

Parish of St Giles the Abbot with St Nicholas

Safeguarding Policy Guidelines

The contents of this document constitute a summary of safeguarding policy and practise at St Giles and St Nicholas Churches. It should be read in conjunction with policies and guidelines published on the Rochester Diocesan website, some of which are highlighted below. Particular attention should be paid to the Parish Safeguarding Handbook which provides a comprehensive overview of Church of England policy. All policies are regularly updated and may change over time. It is the responsibility of all of us who work with children and vulnerable adults or who have leadership roles within our churches, to inform ourselves of any changes.

1. Promoting a Safer Church – House of Bishops Policy Statement
2. The Parish Safeguarding Handbook – Church of England
3. Safer Environment and Activities
4. House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance
5. House of Bishops' Safeguarding Training and Development Programme

The website contains full details of all aspects of safeguarding, including training opportunities, as well as material to support the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers. This document is based on these policies and guidelines.

The safeguarding and protection of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility; procedures and formal processes alone (though essential) will not protect them. The Church, including all its members, needs to be aware of dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary. The child's/adult's welfare is paramount and where there is conflict between the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult and that of the adult, it is the welfare of the child/vulnerable adult that will be given priority.

House of Bishops policies inform us that the terms 'children and young people' or variations of, include all individuals who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. Older teenagers therefore are entitled to the same protections as their younger counterparts, irrespective of their apparent or perceived level of maturity. Power differentials are as pertinent to this age group as to younger children.

PARISH RESPONSIBILITY

St Giles and St Nicholas Churches are communities of volunteers, with members contributing to its life in different ways. **The Incumbents and the Parochial Church Councils (PCC) are responsible for all parish activities and must satisfy themselves that everything is being done to provide a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.** They are also responsible for making sure, as far as possible, that no false accusations can be made against their employees and volunteers.

Our churches will:

*adopt and implement safeguarding policies and procedures, accepting as a minimum the House of Bishops' Policies. In addition, we will follow Diocesan procedures and recommended good practice, while being responsive to local parish requirement;

*accept the prime duty of care placed upon the Incumbents and PCCs to ensure the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the church community;

*endorse Safeguarding Policies annually, at the first meeting of the new PCCs, so that new members are aware of their responsibilities, and can confirm their understanding. The 'Parish Policy Statements' must be signed by the respective Incumbent and Churchwarden. One copy is to be kept in the church records, one copy sent to the Diocese and one copy displayed prominently in the home church. If we have an Incumbent vacancy, the form will be signed by the chair of the PCC and a Churchwarden during the meeting at which the policy is endorsed;

*appoint a Safeguarding Officer for the Parish to work with the Incumbents and the PCCs to implement policy, procedures and good practice. He or she will have an overview of all the children, young people and vulnerable adults in the church, taking responsibility for the implementation of these procedures and guidelines and liaising as necessary with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The Safeguarding Officer should either be a member of the PCC or have the right to attend the PCC at least annually and should report on the implementation of the safeguarding policy within the church;

*appoint an assistant to support Safeguarding at St Nicholas Church

*display in their church premises where children's and vulnerable adults' activities take place, contact details of the Safeguarding Officer;

*display the "Childline" and "Parentline Plus" telephone number and Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) website;

*appoint a Lead Recruiter/DBS administrator for each church.

*ensure that all workers, voluntary and paid, are appointed in line with Safer Recruitment Practice.

*direct all authorised personnel to copies of parish, diocesan and House of Bishops' policies, procedures and good practice guidelines;

*ensure that all those authorised to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults or in a position of authority or are Officers of the church, are appropriately recruited, trained and supported according to the safer recruitment documents produced by the House of Bishops and the Diocese of Rochester;

*ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults undertaken in the name of the church;

*ensure that a risk assessment is undertaken for activities (on and off parish property) involving children, young people and vulnerable adults.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

All volunteers and employees who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be recruited in line with Church of England safer recruitment policies. This includes the requirement to complete the necessary confidential checks via the Confidential Declaration Form and DBS procedure. References will be taken up and followed through and the requirement to complete safeguarding training will be made clear.

Our churches have adopted the Church of England Policy for the recruitment of offenders.

