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St Mary with St Matthew - Cheltenham

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Policy & Procedures (Revised November 2020)

This policy should be read alongside the “Parish Safeguarding Handbook” issued by the Church of England House Of Bishops in 2018

Contents

Introduction

The Policy

Appendix A: Recruitment of Workers

Appendix B: Checklist and Guidelines

Appendix C: Action to be taken with suspected abuse

Appendix D: The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer

<p>The Parish Safeguarding Officers are Stephen Ayland (07751 298840) and Julia Sawers (07434 572199)</p>
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Working with Children and Young People: Introduction.

The heart of the message of Jesus is that He loves us and wants everyone to know about His love. As we work to share this Good News, we know that we have a responsibility to make sure everyone in the church family is safe to grow and thrive.

Safeguarding is everyone's business. That is why we have a safeguarding policy, - to make sure every child and young person connected to the church family of The Minster with St Matthew is protected from harm and free to flourish. We must take safeguarding seriously because abuse is harmful and often has a long-term effect on children and young people.

There are three areas we need to consider in order to have a good safeguarding church culture:

- We want to make sure children and young people are safe from abuse within the church*
- We want to make sure that people who work alongside children and young people are safe from allegation*
- We want to make sure that we know how to respond to children who are experiencing abuse away from church*

You need to read the "Parish Safeguarding Handbook" issued by the Church of England House Of Bishops in 2018 alongside this policy because it gives more details and explanations about specific situations.

Further help and advice can be found on the Diocesan website. The diocesan safeguarding advisers are Becca Faal, (bfaal@glosdioc.org.uk) and Brett Riches, (brishes@glosdioc.org.uk). Their phone number is 01452 835516, or for out of hours concerns, 07944 680320. They are really keen to help us respond well to children and they are a useful source of wisdom and advice.

As we value and celebrate all our church congregation, from the very youngest, we are reflecting the value God places on every single one of us.

The revision and updating of this policy was agreed on

November 2020

Clare Salisbury
Bill Harvey

Church Wardens

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all those, ordained or lay, appointed to the Church Staff
- all those volunteers working with children and young people in the Parish

General Principles

In order to promote good quality children and young people's work, the policy in this Parish is:

To seek to provide a caring, consistent and safe environment in which children and young people can develop and learn. Children and young people will be treated as individuals and have equal status to adults.

The Parochial Church Council

The PCC accepts that safeguarding is everybody's business but it is the particular responsibility of the Rector, Churchwardens and PCC:

Therefore, the PCC will ensure that:

- there is a standing item, "Safeguarding" on the PCC agenda
- the standards and appropriate procedures in the recruitment, training and support of all those involved in the care of children and young people (as outlined in Appendix A) and the Guidelines to encourage good practice (in Appendix B) are adhered to.
- the Rector and the Parish Safeguarding Officers are responsible for implementing and monitoring the PCC's policy.
- the policy is reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised.
- a copy of this policy is available for inspection at the church reception
- the Diocesan poster about safeguarding is displayed where children and young people can easily see it along with information about the Parish Safeguarding Officers and contact information for Childline (0800 1111) and the NSPCC (0800 800500)
- parents or guardians of children and young people involved in the church's activities should be made aware that this policy exists and have the opportunity to view it.
- the PCC Secretary, the Rector, Churchwardens and PCC will ensure the provision of personal liability insurance for all paid and voluntary workers.

- Use of the church building by other groups. The PCC will ensure that when letting the premises to any other groups, they will be asked to complete the Diocesan safeguarding agreement.

Staff and Volunteer Recruitment, Induction, Training & Support

Recruitment

Whenever we appoint a new member of staff or volunteer to a role which includes direct work with children and young people, we will follow best practice and adopt “Safer Recruiting” procedures. (See Appendix A).

There are infrequent occasions when someone volunteers as “an extra pair of hands”, not on a rota but as a one off at a special event. These people will not necessarily go through the normal recruitment procedure. They will only be allowed to undertake this role if the Children’s or Youth Minister is confident that they are able to do so having consulted with one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers if possible. They will not be allowed to:

- assist children with the toilet
- be on their own with children at any time
- have access to information about the children or young people’s contact details

Induction and probation

To make sure new staff feel confident that they know what is expected of them, there will be an induction process for them. The induction will be relevant to the role they are undertaking, it may include opportunities to shadow others already doing the task and supervisory observation by the Children’s or Youth Minister. Induction must include the expectation that the person has read the Safeguarding Policy and a follow up discussion about it with the person responsible for the appointment. Paid and voluntary appointments are subject to the successful completion of a six-month probationary period.

