seek to resource them appropriately.'

(from TaG Mentor's Manual)

How does it work?

Young people are linked up with a mentor who will help them to explore issues of faith and life in an accountable relationship. Typically they would meet once a month for around an hour, although more frequent meetings might be appropriate in some cases.

Potential mentors are asked to complete a simple profile form to enable the TaG co-ordinator to link suitable Mentors and mentees, in consultation with the wider youth team. In the initial phase mentors will be drawn from Christ Church's existing youth team and subsequently from the church body (PCC Meeting 19.11.13).

Using the TaG manual, the mentee will be encouraged to consider where they find themselves in terms of personal, spiritual and abilities, and the mentor will record these observations on the diary sheet. Following discussion, one or two specific areas will be highlighted under each heading, and plans set for how progress can be made. If appropriate the mentor will then pray with the mentee, and arrange their next meeting.

TaG generally operates in clearly defined phases eg a school term. A review should take place at the end of each phase, so that mentor and mentee can decide whether to continue for a further period.

Child Protection

A number of safeguards are put in place to ensure that mentoring relationships are transparent and accountable in line with this Safe from Harm policy and guidelines below.

1. All TaG mentors are required to supply referees, and have a DBS check prior to mentoring a young person
2. TaG mentors must read the Safe from Harm Policy and are expected to abide by our Safe from Harm Policy at all times when meeting with young people.
3. All prospective mentors must attend a TaG training session prior to commencing mentoring, and will be expected to keep records of their meeting with their mentee.
4. Mentors should be approved by the PCC and names recorded in PCC minutes.
5. Mentor/mentee relationships will be same gender.
6. All mentors will be provided with a copy of the Grove Booklet (author Jon Langford) 'Can we have a chat – working safely with young people one to one' and will have access to supervision from someone suitably qualified.
7. Meetings with young people should **always** take place in an appropriate room in the young person's home (but only if the mentee's parent/legal guardian is also in the house whilst mentoring sessions are taking place).
8. Parental permission will be required for any young person who wishes to sign up for the TaG programme. Once a mentor is allocated, parents will be informed as to who the mentor is and how often they will be meeting.
9. Mentors should seek advice at an early stage if the mentee speaks of anything which might suggest they are 'at risk'
10. Any concerns about aspects of the TaG mentoring scheme can be addressed to the TaG co-ordinator or the Parish Safeguarding Lead.

Paul Peterson
Last Updated 21 November 2013

Initially Approved by PCC on 20/1/11, and reviewed ongoing as part of SFH Policy

Youth Leaders' Code of Conduct

All those working with children and young people are acting in a position of trust. They may be seen as role models by those we work with and so it is important that they follow this code of conduct at all times.

General Points

1. The Christ Church, Downend policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People must always be followed.
2. Every leader must complete the interviewing process and hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
3. All young people must be registered on arrival for each club meeting and are not permitted to leave, prior to the end, without parent /guardian permission.
4. Club meetings with regular membership should have membership details recorded so that parents can be contacted in emergencies.
5. All young people should be listened to and treated with respect and dignity. Appropriate language and tone of voice should be used.
6. Leaders must convey Christ-like Bible based character, values and attitudes.
7. Every 'area' must be supervised and the outside cannot be used if there are an insufficient number of leaders available.
8. The car park is out-of-bounds when Church meetings are taking place and the car park is in use.
9. Where possible, there should be at least two leaders, or one leader and a volunteer, present during activities or events.
10. Leaders must try to avoid being in a room alone with a young person.
11. All adult visitors to The Youth Hub must be accompanied by a leader at all times.
12. All leaders must respect a young person's personal space and be aware that innocent touch may be inappropriate and may feel sinister to a young person who is being abused.
13. Physical touch must not be initiated or encouraged by leaders.

