

Safeguarding Policy – Walmley Parish Church

Church Details

Name: St John's Church, Walmley with the Minworth Church Plant

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Section 1: Policy Aims

This policy statement on safeguarding children and adults in the Church was adopted by Walmley Parish Church ("the Church") at a Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on 22nd March 2021.

The PCC of Walmley Parish recognises the need to safeguard the children, young people and adults in our care and guard against the possibility of any form of abuse of children, young people and adults by persons who may be acting in the name of our church. We aim to create a safe environment for the nurture and development of children, young people and adults, in order for them to feel valued and confident to ask for support and help. We will create policies and procedures that uphold the importance of our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults entrusted to our care. We recognize that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.

We commit to providing a safe physical environment for work with children, young people and adults. As members of this church we commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister, in whatever context this occurs. We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people of whom we are aware may be vulnerable, ensuring their wellbeing in the life of this church

Section 2: Policy Details

- a) A Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator will be appointed to ensure the implementation of this policy.
- b) We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust, as detailed in the provisions below.
- c) We commit to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.
- d) We commit to informing the whole church community about our safeguarding policy and procedures and recognise that it is the responsibility of each of us to prevent and report abuse that we discover or suspect.

- e) We will ensure the children, young people and adults in our care know who they can talk to if they have any concerns.
- f) We recognise our responsibility to always respond to and report abuse in whatever context it occurs (regardless of whether the incident has happened inside or outside the church environment), and will always listen to and take seriously any child, young person or adult who reports that they have been abused.
- g) We will always report allegations of abuse and concerns about a child, young person or an adult who is experiencing or at risk of abuse due to their, illness or disability in accordance with our procedures set out below.
- h) We will always report all allegations of abuse against Church Officers* to the appropriate statutory agency and to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and co-operate with any investigation.
- i) We will keep all records in relation to safeguarding concerns, allegations and the recruitment of volunteers and paid workers securely and retain these without a time limit.
- j) We commit to the safe recruitment of all new and current Church Officers* who have contact with children, young people and adults experiencing or at risk of abuse due to their illness or disability.
- k) We will assess all new and current Church Officer* roles and, in every case where the role is deemed to be eligible, apply for an appropriate level criminal record check every five years.
- l) We commit to providing every Church Officer* with clear instructions and information in respect of their role, adequate resources and support and regular opportunities for review.
- m) We will ensure that all Church Officers* working with children, young people and adults experiencing or at risk of abuse due to their age, illness, disability or are in a trusted role attend Church of England safeguarding training every three years.
- n) We will inform the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser, and ensure appropriate supervision, of anyone who is known to have offended against a child, young person or an adult at risk of abuse due to their age, illness or disability who attends activities organised by the Parish Church Council of Walmley Parish and will follow all recommendations of the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser in this regard.

- o) We require all hirers of our premises to have their own safeguarding policy and procedures. Hirers must sign a statement as part of the hiring process which confirms that they operate their own safeguarding policies where groups involve children or vulnerable adults.
- p) The parish adopts the policy and practice guidance of The Church of England and The Church of England – Birmingham as set out in the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan website.
- q) The policy of Walmley Parish Church will be monitored throughout the year, and we will review our safeguarding policy annually to ensure that it meets all current legislation, House of Bishop's and The Church of England – Birmingham policies and practice guidance.

Each person who works with vulnerable people will need to agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

* (A Church Officer is anyone appointed by or on behalf of the church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.)

Section 3: Responding To Allegations Of Abuse

The protection of children and vulnerable adults is a shared responsibility and, regardless of our position within the church, we should never feel that as an individual we have to adopt sole responsibility for making decisions. It is important that suspicions are shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

Concerns must be reported as soon as possible to Tina Jeevan-Reddy on 07966 168 515 who is nominated by the PCC to act on their behalf in dealing with allegations or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to Birmingham Children's Social Care.

The Co-ordinator will also need to inform the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor, Steph Haynes, on 07342993844. In addition to this, the Co-ordinator may also be required by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company.

In the absence of the Co-ordinator, or if the suspicions in any way involve the Co-ordinator then the report should be made to Church Wardens, currently June Hampton or Neil Hayball.

Any suspicions of abuse can be referred directly to Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Tel no: 0845 120 4550 or alternatively contact Birmingham Children's Trust Social Care, Tel no: 0121 303 1888 (office hours) or 0121 675 4806 (out of hours). The Child & Adult Protection Unit at West Midlands Police HQ is contacted via the switchboard number 0845 113 5000.

Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with the church's Safeguarding Children Guidelines and kept in a secure place.

The PCC will support the Co-ordinator in their role and accept that any information the Co-ordinator may have in her possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from CCPAS but the PCC hope that members of the church will use St Johns safeguarding procedures.

If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Co-ordinator has not responded appropriately they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the PCC demonstrates the commitment of the church to effective safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

The role of the Co-ordinator is to collate and clarify the precise details of any allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to Birmingham Children's Social Care. It is Birmingham Children's Social Care's task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Immediate Action

Making an initial decision about how to respond to concerns or suspicions will depend on a number of factors. For example, in some situations it will be necessary to take immediate action to ensure a child's safety and there may not be the opportunity to consult with the Co-ordinator. The following situations would require immediate action:

- a) When a child or vulnerable adult has sustained injuries as a result of abuse that require urgent medical attention (ensure the child sees a doctor).
- b) When a child or vulnerable adult refuses to return home because of the abuse (contact Birmingham Social Care or the Police).
- c) When a child has disclosed that there is a likelihood of them suffering significant harm when returning home (contact Birmingham Social Care or the Police).
- d) When there is evidence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (the Police)

Suspected Abuse

Where there are suspicions of abuse but no allegation has been made, you should share your concerns with and seek guidance from the Co-ordinator or the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor.

General Concerns

For concerns about parenting or general concerns about a child or vulnerable adult's welfare, encourage the parent or carer to seek help but not if this places the child or vulnerable adult at risk of injury. If the parent or carer is unwilling to seek help refer your concerns with, and seek guidance, from the Co-ordinator or the Bishop's Child Safeguarding Advisor.

Support To Those Affected By Abuse

The PCC is committed to offering pastoral care, following the guidance set out by the Diocese of Birmingham policy "God's Children: Our Diocese 2011", working with statutory and voluntary agencies as appropriate and providing support to those attending the church who have been affected by abuse.

Adoption Of Policy

This Church appoints Tina Jeevan-Reddy to represent the concerns and views of vulnerable people at our meeting and to outside bodies as the parish safeguarding coordinator.

This Church appoints Cathryn Hewitt as a parish verifier to process online Disclosure and Barring Service applications.

This Church appoints a Safeguarding Team of the above 2 individuals plus Rev Adrian Evens, Kat Turner, Rev Claire Reid and Phil Craddock to monitor compliance with Safeguarding best practice.

This policy is reviewed annually: the next review will be October 2023

Incumbent Reverend Adrian Evans Date 27th October 2022

Safeguard team representative: Mr Phil Craddock Date 27th October 2022

Approved on behalf of the PCC