Training and support

All children and young people’s volunteer staff will undergo training to be arranged by the Children or Youth Minister. In addition, workers are expected to complete the on-line Diocesan training. Everyone will complete the “Basic Awareness” course, and those who lead groups will also be expected to complete the “Foundation Course”, C1. These courses can be easily accessed via the Diocesan website training portal: safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org. The online courses must be refreshed every three years.

Regular opportunities will be given for leaders to meet together and review/plan work and talk about relationships with the children and young people.

Re-submissions of applications for disclosure

Paid employees and volunteers will re-submit applications for disclosure every five years (according to diocesan policy) as part of the ongoing strategy to protect children and young people.

Running activities and groups with children and young people.

We encourage the highest standards in working with children and young people. Appendix B gives some helpful advice and reminders about how staff and volunteers should conduct themselves around children

Risk assessments

Every activity must have a risk assessment. There are Diocesan templates for this held by the Rector's PA. For regular groups and activities, the assessment should be reviewed annually to make sure it is still relevant. Staff and volunteers arranging activities away from the church premises need to ensure they cover more detail as potentially there are more risks or hazards away from the building.

There must be adequate provision of first aid. An up-to-date list of those with relevant qualifications will be clearly accessible with the First Aid box (to be stored in the kitchen, Tyndale Office and Ministry Office).

Registers

A register will be taken of all the children attending a group on each occasion the group meet. It will also note which leaders and helpers were with the children. The register is to be kept securely locked away.

Parental consent

Parents or guardians will complete a form registering a child for an activity. It will include amongst other things;

- the name and address of the child
- a contact phone number for a parent or guardian in an emergency
- information about any allergies, medical conditions, medications and consent for emergency treatment if necessary
- agreement to the child or young person being photographed

What to do if a child discloses abuse

The recommended guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse will be followed. All those in positions of responsibility in the Parish and, in particular, all those involved with the children and young people's activities must be familiar with the action to be taken if abuse is suspected. (See Appendix C)

If allegations of abuse are made the Diocese and the Parish shall co-operate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with investigating such allegations. Neither the Diocese nor the Parish will conduct investigations.

Parish Safeguarding Officers

Parish Safeguarding Officers for children and young people will be appointed and the PCC will ensure that they have appropriate training and that they are affirmed and supported by the church leadership.

The role and responsibilities of the Parish Safeguarding Officer is outlined in Appendix D.

All children and young people's leaders and helpers will be made aware of the role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer and in what circumstances the Parish Safeguarding Officer should be contacted.

The Parish Safeguarding Officers will meet with the Children's and Youth Ministers once a term to support them, offer advice and ensure the policy is being followed.

**The Parish Safeguarding Officers
are Stephen Ayland (07751 298840) and Julia Sawers (07434 572199)**

Responding to Those Who May Present a Known Risk to Children and Young People in the Congregation

Grooming

Grooming is when a person seeks to gain trust in order to have access to children and young people to abuse them. People who operate in this way are unlikely to apply to work in a formal role within the children's and youth work. They are more likely to seek friendship amongst families and vulnerable teenagers gradually building a relationship which they can exploit, perhaps through babysitting. Guarding against this form of abuse is very difficult and that is why safeguarding is everyone's business. Whilst we always need to be proportionate, we also all need to be alert to the possibility that this may happen within our congregation.

People attending church who may pose a risk to children possibly with criminal convictions for abuse of children

Where people may pose a risk to children, their position within the congregation needs to be carefully and sensitively considered. A full list of the circumstances of such people can be found in the Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook. Arrangements should be put in place to ensure risks are mitigated and also to support them to worship appropriately.

As soon as we know a person may pose a risk to children is in our congregation, we will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. They will be responsible, on a case by case basis, to undertake a risk assessment and, along with the church wardens, Rector and Parish Safeguarding Officers, form a plan, called a Safeguarding Agreement. The Safeguarding Agreement will, amongst other things, cover;

- forming a small group of people around the person to offer friendship, monitoring and support
- ensuring that the person is never offered an official role within the church which may lead others to consider him/her trustworthy
- attend designated meetings or services only
- sit apart from children and families
- decline hospitality if children will be present
- maintaining a high level of confidentiality, unless there is a breach of the agreement and it is necessary to inform others to protect a child

The Safeguarding Agreement will be signed by the person concerned with the full involvement of the church wardens. This is because church wardens can direct parishioners where to sit and have a duty to maintain good order in a service. If necessary, church wardens can eject a person causing a disturbance.