14. Leaders must not respond to excessive attention seeking, which is overtly physical or sexual. Such attention should be brought to the attention of the Youth Pastor.
15. Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, ridiculing or rejecting a young person, even in “fun” should not be done
16. Leaders must not control or discipline young people using physical means unless being restrained to avoid hurting themselves or others.
17. When providing transport every effort must be made to take siblings together and drop them off last. If a leader finds themselves with one young person in the car, that young person must not sit in the front seat alongside the leader/driver as this may make them feel vulnerable.
18. It is not acceptable for leaders to have a romantic, physical or sexual relationship with a young person with whom they have a relationship of trust.
19. Avoid favouritism and special friendships. Do not develop an exclusive relationship with a group member if you are a leader, however small the age gap.
20. Staff should ensure that their own camera phones are not used by young people and that photos of young people, where young people are recognisable, are not taken without express permission of parents/guardians.
21. If you discover or suspect that a child is suffering abuse, you **MUST** tell the Youth Pastor who will then contact the Designated Person. This may result in the involvement of the Police and Social Services. If a young person tells you that they are being abused you should tell them that you have to pass on that information and what else may happen.

Residentials

1. Do not invade the privacy of young people unnecessarily. Leaders are to knock before entering dormitory accommodation and except for emergencies are to enter the accommodation of young people of the same gender only.
2. There should be separate accommodation for the genders and for leaders.
3. Whenever possible, keep age groups together in dormitories/rooms/tents.
4. There must be same gender leaders as the young people attending.

5. Disclosures of abuse by a young person on site should be reported to the local police. If the disclosure is a current or past disclosure which has not taken place at the residential then it should be reported to the local services of the young person concerned.
6. Where minibuses are used it is expected that all drivers and leaders will adhere to the legal regulations and where appropriate, local authority regulations.

Using the Internet and Social Networking Sites

1. Always discourage young people from meeting up with anyone they have met on the Internet unless it is with their parents or youth leaders.
2. Youth Leaders have a responsibility to inform parents if their child attempts to add us as an organisation or any of our associated groups as a 'friend' when that child is known to be below the minimum age necessary to register on that site.
3. Youth Leaders are not to give out personal details on social networking sites.
4. Youth leaders should monitor any internet use by young people within the youth club to ensure appropriate use and content.
5. Permission from parents by the use of consent forms should be sought before gaining personal information (e.g. email addresses mobile numbers) about young people.
6. Permission from parents must be sought before posting photos of young people on social networking sites.
7. Youth leaders are not permitted to be Facebook friends with youth members under the age of 18. This is to ensure the safety of our youth members as well as to protect our youth leaders against any perceptions or claims of inappropriate behaviour, which can have a damaging effect on an individual both personally and professionally.
8. The youth group Facebook page should be a public profile (or 'Fan Page'). Public profiles allow Facebook users to 'Like' the page and become a page user, but they do not have a 'friend' function like profile pages do. Use is for notification of events, times, dates and links to Christian internet content.

Written and approved by the Youth Leadership team (May 2015)

APPENDIX C: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES POLICY I WANT TO COMMUNICATE SAFELY

The paper attached serves as an addendum to Christ Church Downend's Safe from Harm Policy and should be given to all new volunteers/workers who have contact with young people age 11-18.

ICT communication is not deemed appropriate with children under 11, where all written communication should be through their parents/carers.

