

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AT ST.LUKE'S CHURCH, PARKSTONE

This policy and the accompanying procedures draw on Diocese of Salisbury Child Protection guidelines 2004 and the House of Bishops "Protecting all God's Children" 2004. The St.Luke's Church policy reflects the contents of these documents and additional guidance from PCCA. The original St.Luke's Church procedures were approved by the St.Luke's Parochial Church Council in January 2001. This revision was submitted to the PCC for approval in September 2011

Revised August 2011

This document may not be copied without approval by St Luke's Church PCC and PCCA where their materials have been used.

A. INTRODUCTION

THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Church of England in all aspects of its life is committed to and will champion the protection of children and young people both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully endorses and will implement the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and by supporting parents in the care of their children. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well being of children and young people. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or young person or about the behaviour of an adult, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary.

WHY DO WE NEED A POLICY ON KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE?

As a Church, we are committed to reflecting God's standards in all that we do. We are fortunate to have many children and young people involved in a variety of activities within St.Luke's Church and we are grateful for the high level of commitment shown by the leaders and helpers who serve God in this way. The work with children and young people is valued highly within St.Luke's Church. We all need to be active in praying for this work and the leaders and helpers.

Most children will come from caring families and meet no harm at home or in any other setting. However, there will be some who are being abused or neglected at home or elsewhere. As caring Christian adults, we need to be ready to respond to their needs appropriately. We also need to safeguard children from harm within the Church both by preventing abuse by adults and minimising other risks within activities. It is the commitment of St.Luke's Parochial Church Council that we will provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all children and young people. This will enable them to develop physically, socially and spiritually within the context of the Church and minimise the risk of abuse.

It is the responsibility of all who worship at St.Luke's Church and all leaders of groups and organisations within the Church to be aware of the policy and work within its guidelines. The policy applies to all adults who have direct contact with children and young people under 18 years old while attending or running Church related activities. This will include any activities which run under the auspices of the Church where ever they take place.

Policies and procedures are not sufficient alone and St.Luke's Church needs a culture of informed vigilance about the well being of our children, addressing their needs fully. All church members are responsible for speaking out about any concerns or whistle blowing.

This policy will be reviewed annually and it is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council to ensure such reviews takes place. Each review should include the child protection training needs of CYPECS leaders and helpers with the overall aim of some refresher training every two years. The Church Child Protection Co-ordinator who will administer and verify CRB checks will be appointed by the PCC and the appointment will be reviewed annually. The Church Child Protection Adviser who is a source of advice and delivers necessary training will also be appointed annually. The Vicar and PCC oversee these arrangements. In particular circumstances, alterations to these procedures may be permitted by resolution of the Parochial Church Council.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse has always happened, but the definition and recognition of it varies over generations and in different cultures. The definitions used in this policy reflect the definitions in “Working Together to Safeguard Children from Harm”, DOH 2010. This states:

“Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children”

Church communities need to be particularly vigilant to identify the inappropriate use of any religious belief or practice which may harm somebody spiritually, emotionally or physically.

➤ **Physical abuse**

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. This can also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates symptoms or deliberately induces illness in child. Physical abuse can be done either maliciously or as a punishment.

For most injuries to young children there will be suitable explanations as children do have accidents. However, it is important to record **all** injuries very carefully. (See Appendix G and the body chart) Recording can do no harm and could be vital information for the future protection of a child.

Some signs of physical injury might include:

- *Unexplained or recurring injuries*
- *Refusal to discuss injuries or improbable explanations*
- *Admission of excessive punishment*
- *Child flinching when touched*
- *Fear of returning home*
- *Self-destructive tendencies or aggression to other children*
- *Certain types of injuries, eg. object or finger shaped bruises, bite marks, burns or scalds, injuries to the face, head or genital area.*

➤ **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and psychological needs likely to result in serious impairment of child’s health or development. This may occur in pregnancy with the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Neglect may involve failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter including exclusion of the child from home or abandonment. Neglect may include failure to protect the child from physical harm or danger, to access appropriate medical care or treatment or to provide adequate supervision. Neglect may include unresponsiveness to the child’s basic emotional needs.

