

THE KINGSWINFORD PARISH SAFEGUARDING POLICY – Updated last: August 2022

This Safeguarding Policy relates to all church groups and organisations within the Kingswinford Parish who work with children and young people from 0-18 years of age. The terms “child” and “children” are used throughout this policy to cover anyone in this age range. Also, all adults who are vulnerable (*see definitions at the end of this document*).

Definitions of abuse will apply equally to vulnerable adults and this policy and associated policies should also be read by anyone administering to those who are vulnerable according to the definitions of the policy (below).

It follows the guidelines set out in *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Worcester*, which conforms to the House of Bishop's Safeguarding Policy *Protecting All God's Children* (2004). It should be read in addition to the guidance and good practice document for the voluntary and community sectors, which can be downloaded from Worcester Council for Voluntary Youth Services (<http://www.youngsolutions.org.uk/safeguardinghandbook/>). Also, read the House of Bishop's Policy for safeguarding adults in the Church of England *Promoting a Safe Church* (2006), especially definitions of ‘vulnerable’ in relation to adults. Publications are on display for reference in our churches.

The PCC and DCCs of the Kingswinford Parish take seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children entrusted to their care. Each of us has a responsibility to prevent the abuse of children. We must also report any abuse or suspected abuse if discovered.

This policy will be revised annually, accepted and written in the minutes of the PCC. The Parish Priest and Churchwardens will appoint a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and two Church Safeguarding Officers (CSO) annually.

CONTENTS

WHO IS THIS POLICY FOR?	3
WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?	3
OUR POLICY	4
Objectives:	4
The Golden Rule	4
DBS Checks	4
Leader Child Ratio	4
Prevention - health and safety	5
Parental Consent	5
Reporting A Complaint Of Abuse	5-6
Training	6
Guidance for Bell ringers	6
Choir	7
Organisations using the Church Building/Church Centre	7
IMPORTANT NOTE ON INVESTIGATIONS	7
SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION	6

WHO IS THIS POLICY FOR?

Church leaders and all volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults, or who may come into regular and direct contact with children and vulnerable adults during their activities, will be required to work within the guidelines recommended in this policy. They must read, know about, and undertake to observe them. This will include adult members of mixed age activities such as bellringers, the choirs and (if applicable) servers.

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse may be:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Physical ii. Emotional iii. Sexual iv. Neglect v. Domestic vi. Spiritual vii. Organised | } | <p>For details of the first five see the Worcester CVYS document (details to download at start of this document)</p> |
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vi. Spiritual abuse: In the context of the church community there is a further form of abuse that can have devastating effects on the spiritual development of the child. When trusted members of the Church community abuse children in their care this also constitutes spiritual abuse. Church communities must be particularly vigilant to identify any kind of spiritual abuse including the misuse of the authority of leadership, oppressive teaching, or obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in physical, emotional or sexual abuse. This also applies to vulnerable adults.

vii. Other forms of spiritual abuse include denying children (including young people) of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God. Whatever the nature of the abuse the child's trust is betrayed and the child's belief in natural and divine justice is damaged. One effect may be that the child turns away from the Church and from God. This also applies to vulnerable adults.

viii. Organised abuse: organised or multiple abuses can involve one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related children or young people. The abusers may be acting as part of a network or in isolation and may use an institutional framework or a position of authority or trust to recruit children for abuse. They may use children themselves to recruit other children.

Any child or young person or vulnerable adult can suffer abuse. The abuse may be perpetrated by an adult, male or female, or by another child. It is also important to protect those 16-18 year olds who are legally able to give their consent. Sexual activity by *those who are responsible for young people* and whom they trust is illegal, and constitutes an abuse of trust and power. Also, vulnerable adults may not be able to understand dangerous situations and certainly cannot give informed consent.

ix. It is vitally important to recognise that abuse of children is much broader than sexual abuse and that all abuse is a betrayal of trust and a misuse of authority and power. No form of abuse can ever be justified and the child is never to blame. This also applies to vulnerable adults.