Key Principles

- In developing our policies, we must seek to ensure that all children and young people are protected and that the integrity of our volunteers and workers is safeguarded. Volunteers are representing Christ in their roles as leaders and should relate to group members in a way that honours him.
- ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies*) have become the main means by which most (but not all) young people communicate with one another and are therefore a useful and legitimate tool for youth leaders/worship group leaders in communicating with group members.
- In order for us to use ICT's to communicate with young people (age 11+), in a positive and responsible manner, we must first obtain written parental agreement through the annual consent forms held by the youth co-ordinator. If a parent/carer request that their child is not communicated with by ICTs, this must be respected and an alternative found.
- Youth leaders are not permitted to be Facebook friends with youth members under the age of 18. This is to ensure our youth members' safety as well as to protect our youth leaders against any perceptions or claims of inappropriate behaviour, which can have a damaging effect on an individual both personally and professionally.
- The Youth Group Facebook page should be a public profile (or 'Fan Page'). Public profiles allow Facebook users to 'Like' the page and become a page user, but they do not have a 'friend' function like profile pages do. Use is for notification of events, times, dates and links to Christian internet content.
- Communication with young people through ICTs must be clear and unambiguous to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. In most cases communication through ICTs will be purely for information purposes (i.e times, venues and detail of group events).
- Extra care should be taken when communicating one to one with young people and copies of messages received and sent should be retained in case of need for future reference. Except in the case of a genuine emergency, no messages should be sent to young people by any form of ICT between the hours of 10pm and 7am.
- Workers and volunteers should ensure that they only take photographs of young people in accordance with the church's policy on photography e.g ensure that prior consent is obtained and all images are stored in line with Data Protection Act principles.
- When approved photos are used in brochures/programmes or on websites, full names of young people or any other personal information should not be displayed.

* Communication through ICTs for the purposes of this paper would include e-mails, texts, personal messenger, Facebook, twitter, digital cameras and storage, and any other electronic means of communication. (Approved by PCC February 2016).

APPENDIX D: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Domestic violence and abuse like all abuse can happen anywhere, in any cultural group, any age group, any social class, any religious community.

Domestic violence and abuse may occur within intimate relationships between partners, ex-partners, siblings, parent to child. It may not be a 'one – off' pattern. It is a recurring form of physical and emotionally violent behaviour where the perpetrator seeks to intimidate and control the other person. The majority of cases reported concern about men abusing women, however there is now a growing concern over the violence of some women towards men and other women, as well as the violence of one sibling to another. Research has shown that women are often hurt 30-40 times before reporting the abuse to anyone.

The Christian church has a responsibility to name domestic violence as unacceptable; there have been reports on occasions of Christian violence being justified by faulty theology. At times, in the belief that a vengeful God requires a husband to act in vengeful and judgmental ways, a man may adopt an authoritarian approach which includes punishing behaviours toward members of the family. The church is required to counteract such belief by, "holding fast to the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the decisive revelation of the divine character" (Responding to Domestic Abuse 2006 Church House Publishing). Jesus reveals the heart of God; a heart of compassion for those who are oppressed. Jesus showed respect for women and all people in a way that was unusual at the time of his earthly life. Church communities and leaders are called to apply a life giving model of servitude as that of Jesus, in all relationships including that of the marriage and family relationships.

It is important that Pastoral workers do not coerce survivors of abuse to forgive as this is a complex psychological process, which is best handled within the confidential counselling relationship with someone who is qualified and trained to enable the person on a pathway of healing.

As a church, we accept our need of advice and guidance from all agencies which have specialist knowledge in this area and, will not attempt to mediate between couples and within families without those trained for this purpose.

APPENDIX E: DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL ABUSE

The following are forms of spiritual abuse:

- Misuse of authority, for example, by dictating in exact form what a person should believe and how they should live their life, in every detail of their life.
- Extreme pastoral interference in personal issues including how someone may express their faith.
- Teaching that underlines forgiveness and healing without acknowledging the dilemmas of this for those who are the survivors of abuse.
- Teaching of healing that expresses physical wholeness in such a way that leaves those with a physical, learning or mental disability feeling discriminated against or in some way less spiritually whole.
- Teaching that promotes the superiority of one group over another, for example men over women or vice versa; one ethnicity over another etc.
- Making someone feel inferior in their journey of faith.
- Untrained and unhealthy use of deliverance ministry.
- Condescending behaviour patterns among leaders of church and life groups. An example of this might be to restrict the church role of a person on the basis of their physical/learning disability/age and/or mental health problems. Or, suggesting people do not participate in prayers, groups, meetings, because of their particular disability. A positive model of inclusion is to consider the needs of people and address these accordingly, for example ensuring appropriate mentor support for someone with a learning disability to encourage their involvement in the ministry of intercessions, or identifying specific gifting and encouragement to involve the person with a disability in that ministry etc.