DBS

All those, whether in a paid or volunteer role, who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, will be assessed as to the need for a DBS check. If eligible, these need to be completed every three years. New recruits will be required to complete a Confidential Declaration Form prior to the DBS check. Failure to do so will halt the recruitment process. All information is confidential and will only be shared by the PSO, Incumbent and DSA. The DSA will be notified of any declarations made on the CDF form and DBS.

The document 'Eligibility for DBS Checks' lists all those who require a DBS check and can be found on the Diocesan website.

Details of our current Lead Recruiter/DBS administrators can be found on the church website or in the church magazine. The Rochester website also has further information.

The [code of practice](#) published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997 advises that it is a requirement that all registered bodies must treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and not discriminate automatically because of a conviction or other information revealed. The DBS code of practice can be found by pressing the above link.

KNOWN OFFENDERS

Our churches are inclusive and welcoming places where the safety of all are paramount to our planning. Offenders and others who may pose a risk will be effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the DSA.

SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

We aim, at both our churches, to create an atmosphere and environment where people can discuss any concerns and receive support. The Incumbents and church safeguarding officers are readily available to fulfil this role.

Paid and unpaid workers who have responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults and those who hold a church Office should attend suitable safeguarding training at least every three years. It is their responsibility to ensure that this is completed.

A training matrix is available on the Rochester website and is updated to reflect current practice. This outlines the training to be undertaken by the different church groups/individuals, according to responsibilities held and contact they have with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Core Training

Most church members who need to undertake safeguarding training should look at Basic Awareness and Foundation training on the Diocesan website. These can be completed on-line in your own time.

Basic Awareness

This online training is recommended for anyone who needs a basic level of awareness of safeguarding.

Foundation

This online training is required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities or who have contact with children, young people and/or adults who may be vulnerable.

It is **mandatory** that Basic Awareness safeguarding training is carried out prior to the Foundation module.

Domestic Abuse Training

This is now a requirement for church ministers and lay readers, safeguarding officers, pastoral visitors and PCC members

Those in our church who have leadership responsibilities should undertake Leadership training, which is usually face to face training delivered at various venues across the diocese, but is currently being held over Zoom. It is **mandatory** that Basic Awareness and Foundation modules are completed prior to this.

Leadership safeguarding training.

Required for all church leaders ordained or lay.

Required for anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities or responsibility for leading activities involving children, young people and/or adults who may be vulnerable. This includes Safeguarding Officers, church wardens, directors of music and choir leaders, bell tower leaders, home visitors lead.

Specialist Training

Beyond the requirements of core safeguarding training, high quality training across a whole range of more specialist safeguarding subjects is being made available by the Diocese.

Details of all core and specialist courses which are currently available are to be found on the Rochester website.

CHURCH LED ACTIVITIES

GENERAL GUIDELINES

At St Giles and St Nicholas Church we value and respect all church members.

We will:

- *treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity;
- *ensure that our own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful;
- *adhere to our 'no lone working' policy;

- *ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be accompanied to the toilet;
- *ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern;
- *respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around;
- *administer any necessary first aid with others around whenever possible;
- *obtain consent for any images to be taken, shown or displayed. Photographs may only be taken by our nominated church photographers;
- *record any concerning incidents and give the information to the Safeguarding Officer. We will sign and date the record;
- *always share concerns or the behaviour of another worker with the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Incumbent;
- *if any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand.

We will not:

- *initiate physical contact;
- *invade a child's/adult's privacy while washing or toileting;
- *play rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- *use any form of physical punishment;
- *be sexually suggestive about or to a child/vulnerable adult, even in fun;
- *touch a child/adult inappropriately or obtrusively;
- *scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, group or adult;
- *permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- *show favouritism to any one child or group;
- *allow a child, young person or vulnerable adult to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature. Any such activity should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer;
- *give lifts to children, young people or vulnerable adults on their own or on your own. In an emergency, a driver may transport one child/adult on their own but they must sit in the back of the car. Any such actions should be recorded and the Safeguarding Officer notified;
- *smoke tobacco or any other substance in the presence of children;
- *drink alcohol when responsible for young people;
- *invite a child/vulnerable adult to your home. All contact should be with the parent and take place on church premises;

N.B. November 2018:

Following correspondence from the diocese it has been recommended that PCCs agree that all meetings with children or young people will be held on church property. This may include the Rectory but not the homes of other individuals. The PCC agreed this policy.