OUR POLICY

Objectives:

- i. To keep all children, vulnerable adults and those who work with them safe from harm.
- ii. To try to ensure that every child entrusted to our care is never subjected to any form of abuse by church members. This equally applies to vulnerable adults.
- iii. To know the procedures to follow, in the event of any concern about a child's welfare, or vulnerable adult, or if there are complaints/allegations of abuse made within or without the church organisation.

The Golden Rule

Keep all relationships with children open, observable, readily understood and shared with more than one responsible adult. All work with children must be well supervised and the people doing it carefully selected, well trained and advised of their Safeguarding duties.

DBS Checks and Safer Recruitment

All leaders and volunteers (as defined on page 3) and the Parish Safeguarding Officer must:

- i. Complete and sign the Diocesan Declaration form.
- ii. Give written references and identification and undergo the Safer Recruitment process.
- iii. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks may be required. Please refer to the *Safer Recruitment 2017* document and the PSO or CSO.
- iv. Forms and information are obtainable from the Parish Safeguarding Officer (or Diocese if the a new Parish Safeguarding Officer has been appointed).
- v. All records are confidential and must be kept in a secure place. GDPR procedures must be observed with all records and participants in activities must have been given GDPR data privacy notices (or to their parents/carers). During an interregnum, the Area Dean is responsible for any records; the churchwardens will liaise with the AD in the appointment of new workers on any Safeguarding issues, which may arise.

Leader Child Ratio

- i. At least two adults (18+) who have been Safer Recruited to be present with a child or group of children.
- ii. Children must be adequately supervised.
- iii. The following ratio of children to leaders provides a useful guide.
 - 0-2yrs 1 adult to 3 children
 - 2-3yrs 1 adult to 4 children
 - 4-8yrs 1 adult to 6 children
 - 9-12yrs 1 adult to 8 children
 - 13-18yrs 1 adult to 10 children
- iv. No adult should work alone with children

Working with Vulnerable Adults

- i. Training and authorisation by the incumbent must be undertaken before regularly engaging in this work, on behalf of the Church; eg. Home visits, Healing Ministry, Hospital visiting

Prevention - health and safety

- i. Make sure the premises are safe for the age of children. Furniture and equipment that may be dangerous needs to be made secure or fenced off. Follow PCC Risk Assessments and make assessments for novel activities or those off-site.
- ii. A register of attendance for each group must be kept. Including the names of leaders and helpers.
- iii. Fire exits marked.
- iv. A first aid kit should be available in the church building or at the venue of the children's activity and clearly marked.
- v. An accident/incident report book should be kept in church or at the venue of the children's activity.

Parental Consent

- i. Parental consent for a child or young person to attend a particular activity is needed.
- ii. A contact number is required in case of emergency
- iii. Further parental consent is needed if children are taken off the premises.
- iv. Children should not be driven in a car alone, except in an emergency. Two adults should be present, seated in the front. If driving a child/children alone in a car, it is better they occupy the rear seats. Parents must be informed of the journey and place and times of arrival and return. Drivers should check their personal insurance policy and car seats must be used in accordance with the law.

Responding to concerns or allegations and reporting a complaint of abuse

- i. The well being of the child is paramount at all times. Where a child or adult is in immediate danger or requires immediate medical attention then call the emergency services on 999. Do not delay.

The following situations would require immediate action:

- When a child has sustained injuries as a result of abuse that require urgent medical attention (ensure that the child sees a doctor);
- When a child is refusing to return home because of the abuse (contact Social services or the Police);
- When a child has disclosed that there is a likelihood of them suffering significant harm on returning home (contact Social Services or the Police).

Most situations will not require such immediate action. Where there are suspicions of abuse but

- where no allegation of abuse has been made, you should share your concerns with, and seek guidance from, the incumbent, and/or the PSO, CSO and from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA).