The Children's and Youth Ministers will be informed that this person is within the congregation.

If a person refuses to sign the agreement, then further advice should be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and possible statutory agencies too, such as the police.

The Safeguarding Agreement will be reviewed annually to ensure it is still relevant.

Appendix A: Recruitment of Workers

We will follow best practice in recruiting staff and volunteers and will adhere to the Diocesan Safer Recruiting Guidelines.

Safer Recruiting Guidelines refer to the following categories of people:

all candidates for Church Staff appointment, ordained or lay;

all candidates wishing to work with children or young people in the church community, whether on a paid or voluntary basis.

In brief, the process is:

Job description for the role is agreed and circulated to applicants

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Application form completed which includes a declaration where a role is eligible

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Interview

↓

DBS check undertaken

↓

References taken up

Templates for these forms are held by the Rector's PA.

Job description

Having a job description is a helpful way to think about the suitability of a person to undertake any role with children and young people. It takes away the bias of a friend or known personality being considered purely on the basis of the connection. Job descriptions should be up to date and a simple written description of the role. It should be clear about the expectations of the role, the time commitment and the experience required.

Application form

This is self-explanatory. If the role is to go to competitive interview, it should have a closing date and the date of planned interviews for information. It should also include a statement for signing which confirms the applicant has not had children removed from their care by Social Care and that they have read and agree with the church safeguarding children's policy.

Interview

For most voluntary roles, this is not a formal process, it can be a chat over a cup of coffee. The purpose is to understand why the person wants the role and whether they have the skills and experience it requires.

For paid roles, the interview is more official. There will be a panel with prepared questions for the applicant. When relevant to the vacancy, applicants' previous experience of work with children and young people will be explored as part of the formal or informal interview

process to assess suitability for work with children and young people. As a minimum this will cover:

- previous work in the church
- personal contact with children e.g. family, baby sitting etc.
- work with voluntary organisations
- previous experience working with children and young people
- reasons for being interested in working with children and young people in the church
- Christian experience

The interviewer must be a member of staff, if he/she has any doubts about the suitability of the person they should ask further, more searching questions. They should also seek the advice of others on the staff team and the senior members of the children and young people's leadership team.

DBS check

Before a person is appointed, they will also be required to complete an application for DBS disclosure. This includes a declaration of their offending history. The DBS will issue two copies of the disclosure: one to the applicant and one to the Counter-signatory. The Counter-signatory will advise the Rector, in writing, whether or not they are free to continue with the appointment. The applicant needs to show the clear certificate to the person responsible for their recruitment. Applicants are expected to sign up to the DBS updates service.

References

Two external references are required for any applicant and must be taken up.

Confidentiality

The paperwork associated with any appointment will be kept strictly confidential to the Rector, the staff member responsible for the volunteer (if it is a voluntary role), and the Rector's PA. It is kept securely locked away. Information regarding the names of those who hold DBS disclosures will be stored electronically in a pass-word **protected** database program.

A register must be kept of all volunteers working with children, this will be shared with the Parish Safeguarding Officers once a term.

All records must be kept indefinitely.

Appeals Procedure

Where an applicant feels that disclosure information has not been handled in a fair and sensitive way an appeals process is available through the diocesan advisor.

Appendix B: Guidelines for working with young people

These guidelines are to be followed by those who work with children or young people in the Parish. The guidelines are not exhaustive and there are situations where they may need to be added to or modified. However, an understanding of the principles underpinning these guidelines is vital.

Children and young people may experience a variety of different types of abuse and that is why it is really important for workers and volunteers to consider how their actions might be interpreted by a child or young person. These guidelines are to keep everyone safe and to prevent a child making an allegation against a worker who has inadvertently triggered a memory of abuse by their action.

Checklist for work with children and young people

- Treat everyone with respect, affirm and praise children and young people, do not ridicule them.
- Think about peer bullying and help children to be kind to one another
- Chat with the children and young people, learn their names and interests so that you build a relationship with them. As they feel comfortable with you, make sure they know who they can talk to if they have a concern.
- Adults should not be left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of them being observed. The principle is that help (for either party) should be within earshot.
- Ensure another adult is told if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children.
- Ensure that if a child or young person is met away from church premises on their own it is in a public place such as a café.
- At least two adults should be present with a group when it is the only activity taking place on the premises.
- Never take a group of children or young people off the premises with fewer than two adults.
- Do not at any time allow anyone unknown to the group leaders to have unsupervised access to children or young people.
- The Children's and Youth Ministers will have work mobile telephones for use in maintaining contacts with the children and young people in their care.
- We will follow the Church Social Media policy.
- Photographs will only be taken by a designated person with parental consent.
- Leaders will be mindful of the circumstances of praying with young people because this can be a very intimate experience. Leaders will not develop exclusive, close relationships with young people.