*arrange social occasions with children (other than family members) outside organised group occasions;

*allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person;

*allow strangers to give lifts.

Touch.

Our church-run groups and activities aim to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, while avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made. It is important that any type of physical contact in the course of our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is not able to be misconstrued as inappropriate.

All volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult. Church workers are mostly volunteers and should not be placed or place themselves, in vulnerable situations. Therefore, keep everything 'public'.

Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church officer.

Think about the context of 'touch'. For example, holding a child's hand as we walk back to church after Sunday school, is acceptable, but restraining or pulling a child by the hand to manage their behaviour, is not. If a child needs comforting, sit beside them rather than sitting them on your lap. Always ask permission to touch and respect peoples' personal space. Touching for teaching purposes, for example when bell ringing, should **always and only** be appropriate to the task and personal space MUST be maintained.

Should children or vulnerable adults require help with clothing, e.g. choir robes, encourage them to help one another or arrange clothing themselves. Should help be required, always ask the child/adult's permission and ensure you are not alone.

St Giles and St Nicholas Churches are inclusive churches, open and welcoming to all. Where a child or vulnerable person with special needs requires additional support, we will work with and take advice from parents and careers.

Additional guidelines when leading groups.

In addition to the above, team members will:

*ensure any health and safety requirements are adhered to;

*ensure that the room and equipment to be used is safe and in good order;

*ensure that external doors are unable to be opened by children;

- *undertake risk assessments, where necessary, with appropriate action taken and record kept;
- *keep registers and consent forms up to date;
- *have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present;
- *create space for children/vulnerable adults to talk – either formally or informally;
- *liaise with the Safeguarding Officer over good practice for safeguarding;
- *always inform the Safeguarding Officer of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise. The Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Administration

The PSO will provide group leaders with a Safeguarding Contact Form which should be completed by parents or carers, a copy of which will be kept by the leader and another returned to the PSO. These will include up to date details of home address and telephone numbers, any specific medical information and permission to use photographs. At each meeting or activity, a register of the young people and children attending will be kept, along with the names of the leaders and helpers present. Registers should be kept indefinitely.

We will keep a log book of incidents.

Forms giving permission for special activities will be used when undertaking one-off events and activities.

Recommended staffing levels.

Groups for children under 3 years of age are held in the presence of their parents or carers.

Where parents are not necessarily present, e.g. Sunday school, the ratios are as follows...

3–8 years - 1 person for every 8 children

Over 8 years - 1 person for the first 8 children then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children

However, for all our groups (Sunday school, choir, confirmation classes etc) we operate a ‘no lone worker’ policy. Each group should, therefore, have at least two adult workers, or a chaperone where this is not possible.

For Junior and Senior Sunday schools and our Youth Groups, we require a minimum of two adults be present in the room. Sessions should be planned with this in mind but, if necessary, a parent can be co-opted to provide immediate, short-term cover. This is especially important at St Giles, where we have to walk children back to the church at the end of our sessions.

Young people who wish to develop their leadership skills through helping at Sunday school, will undertake appropriate Safeguarding training. They will always be overseen and we will ensure that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and that the work they do is appropriate to both their age and understanding. They are not to be included in the staffing ratios.

NON CHURCH LED ACTIVITIES

The PCC's will approve a list of non-church run activities that are conducted on church premises. The list will include any regular activities/groups but not 'one-off' sessions such as birthday parties. The list will be reviewed on an annual basis

VISITING ADULTS and PASTORAL CARE

Visiting vulnerable adults in their homes is an essential element of our church ministry. Many parishioners will be well known and, where there have been no previous concerns, the level of risk during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered. To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your safety also, it is advisable to:

- *undertake a risk assessment before an initial visit, especially if you do not know the person (see Model Risk Assessment Checklist for Home Visiting).
- *consider whether the visit is necessary, or whether you should visit in pairs
- *if visiting alone, where possible let someone know where you are
- *do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephoning the person just before visiting
- *take a fully charged mobile phone with you
- *be aware of exits
- *be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that is available.
- *do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
- *never offer 'over-the-counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- *do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items, to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Treasurer.
- *make a note of any safeguarding concerns and report to the Safeguarding Officer
- *liaise regularly with the person supervising you, which is usually the Incumbent or lead PA who will be able to offer further advice and support

N.B. The PCC's have approved lone visiting by Pastoral Visitors and lifts are permitted within this context, for example, taking people to Church or House Group. However, the guidelines above still apply.

