

# **ST LUKE’S CHURCH KINGSTON UPON THAMES SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Parochial Parish Council (PCC) of this Church has adopted the following policy on Safeguarding Children. It is based on “A Safe Church”, the handbook containing comprehensive Policies, Procedures and Guidelines issued by the Diocese of Southwark in accordance with the national legal framework for safeguarding children.

## **DECLARATION OF INTENT**

As the people of St Luke’s Church we are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- are youth-friendly and child-friendly and nurture their positive development.
- enable children and young people to be active contributors to the church community.
- protect children and young people from actual or potential harm.
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Parish Safeguarding Officer**

The PCC will appoint a Parish Safeguarding Officer to whom concerns or allegations regarding children or young persons should be reported. The PCC will also appoint a deputy to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, to whom all such reports should be made in the absence of the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The role and job description of the Parish Safeguarding Officer are as set out in “A Safe Church”, Section 3.

Copies of this manual are held by the Parish Priest, and the Parish Safeguarding Officer and their deputy. It can also be viewed on the Parish Website.

### **Volunteers and paid employees**

All volunteers for activities involving children and young people should be assessed for their suitability. Section 5 of “A Safe Church” contains detailed advice on procedures to be followed regarding selection, recruitment and support of staff, both paid and voluntary.

All volunteers and paid employees, whether newly recruited or already in post, whose normal duties include regular contact with children under 18 years of age, will need an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure. These forms will be confidential to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, who will submit them to the Diocese for processing. A step-by-step guide to application for an Enhanced Disclosure can be found in "A Safe Church", Section 5. It is the duty of the Parish Safeguarding Officer to ensure this process is followed, and to keep confidential records of applications in a securely locked cabinet to which only they have access.

Paid employees will be provided with a job description and will be required to complete a period of probation.

Volunteers and paid employees will be given a copy of this Policy Statement and will be required to acquaint themselves with the contents of "A Safe Church". They will have access to supervision, support and, where appropriate, training.

The Safeguarding Officer should make and update annually a list of all paid staff and voluntary workers in the church who have regular, direct contact with children and ensure that recruitment procedures have been followed.

## **Activities with Children and Young People**

### Leadership

The following are some pointers towards good practice. The list is not comprehensive and should be read in conjunction with the relevant pages in Section 4 of "A Safe Church".

- Always have at least two leaders, no matter how small the group. Small groups with single leaders may meet in adjoining rooms with an open door between. If a child or young person is being interviewed alone, have another adult nearby.
- Try to ensure the leaders' genders reflect the group, i.e. endeavour to have at least one male leader if there are boys present, and at least one female leader if there are girls present.
- At least two leaders need to be present from before the first child arrives until after the last child leaves.
- No person under the age of 18 years should be left in charge of a group of children of any age.
- Young people aged 16 and 17 years may help with groups but should be supervised by an adult leader who will be responsible for good practice and that the safeguarding procedures are followed.
- Ensure all leaders are aware of the health and safety issues relating to the activity, including procedures for fire and first aid.

- If children are to be taken off the premises, the parent or guardian should give permission for this in writing.
- Parents or guardians should always be informed if children are to be transported in a car or vehicle and those transporting children should make sure that their insurance covers transportation on this basis.
- Give regular leaders a copy of the relevant sections of the handbook (“A Safe Church”).

When activities take place away from Church premises there should always be available in the parish a list of names, addresses and next of kin of all children, young people and leaders who are away from Church premises, and all leaders should have a copy of this list. There should always be a known contact person in the parish who is available on a telephone number in case of emergency.

Leaders should register every child and young person attending each specific activity with a form including name, address, date of birth, and contact details of parents/carers.

It is recommended that for all new and existing parish activities where children are included, both one off and regular, a risk assessment be carried out before it takes place. Details on this can be found in Section 4 (pp 4-3 to 4-5) of “A Safe Church”.

All health and safety regulations are to be followed.

### **Other users of church premises**

All hirers of Church premises, including for one-off bookings, will be made aware of the Policy for Safeguarding Children, and will be required to sign to confirm having seen it and agreeing to abide by it. For regular bookings, the responsible person will be given a copy of the policy and will be required to complete the Form for regular hirers of church premises. A template of this form is on page 10-19 of “A Safe Church”.

In any booking of church premises for which the PCC is responsible, the following clause should be included:

*“You are required to ensure that:*

- *children are protected at all times, by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.*
- *you carry full liability insurance for this.”*

### **Insurance**

Policies of insurance require the insured to take all reasonable steps to prevent injury, loss or damage occurring. Failure to take such precautions may prejudice the

insurance arrangements. A duty therefore exists upon the insured to adopt best practice based upon current and ongoing guidelines as detailed in “A Safe Church”.

St Luke’s Church is insured for Public Liability with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company. Ecclesiastical considers that the implementation of Diocesan Policy and procedures by all church organisations is essential for the maintenance of public liability insurance in terms of safeguarding children.

The policy covers youth work organised under the auspices and control of the PCC anywhere in the British Isles. However, for a group to be working “under the auspices of the PCC”, the following should apply:

- The PCC must specifically accept responsibility for the activities of the group and minute such in its records in detail (e.g. that it has agreed to this activities taking place, with details of staff, dates and times, and for the stated financial purpose).
- The PCC must have full details of any proposed new activities, such as to decide whether to accept responsibility for them, and this must be minuted.
- The PCC must select all leaders and maintain records of these appointments.

### **Action to be taken in the event of suspected or alleged abuse**

A detailed procedure on responding to disclosures or observations of abuse is in Section 6 of “A Safe Church”. The following is a summary of the action points.

If a child needs immediate medical help, call emergency services, and ensure that ambulance and hospital staff are informed of any protection concerns.

If it would be dangerous for the child to return home, or he/she does not want to return home and you are sufficiently concerned for their safety, contact the emergency social services, and the police.

If you observe a child being harmed or at risk of harm by someone other than a family member, you should inform the parents or carers immediately, and work with them on appropriate referral to police and/or social services.

Inform either the Parish Priest, or the Parish Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Record what has happened and what has been said, and what action has been taken, and give these records to the Parish Safeguarding officer.

Never speak directly to the person against whom allegations have been made, or whom you may suspect.

Never attempt to investigate the situation yourself.

The Parish Priest or Parish Safeguarding Officer should:

Without delay, seek advice and share the information with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA).

If the allegation or observation of abuse relates to a church officer, or to clergy, the DSA will instigate the appropriate procedure. (“A Safe Church” – Section 6, p 6-11)

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is to keep records and ensure they are kept in a secure cabinet.

There may also be situations where you are informed of, or observe, behaviour which is inappropriate and may potentially lead to abuse. Adults may speak of concerns about a child, or the behaviour of an adult. These should be listened to carefully, and the conversation should be recorded. The adult needs to know that if it is considered that a child may be suffering significant harm the information may have to be passed on, whether or not the adult making the disclosure wishes this to happen. Such concerns, should be discussed with the Parish Priest and Parish Safeguarding Officer, who should discuss them with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

**Confidentiality**

There are complex rules governing confidentiality. In general, all information concerning a child or his/her family must be kept confidential and only shared with the designated people previously mentioned. This confidentiality is a continuing requirement at all times and is required when workers are “off duty” or no longer involved in the work of the Church. However, there are circumstances where information must be shared with outside agencies, such as police or social services. Therefore no absolute assurance of confidentiality should ever be given to a child or adult making a disclosure.

If uncertain about whether certain information should be shared or not, or whether consent is required to share information, the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Parish Priest should consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in confidence. She will work with them in deciding whether the information needs to be shared, and how.

PCC  
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