Some signs of neglect might include:

- *Leaving a child alone without proper supervision*
- *Exposure to dangers the child is not able to deal with*

- *Inadequate clothing, lighting, food or heating*
- *Being unkempt or dirty*
- *Failure to seek or follow medical advice.*

➤ **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware that this is happening. This may involve physical contact which can be penetrative or non-penetrative. It may include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is perpetrated by men, women and other children against both boys and girls.

Most sexual abuse is not known until a child chooses to tell a trusted adult – this could happen in the Church context. Any statement of abuse must be taken very seriously. Sexual abuse often starts very subtly and builds up so slowly that the child begins to accept the abuse as something he or she has to tolerate. By the time the child wants to tell "the secret", he or she feels guilty and confused and fears no one will believe the truth. The child may have become very good at covering up the abuse and may feel he or she is betraying someone close to them and loved by them.

Some signs of sexual abuse might include:

- *Unprompted allegation by the child or hinting at a secret.*
- *Behavioural changes in the child – withdrawn, self-harm,*
- *eating problems, nightmares or sexual acting out.*
- *Fear of someone*
- *Possession of unexplained amounts of money or gifts*
- *Unusual behaviour by an adult in relation to the child.*

➤ **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, causing severe, persistent adverse effects on child's emotional development. This may involve conveying to a child they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued to the extent they meet another's needs. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of how they communicate. There may be age or developmentally inappropriate expectations which may include interactions beyond the child's developmental capacity as well as overprotection and limitation of exploring and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children frequently frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some emotional abuse is present in any other form of ill-treatment but it can be very damaging when it occurs alone.

Signs of emotional abuse might include:

- *Behavioural signs eg. Overactive, aggressive, withdrawn, compulsive stealing or scavenging*
- *Language or developmental delay*
- *Inability to play*
- *Excessive lack of confidence or need for affection and attention.*
- *Use of excessive punishment by parents or over reaction to mistakes by child*

B. PROCEDURES

HOW DO I KNOW IF A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED?

Sometimes, a specific incident or injury will alert you but more often an accumulation of concerns will build up over time. Few signs of abuse are significant alone, but a cluster of signs must be taken seriously.

The child might show by their **own behaviour** that abuse is taking place, behaving in a way which is inappropriate for their age and stage of development. Major changes in a child's behaviour would make you alert to the possibility of abuse as one explanation.

There may be signs that you can **observe** when the child is with you, for example, inadequate clothing, poor hygiene, hunger or tiredness. Developmental delay or poor growth can be significant when there are other signs to arouse concern. The child might tell you or hint at telling you about abuse.

You might be concerned about the **behaviour of the adults** with the child, for example, reports that the child is left alone or not well supervised. A parent may tell you that they are not coping or are punishing the child excessively. You may observe that a parent is criticising, humiliating or scapegoating a child.

Record all signs carefully and refer to your Church Child Protection Adviser or the Vicar. You never know what might be significant later on. An allegation of abuse or an injury is urgent and the evidence may be gone if you delay. A child's safety could depend on your recording. Never wait until you are sure before you start to record. Don't jump to conclusions or make assumptions. There are lots of reasons why a child might be unhappy. Seek advice.

Don't agree to keep something secret

No individual should promise confidentiality to someone who is a potential or actual abuser or to someone who makes an allegation against a particular individual. If a child or young person makes an allegation, it is unacceptable not to pass this on as this will cause the abuse to continue. The child or young person should not be given responsibility for this decision, but advised of the need to refer this on.

If an adult discusses their own past abuse, the adult needs to be advised of the very strong reasons for this information being given to the Police in terms of protecting children now. If they do not wish to do so, the St.Luke's listener does not have to immediately go against these wishes, but does need to discuss the matter with the Church Child Protection Adviser for advice. Sexual abuse is often addictive and perpetrated over many years.