Pastoral Visitors should differentiate between activities carried out as a 'friend' and that of a PV.

For example, giving a lift to the shops as a PV falls outside of the remit. Where shopping is concerned, any activity involving money would be regarded as a regulated activity and require a

higher level of DBS check and, therefore, not allowed. Pastoral Visitors do not provide 'care' and outside agencies should be informed if the person visited is showing signs of such support being needed.

Giving a lift to a friend in order for them to do their shopping, is allowed.

PV's should be mindful of this difference.

SAFE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

We acknowledge that whilst children and young people may appear technologically competent, they do not necessarily have the maturity to understand the dangers they may be exposed to. It is important that children, young people and vulnerable adults understand and stay safe if technology is used at our church and the following guidance should be followed:

We agree that:

*all electronic communications are appropriate and professional. If using e-technology as a group activity, we will ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group. Our 'no lone worker' rule will apply.

*communication between children and adults by whatever method will always take place within clear and explicit boundaries.

N.B. It is the policy at both our churches that all communication between workers and children will be done through the responsible adult, using their contact details and not the child's/vulnerable adult's.

*no images or video footage will ever be permitted in an area of personal privacy e.g. toilet or changing area

*adults will not give their personal contact details to children or young people, including their mobile telephone number and details of any blogs or personal websites.

*we will not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site. We will only make contact with children for professional reasons, through their parent.

*any paid or unpaid worker will have a separate 'Facebook' account for their work with young people and should not give out any personal information about themselves.

*privacy settings and use of strong passwords will be used to keep personal data private. In addition, all shared computers will have a different password for all users so that they cannot be accessed secretly.

*a named adult or adults, will be appointed at each church who is responsible for the churches engagement with social media, eg Facebook, Instagram. This person will oversee the content and management of said usage and be accountable to the PCC.

Receipt of inappropriate material by electronic means

Receipt of any inappropriate material by electronic means/social networking will be notified to the Incumbent or Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent.

Any such material should be reported to the police.

An individual should not physically show or send any such photos as this could result in an offence being committed, for example, for distributing indecent images.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND IMAGES

General Guidelines:

Permission must be obtained of both children and adults before a photograph is taken or film footage recorded.

Parents/carers have the right to refuse their children being photographed.

It must be made clear why the image(s) or film is being used, what it will be used for and who might want to look at the pictures.

When using photographs of children and young people, never identify them by name or other personal details. These details include email or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers.

Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a website or Facebook page.

Publishing images of children brings good publicity and usually gives pleasure to children and their parents, but also raises some issues worth noting briefly:

*Images count as personal data under the terms of the Data Protection.

*Images of children in media with a wide circulation may lead to children being traced by people who should not be able to find them. This affects children who have been involved in disputed custody matters, adoptions, abductions or other civil or criminal matters.

*Images of children may be used by paedophiles to target prospective victims, which is possible if identifying details are given.

*Images of children may be used or manipulated for the purposes of child pornography, which is a growing problem on the internet."

At both our churches...

... photographs are used in our magazine and on the website to promote activities and celebrate the life of the church. They are taken by our nominated photographers. Permission to take and use photographs is included in the registration forms for all children's groups. At other times, it will be announced that photographs are being taken. Parents who donate photographs to celebrate important family occasions, such as baptisms, do so knowing that they will be published in the magazine or on the website. We will do our best to request that photographs taken by members of

the congregation during church services or events are not to be posted on social media. Parents are entitled to withdraw their children from group photographs.

Children who are photographed will not be named.

Photographs or images are not to be stored on personal cameras, phones or computers. However, those who manage our website and magazine or who are our nominated photographers, may use their own authorised computers and cameras, where data is securely stored. These individuals should all be mindful of and abide by the General Data Protection Regulations May 2018.

