

Safeguarding Policy

Christ Church, Chineham

Each person is precious to God and everyone needs the assurance that this brings. The Church is intended to be the place where all find healing and wholeness, and has particular care for those least able to look after themselves. This includes children and adults made vulnerable for a variety of reasons. Therefore, we, the parish of Christ Church Chineham, take seriously our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people, and adults who may be at risk of harm. We have produced the following safeguarding policy and underpinning procedures in order to set out the standards we wish to uphold.

As a Local Ecumenical Partnership Church we are able to work under the safeguarding policies and procedures of several denominations. As we use the DBS check services of the Church of England Diocese of Winchester, and its Diocesan Safeguarding Team for training, advice and referrals, we have decided to adopt their policies and guidance as far as is possible.

This policy applies to all 'church officers'¹ and is informed by and supports the Church of England's House of Bishops' "Promoting a Safer Church" Policy² which we have adopted, and the Winchester Diocesan policy and practice guidance. The term 'parish' is used to denote the Church Council, the PCC and Lead Minister who together are responsible for ensuring the safety and protection of all vulnerable groups involved with the church. It is also the responsibility of all church officers to assist the Church Council in this endeavour.

We recognise that:

- All children and adults with vulnerabilities, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to protection from abuse
- Partnership working is essential to good safeguarding practice
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to without delay
- All church officers have a responsibility to report concerns to their Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)
- Church officers must receive support and training to be aware of and understand best practice, and how to manage any welfare or safeguarding issues that may arise.

1. Promoting a safer environment and culture

We will ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to safeguard vulnerable groups in order that they can participate fully in any pastoral, social and other Church Council endorsed or approved activities and events, safe from harm and abuse.

The following activities and events have been identified as those which are associated with vulnerable groups and run in the name of the church:

¹ A "church officer" is defined in the House of Bishops document as "anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid".

² Policy from 2017, available on the Church of England website. Which says "all authorised clergy and lay workers, church wardens and PCCs must have 'due regard' for. ... This means that the person under the duty is not free to disregard it but is required to follow it unless there are cogent (clear, logical and convincing) reasons for not doing so."

- Groups for children and young people without parents (often known as “Sunday School groups”)
- Trips, including residentials, for children and young people
- Groups for parents/carers with their children (Sparklers and Messy Church)
- Home visiting, including Home Communion.

For these activities and events we will:

- Designate a Group Leader
- Ensure adults do not work alone with children.
- Ensure adults do not work alone with young people, excepting church staff who may do so when needed, but must abide by our Lone Working Policy.
- Ensure an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to children, taking into account the nature of the activity, the venue and the age, gender and needs of participants.³
- Obtain parental/guardian consent for attendance at groups and trips, use of images and transporting children in private cars
- Ensure unaccompanied children are taken care of by a suitably appointed adult and endeavour to establish contact with the parent or carers to gain their consent to their child’s attendance
- Ensure no child or young person is invited into the home of a church officer unless the reason for this has been agreed with their parents or carers
- Ensure pastoral carers do not misuse or abuse the trust that is bestowed upon them
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out before the activity/event takes place, and these are reviewed regularly
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the Church Council.

2. Safer Recruitment

We will select, vet and train all church officers working or volunteering with vulnerable groups in accordance with the House of Bishop’s and Diocesan safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

For volunteers we will:

- Ensure we have clear role descriptions and/or person specifications for all working with children and/or vulnerable adults
- Ensure all such workers undergo the relevant level of Disclosure and Barring Service check before appointment, including completing the confidential declaration
- Ensure that all workers with children and vulnerable adults are interviewed
- Provide a written behaviour code for all workers with children and/or vulnerable adults
- Offer support and training after appointment.

Additionally, for paid staff we will:

- Ensure we take up written references and carefully check the applicant’s right to work in the UK before appointment
- Ensure all church leaders and those who work with children and/or vulnerable adults complete appropriate safeguarding training at least every three years.

3. Responding to safeguarding concerns

We will ensure that anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the church will be responded to

³ Current guidelines from the NSPCC are shown in the Safeguarding Handbook, chapter 11.

respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with legislation, statutory and national safeguarding policy and procedures.

We will:

- Appoint at least one lay Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) for children and vulnerable adults
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to cover if the PSO is not available
- Follow the Parish Safeguarding Handbook from the Church of England (unless otherwise stated)
- Clearly display contact details of the PSO and the Diocesan Safeguarding team, as well as local and national services available to get help with safeguarding issues
- Store personal information and safeguarding records securely and ensure information needed in an emergency is readily available
- Ensure all church officers are aware of their responsibilities in regard to the recording, storage and sharing of information

4. Care of Survivors of abuse

We will ensure that those who have suffered abuse will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and taken seriously.

5. Managing risk

When it is known that a member of the church community may pose a risk to children and/or adults, we will consult without delay with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser so that a safe course of action in accordance with national and local safeguarding policy and procedures is followed, in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies.

Monitoring and Review

This safeguarding policy and the following policies and procedures will be available to all church officers, parents and participants

- Lone Working Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Guidance for those who exercise pastoral care

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Church Council and amended as appropriate.

Further Information

To discuss any aspect of this, to request training, or discuss concerns, please contact our Parish Safeguarding Officer at safe@christchurchineham.org.uk or 07597 643691.

Last update: v1.0, 12.3.2019

Approved by Church Council: 19.3.2019

Record of Agreement for Safeguarding Policy

Christ Church, Chineham

I have read the contents of the Safeguarding Policy (dated) and agree to follow it, and raise any relevant requests for help, or concerns with the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Name

Date