If someone admits to abusing children, they need to be advised that such information has to be passed on to the Police out of our duty to care for children. This is rare as most abusers are very practised at not telling any one about their behaviour.

If you have any concerns, seek advice as soon as possible from the Church or the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser or the local Social Services Child Care Team. If it is an allegation against a volunteer or staff member, it must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer. Don't delay if you are concerned. Do not discuss the matter with anyone else.

RESPONDING TO ABUSE CONCERNS

You must do something if you have concerns. It is not the Church's job to investigate abuse – it is the role of the statutory agencies, Police and Social Services.

Time can be crucial particularly in relation to physical or sexual abuse, so do not delay taking action. Do not inform the parents of your concerns until you have discussed the matter with the Church Child

Protection Adviser or Social Services. It may be necessary for the child to be medically examined within a short time and delay can adversely affect the outcome.

It is very important if you suspect abuse is occurring that you don't ask questions. Instead, record all concerns and seek advice. Use the form in Appendix H for all such suspicions and the body map if there are physical signs. The Church Child Protection Adviser will discuss the matter with you and with the Police and Social Services if there are concerns about significant harm to the child. If you remain concerned about a child after such a discussion or if no one is available, ring Social Services yourself. It will be helpful for future concerns to inform the Church Child Protection Adviser or Vicar afterwards.

It is important to understand that even the most respected and trusted member of the Church community could be an abuser. The fact you know someone well does not preclude them from being an abuser. Some people target churches as being places to obtain easy access to children and may patiently wait for their opportunity. The welfare of the child has to come before loyalty to the Church, however unbelievable the allegation may be.

If a parent talks about concerns that their child is being abused, this must be passed on to the Church Child Protection Adviser and Social Services even if the parent cannot be persuaded of the need to do this themselves. This is essential in order to safeguard the child and other children.

Concerns about abuse by another child or young person also need to be discussed with the Church Child Protection Adviser. Although, many young people will experiment sexually, if there is an imbalance of power or age, this should be responded to in a similar way to sexual abuse by adults. The welfare of both young people will be paramount. Sexual activities remain unlawful for under 16 year olds and there is specific protection for under 13 year olds deemed unable to consent.

All allegations against a member of the clergy, paid staff, church officer or volunteer will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer within Poole Borough Council, the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser as well as to Social Services.

After referral to Social Services, the Church will continue to offer support to the child or young person and to the person who received an allegation. Such support needs to be agreed with Social Services. The Police and Social Services work jointly in investigating child abuse and the paramount concern is the welfare of the child.

Telephone referral to Social Services should be followed up by a written confirmation within 24 hours. Where there is a Common

Assessment Form completed due to earlier concerns this should be forwarded at this point but paperwork should not slow down a referral. Social Services will undertake a full assessment of the situation and this will often result in the family being offered the help they need. Very rarely will this involve the removal of a child from home.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF A CHILD TALKS TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE?

- Take the child seriously, however young or confused they are
- Keep calm and don't show distress
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Do not try to obtain more information than is necessary to establish concern. Don't ask questions but don't stop the free flow of information if the child wants to talk. Listen carefully without interruption.
- Explain to the child what you will do with the information next and in a way the child can understand.
- Don't make promises to the child that you can't keep.

Write everything down immediately using the child's words if possible. Refer to the Church Child Protection Adviser or the Vicar or the Social Services before discussing with the parents or anyone else. St.Luke's will advise the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser of any referrals.

C. POLICY

PREVENTING ABUSE WITHIN THE CHURCH

Within St.Luke's Church, we often know each other well and there are excellent relationships across generations which benefit us all. While keeping children and young people safe from risk of harm, we must continue to build these relationships. For many of us, relationships with adults when we were young brought us to our present faith.