N.B. There is excellent advice on technology and photography in the Safer Environment and Activities publication which you can find on the Rochester website.

RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Procedure to be followed if there are disclosures, allegations, complaints or suspicions

Hearing a child's / vulnerable adult's disclosure of abuse:

If a child /vulnerable adult asks to talk in confidence DO NOT promise confidentiality. You have a duty to refer someone who is at risk.

Imminent risk

If you encounter a child/adult in a situation where they are in imminent danger, you should act immediately to secure their safety.

Seek the assistance of the police on 999 and then make a referral to children's social/adult services.

If a child/adult needs emergency medical attention, this should be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents, if available, should be kept fully informed.

What to do if you suspect a child /adult is at risk or has been abused

Speak to the Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent who will make the referral.

Describe the event or disclosure and give information about the child and family / adult. Remember to give as much detail as possible, distinguishing between fact and opinion and also what is first-hand knowledge and what has been heard from others (hearsay).

It is not your responsibility nor the responsibility of the PSO or Incumbent to 'investigate' and 'judge' any allegations, but to refer on 'up the chain'. If the PSO/Incumbent are unavailable refer to the DSO or statutory organisation as appropriate.

For out of hours referrals, call the emergency social work team or, when urgent, the police.

Ensure that you notify the Safeguarding Officer who will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. You should also notify your Incumbent, if you have not already done so.

Police Emergency Telephone Number 999

Police Non-emergency Telephone Number 101

Children's social services telephone number 0208 461 7379 / 7026 / 7373

(see also Diocesan website)

DIOCESAN AND CHURCH CONTACTS

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

Lead adviser: Greg Barry

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Sharing concerns with parents

Where there are concerns that the parent(s) may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing concerns with parent(s) may place the child at further risk. In such a case advice must always firstly be sought from children's social services or police as to how and who informs the parent(s).

RECORD KEEPING AND DATA PROTECTION

The General Data Protection Regulations 2018 contains principles governing the use of personal data. Data must be:

- (i) fairly and lawfully processed;
- (II) processed for limited purposes;
- (III) adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- (iv) accurate;
- (v) not kept for longer than is necessary;
- (vi) processed in line with your rights;
- (vii) secure; and,

(viii) not transferred to countries without adequate protection.

We maintain records relating to parish appointments, including a note of when a DBS check was obtained. Records should be kept secure and retained after the people concerned have left the diocese. Records of child protection matters should be kept, together with a note of the outcome. These should be retained even if the information received was judged to be malicious, unsubstantiated or unfounded.

Records of known offenders against children should be retained indefinitely, together with a copy of any agreement and reviews.

Nothing in data protection legislation seeks to limit appropriate disclosure in order to protect an individual who either is, or may be, at risk. What matters is that the process of information sharing is reasonable and proportionate.

Safeguarding issues are shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis, managed by the Incumbents and Church Safeguarding Officers. Information is not to be shared with others and privacy and confidentiality is to be maintained at all times. Churches are small, tightknit communities and speculation is not to be encouraged.

It is the responsibility of **all** of us at St Giles and St Nicholas Churches (congregations, members of all groups, etc) to be aware of safeguarding and to report to our Incumbent or Safeguarding Officer any concerns they may have or awareness of any divergence from this policy.

This policy will be published on the church website and a hard copy will be displayed in both churches.

Each Safeguarding Officers will keep a list of those who work regularly with children and will ensure that they receive personal copies of this document.

The Diocesan website regularly updates its policies and guidance and it is the responsibility of all of us to inform ourselves of any changes. The information therein provides full information, guidance and procedural support relating to all aspects of the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Useful contacts and helplines

- NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Stop It Now: 0808 1000 900
- National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC): 0808 801 0331
- Samaritans: 116 123
- thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS): 0303 003 11 11
- Family Lives: 0808 800 2222
- Action On Elder Abuse: 080 8808 8141
- National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 24

Our nominated photographers are:

St Giles Church

Lesley Parsons

Nick Reynolds

Mike Dancer

Irene Dancer

Ralph Barlow

St Nicholas Church

Roger Allard

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Our magazine editors are:

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St Giles and St Nicholas Safeguarding Officer

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