- Leaders of any youth activity will not be in a romantic relationship with any young person in the group

Guidelines on physical contact with Children and Young People

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- A brief hug for a distressed child, or holding hands is fine, but a child sitting on your lap for prolonged periods shows favouritism and could be misinterpreted. Leaders and helpers are advised to offer comfort and reassurance and then gently move the child to sit next to them.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's. Touch should not be prolonged.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Think about rowdy physical activity such as piggy back rides and be alert to the possibility of this becoming out of control or the children becoming over-excited.
- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others apart from in exceptional circumstances. i.e. when they need medical attention **or** for their own safety.
- Under no circumstances shall corporal punishment in any form be used.

Additional checklist for sleepovers on church premises, off-site trips and residential events:

- Risk assessment
- Food Hygiene
- Expert supervision of risky activities (e.g. swimming)
- Information from parents (e.g. for medicines)
- Written delegation of "*in loco parentis*" for leaders
- Safe transport
- Supervision of sleeping arrangements
- Clear policy and planning on sending people home
- Clear and enforced boundaries about responsibility of leaders (e.g. signing out book for older young people on residential events)
- Fire and emergency evacuation precautions
- First Aid availability

Transporting children

- Only those who have gone through the church recruitment procedures for workers should transport children unless the parents have made a private arrangement not facilitated by the church.
- All drivers will have a licence to drive a car, insurance and an MOT certificate if needed
- All drivers should have read the child protection policy and agree to abide by this
- Parental consent should be given and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the children and youth work leadership
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in the car with a child
- Having checked drivers, through the recruitment procedure, it is reasonable to expect them to be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Ensure a discussion takes place over who is the most suitable child to drop off last. It is worth noting that two adults in a car with one child is not necessarily a guarantee of protection for that child.
- At collection and dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that an appropriate adult collects children
- Look at instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a child e.g. where they have had a disagreement that evening, where a child/young person has a “crush” on that adult etc. In such cases arrange for someone else to transport that child/young person

Using minibuses

In addition to the above,

- Ensure that you have adequate supervision. As well as the driver, another responsible adult sitting with the passengers will be needed.
- Ensure that the responsible adult has also gone through the church recruitment procedure

Appendix C: Suspected abuse - action to be taken

See fact sheet from Diocese of Gloucester entitled, "A fact sheet dealing with some of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and what to do if you are concerned".

If you have concerns of any kind speak to one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers.

The "Quick Guide" in section 7 of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook gives a flow chart of actions to be taken to respond promptly to every safeguarding allegation.

Abuse is varied and can take many forms including, physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse or neglect. In addition, there are other risks for children and young people from sexting, gangs, sexual exploitation, on-line abuse and cyber bullying. More details of these forms of abuse can be found in the Parish Safeguarding Handbook.

What to do if a child or young person wants to talk about abuse

It is very difficult for a child or young person to tell someone of abuse so:

- Let them know that you will listen to anything they have to tell you. Do not promise confidentiality. Explain to them that some things are so serious you will need to tell the Parish Safeguarding Officers.
- Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm. Remember that you don't have to come up with a clever answer, they have chosen to tell you because of the way you have interacted with them in the past, so just be yourself.
- Listen carefully and do not stop a young person who is revealing painful events.
- Never push for information or ask leading questions.
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened that something bad will happen if they tell.
- Reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell you.
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he or she said it. Record the date, time and location and whether other people were present. Keep the hand-written record.
- **Keep the hand-written record** even if subsequently typed up, for an indefinite period.
- Do not speak to the possible abuser or anyone else except the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- **NEVER INVESTIGATE AN ALLEGATION OR MAKE A JUDGEMENT ABOUT IT. JUST REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN OR HEARD, WRITE IT DOWN AND TALK TO THE PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER STRAIGHT AWAY.**

**The Parish Safeguarding Officers
are Stephen Ayland (07751 298840) and Julia Sawers (07434 572199).**

What to do if you suspect abuse

- The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that his or her concern is taken seriously (i.e. by informing the Parish Safeguarding Officer.)