It is, however, important to have in place a policy which helps to ensure the safety of both children and adults. We need to create an "awareness" culture at St.Luke's Church where there is an understanding of the risks to children and a clear view of what is and is not acceptable behaviour to children and young people. This will also reduce the risk of unfounded allegations against adults.

Appointments of young people's workers -

The appointment of future paid youth workers will follow the guidelines issued by Salisbury Diocese. In addition, guidance in this document will be discussed in detail with the prospective youth worker.

Appointment of volunteers to be leaders or helpers will follow the procedures outlined below. In addition, searching questions will be asked about the potential volunteer's response to child protection concerns and preventing abuse in the Church. This discussion will be by the Youth Worker or Vicar and the prospective volunteer. The candidate's spiritual life and walk with God will also be explored. Any concerns should then be discussed with the Child Protection Adviser and the Youth Oversight Committee of the PCC.

Any person who wishes to be involved in "work" within St.Luke's Church that will lead to direct contact with children will be asked to complete the application form. A refusal to complete the form will automatically exclude the person from working in any role that allows contact with children or young people. All new volunteers will be asked to provide two references, one of which will comment on previous work they have done with children and young people. Volunteers will all receive a contract. All volunteers submit to a Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) check organised by the Church Child Protection Co-ordinator.

If there are any doubts about someone's suitability to work with children or young people, they should not be allowed to do so. No one has a right to work with children, but children have the right to the highest standard of care. It is important to realise that just because someone receives good references and a clear CRB check this does not mean they pose no risk to children or young people. All new workers will undertake a six month probationary period at the end of which their suitability will be re-discussed with the Youth Worker. Anyone whose behaviour in any way causes concern about them working with children should be asked to stop such work. This does not reflect on their Church membership and they should be encouraged to use their gifts in other areas of Church life.

The following practical guidelines have been agreed –

All leaders of groups will ensure that the venue is suitable and safe. If there are any concerns about this, they should be reported to the PCC via the Youth Worker who will share such information with the Vicar. The whereabouts of the first aid kit, the nearest telephone and fire extinguishers and exits should be known by leaders and helpers. There should be basic First Aid knowledge by leaders and hygiene standards should be maintained where food or drinks are served. Where children are taken away from the usual venue PCC and parental approval should be sought. Drivers should have full and clean driving license for two years and notify the Vicar if they have 6 points or more.

All adults working with children or young people will attempt not to be alone with a child or young person unobserved. This means there should always be two adults present during activities

or doors open between two groups. An adult is over 18 years old and has been through the checking process. This will apply wherever the adult is with a child including Church members' homes or cars.

Two leaders are sufficient for 20 children over 8 years old, with one additional leader per 10 additional children. A balance of gender should be maintained where possible. For children under 2 years old there should be one leader per three children, from 2-3 years old one per four children and 4-8 year olds one per eight children. Failure to comply should be noted in the group's register or log book.

In residential activities, it may be difficult to avoid rare occasions where only one adult is present, but this should not be with only one child or young person. The leader should inform the other leaders of the situation arising.

If specific situations arise where one to one contact with a child or young person is necessary (for example for spiritual mentoring) this should be agreed in advance with the Vicar and Youth Worker. Such arrangements would normally take place in a building where someone else is present. Parental permission should also be obtained where the child is under 16 years old. This is particularly likely to arise for the paid Youth Worker and such situations will be agreed with the Vicar or the Chair of the Youth Committee in advance.

Care will be taken about the use of **photos or video** images of children and young people. Occasionally photos of Church events will include group pictures of un-named children. If children are going to be named or photographed individually, prior permission will be sought. No details of the identity of the child should accompany photographs in Church publicity or the website.

Use of **texting and Facebook** by leaders and volunteers needs to be with great care. Only group texts and e mails should be sent with arrangements, not entering into personal sharing. Leaders and volunteers should not allow access of young people in their groups to their own personal Facebook profile.

All leaders and helpers should receive the support they need.

They will be supported by the Youth Worker and support group and will know who the Church's Child Protection Adviser is. They will receive regular support in the form of meetings and training events.

Leaders and helpers need to try to behave in a way which could not be misconstrued.

Relationships with children and young people should offer them a role model as Christians. Levels of personal care eg. toileting should be appropriate and related to the age and stage of development of the child.

Touching of children and young people needs to be considered with care. It is not helpful to assume touch is never appropriate. Touch should always be initiated by the child not the adult. It should be age appropriate and any concerns about inappropriate touch by a child should be referred to the Church Child Protection Adviser. The use of touch must be to meet the child's needs, not the adult's. Any touching should take place in a public setting, observed by another adult. Care should be taken when playing physical games that there is no inappropriate touching and that children are happy with the activity. Leaders and helpers should monitor each other in the area of touch and should help each other maintain safe standards. Any concerns about the behaviour of another leader or helper should be referred immediately to the Youth Worker or Vicar or Church Child Protection Adviser.

A register should be kept of all children involved in an activity. Consent and information forms should be filled out by parents for regular activities and these should be filed by the leader of the group. The register should be completed each time the group meets.

A log book should be kept for each group. This should be filled out every time the group meets. This should record who were present in addition to those recorded on the register. This should include casual callers to the venue. The log should include a record of any difficulties, unusual events or concerns about individual children. Accidents or incidents should be noted on the relevant form and passed to the Youth Worker.

Protecting children within the Church does not just stop at the CYPECS groups. At other times in Church life, children could be abused by someone worshipping with us. It is important that all adults, particularly the parents of the children take responsibility to ensure that children are not alone in unobserved parts of the Church building or grounds. If they are in a large group of children playing, it may not be essential to have an adult with them, but one should know where they are and who is there. Where mixed age social or musical activities take place two adults should always be present with children.

Protection of children in Church premises user groups

Those that work for other organisations associated with St.Luke's Church (for example, Brownies) should adhere to those organisational child protection policies which should be no less stringent than St.Luke's Church's own policy. Agreements for hiring premises which are the responsibility of the PCC will make hirers responsible for ensuring the safety of children. Regular bookings are required to have a child protection procedure in place which will be disclosed but not approved by the PCC.

CARE FOR THE ABUSED AND THE ABUSER

As a Church, we attempt to offer a loving Christian community to all who wish to be part of it. This will include abusers, both known and unknown. Sexual abusers, in particular, may become part of the community and are much safer within such a community who can offer oversight and support. They should be treated with love and respect, but helped to avoid further abusive situations. If someone has been convicted of sexual offences against children, they will not do any voluntary or paid work involving contact with children or attend mixed age church activities. Where they are known abusers, boundaries will be agreed with them to keep children in the fellowship safe. These should be written and the Diocesan Adviser involved in a careful assessment. Any offenders will be carefully managed and monitored in line with the House of Bishops recommendations.

We have within our Church family many who were abused as children and still suffer from the consequences. The Church offers a number of supports to such hurting adults including care by the pastoral team and the prayer ministry at the end of services. Where children or young people need support due to past or current experiences, this will always be offered in conjunction with the statutory services and with the consent of those with parental responsibility.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| • St.Luke's Child Protection Adviser | Lin Naylor | 01202 742397 |
| • St.Luke's Child Protection Co-ordinator | Kate Wyatt | 01202 721273 |
| • St.Luke's Vicar | Chris Strain | 01202 741030 |
| • The Diocesan Child Protection Adviser | Rachel Bussey | 01722 411922 |
| • Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service | PCCA | 01395 263384 |
| • NSPCC help line | | 0800 800 500 |
| • Local Children's Services social work Team | | 01202 735046 |
| • Out of Hours Service | | 01202 668123 |
| • Police Child Protection Investigation Team | | 01202 552099 |

BODY CHART

DO NOT UNDRESS THE CHILD – JUST OBSERVE DURING NORMAL ACTIVITIES.