Suspicion may vary from a vague disquiet about possibly inappropriate behaviour to clear evidence of serious abuse, with many intermediate levels.

Information may reach you from a variety of different sources:

- a child or young person saying that he or she has been abused
- another child or young person who is concerned
- a member of the child's family
- a fellow worker of the suspect
- someone who believes that he or she is the object of malicious or unfounded rumour
- your own concerns.

NEVER INVESTIGATE AN ALLEGATION OR MAKE A JUDGEMENT ABOUT IT. JUST REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN OR HEARD, WRITE IT DOWN AND TALK TO THE PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER STRAIGHT AWAY.

- Do not speak to the possible abuser or anyone else except the Parish Safeguarding Officer. (This is important to maintain confidentiality.)
- If the way forward is unclear, the Parish Safeguarding Officer should consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers (01452 835516).
- If the suspicions concern the Rector or an authorised lay worker then the Parish Safeguarding Officer should consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers immediately.

If there is clear evidence of abuse

While no one will want to react without careful consideration, when an allegation has been made it is important to avoid delay in order to forestall further abuse.

Clear evidence is

- where a child or young person is making a clear allegation of abuse

- where injuries to the child are raising strong suspicions

Do not speak to the possible abuser or anyone else except the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer should:

- Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice about next steps
- If agreed, contact Children's Social Care or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team, for advice if concerned about the child's safety. **Do not** inform the parents if you consider the child may be at further risk of abuse if you do so.
- Gloucestershire Children's Social Care 01452 426565 (office hours 9.00 to 5.00)
- Police Child Protection Unit (24 hours) 01452 261112 or if no reply 01242 521321

If the alleged abuse is taking place under the care of the Church or one of its organisations the Parish Safeguarding Officer should also inform the Rector.

If the suspicions concern the Rector or an authorised lay worker then the Parish Safeguarding Officer should consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, (01452 835516, or out of hours 07944-680320), immediately.

If the suspicions concern the Rector, the Parish Safeguarding Officer must NOT speak to the Rector.

If, for any reason, the Parish Safeguarding Officer is unsure whether or not to follow the above, then advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will be sought and followed.

Do not speak to the parent, suspected abuser or anyone else.

Under NO circumstance will the Parish Safeguarding Officer attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of abuse. The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the relevant authorities whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Parish Safeguarding Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral to the relevant authorities, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters and should therefore take the action outlined above.

The PCC will support the Parish Safeguarding Officer in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

In the absence of the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the absence of the Parish Safeguarding Officer should not delay action outlined above. If unsure what action to take contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers for advice.

Allegations of physical Injury or neglect

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice about the child's safety. **Do Not** inform the parents if you consider that child may be at further risk of abuse if you do so.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Parish Safeguarding Officer will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor (or Health Visitor) will then initiate further action, if necessary.
- If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from Children's Social Care.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will offer to go with them. If they fail to act, the Parish Safeguarding Officer should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice.

Caring for the child after disclosure

On some occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Children's Social Care and/or police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

**If you suspect a child or young person is at risk of abuse
the one thing you must NOT do is nothing!**

Appendix D: Role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The reason for a Parish Safeguarding Officer in each parish is to ensure that another person shares with the Rector the responsibility for child protection.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer has three main responsibilities, - advocacy, reporting concerns and policy. The Parish Safeguarding Officer should;

- be known to the congregation and the clergy and be able to respond if there are any safeguarding issues.
- be familiar with the work of the church, with children and young people and know the leaders.
- be involved in the recruitment of volunteers and employees and ensure that the names of volunteers are recorded.
- be responsible for maintaining the list on behalf of the PCC of those who work with children in conjunction with the evidence checker
- be a part of the annual APCM review of the PCC policy, complete the safeguarding checklist and for it to be submitted to the Diocese
- be alert to any unusual behaviour or inappropriate relationship on the part of any church worker with a child or young person.
- give advice and support to those leading activities for children
- be involved in drawing up the Safeguarding Agreement if a person posing a risk to children is worshipping in the church
- in the event of suspicion or an allegation of abuse, know when to seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and when it is necessary to inform Social Care immediately.
- ensure the children and young people's leaders know who to talk to if the Parish Safeguarding Officer is not available
- help, support, develop and implement PCC policies and practices and to be familiar with the activities undertaken by the church and those groups using the church premises.
- attend training in child protection, seek advice and keep up to date on best practice. Pass this on to Staff and children's and youth leaders as appropriate.
- review with the PCC that appropriate insurance cover is in place