- ii. If there is a concern of abuse **by another child** within the group it must be reported immediately to one of the following:
Leader → CSO → PSO who will take advice from the relevant agency.
- iii. If there is a complaint of abuse **by a leader within the church community** it must be reported immediately to one of the following:
CSO or Vicar or PSO → Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- iv. If there is a complaint of abuse **by the Vicar** it must be reported immediately to the following:
CSO/PSO → Churchwardens & Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- v. If there is obvious concern about a child's well being, or if a child complains of abuse outside the church organisation it must be reported immediately to one of the following:
CSO or PSO or Vicar → Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser
- vi. Kingswinford Parish will appoint a **CSO to each Church.**
- vii. A lead agency may be contacted for advice or in the first instance (Social Services, Police)

Contact details of Social Services and Police within the Diocese:

Hilary Higton, **Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser** - 07495 060869

Non-Urgent Police Enquiries - 101 (you will be put through to the appropriate force eg West Mercia or West Midlands)

Dudley Area which includes Halesowen, Stourbridge and Brierley Hill – Children's Services 0300 555 0050, Adults 0300 555 0055 (out of hours 0300 555 8574)

Training

Kingswinford Parish will ensure that leaders and volunteers are trained to the level of their responsibility. The diocese has an obligation to train clergy, licensed workers and leaders. The PSO and CSO will attend training and support provided by the Diocese.

Guidance for Bell ringers

We welcome young people from other parishes and value their contribution to bell ringing. We recognise our responsibility as bell ringers to create a safe environment in which they are able to learn and practice the art of bell ringing with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

Therefore we require:

- i. No adults should work alone with children and young people.
- ii. At least one adult should be in calling distance at all times.
- iii. Instruction should be given without physical contact but in an emergency safety overrides all else.
- iv. All visiting teams must be made aware that the Kingswinford Parish has a Safeguarding Policy and procedures in place. The Tower Captain should hold a copy of the policy and make visiting teams aware of this.

The PCC has adopted the *General statement on Safeguarding Children in Towers* (December 2015) by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

Choir

- i. Any young people who are members of the church choir must have permission to attend practice and activities involving visits to events or festivals.
- ii. There must always be at least two adults in attendance at practice when children are present.
- iii. All other issues concerning choir activities, when children are in attendance must follow parish policy.

Organisations using the Church Building/Church Centre

- i. Clear notices will be displayed in church and on the notice board to state the church has a Safeguarding policy in place.
- ii. The golden rule will be displayed and a warning that only authorised leaders and helpers will be allowed access to children's groups meeting on the church premises.
- iii. Visiting groups will be made aware of the Church policy and expected to have the correct ratio of adults to children.
- iv. They should be aware of health and safety issues in the building and their responsibilities where children are present.
- v. Groups meeting under the name of another organisation (eg: uniformed organisations) must operate within their own Safeguarding/Safe from Harm Guidelines which must, at least, be equivalent to the Parish Safeguarding Policy.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Clergy and Diocesan Officers are NOT authorised to investigate any allegations and must never attempt to do so. Only the Police or Social Services are authorised to investigate Safeguarding cases. They are called The Lead Agencies and will co-ordinate the responses.

SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION

The members of the PCC of St Mary, Kingswinford, as Charity Trustees, are responsible for reporting all serious incidents to the Charity Commission in a timely manner. The trustees delegate the reporting of serious incidents, concerned with safeguarding, in accordance with the PCC policy Reporting of Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission.

Copies of Parish Policies are in a blue folder in the Vestry of each Church. They should be read alongside this Policy and the policies displayed on the Safeguarding Boards in each church. Policies are displayed on our church websites.

Definitions

Child

For the purposes of this document, “Child” denotes anyone under 18 years of age.

Vulnerable Adult

The law defines ‘vulnerable adult’ as:

- A person 60 years of age or older with functional, physical, or mental inability to care for self; or
- An adult 18 years of age or older who:
 - Has a developmental disability; or
 - Has a guardian; or
 - Lives in a nursing facility, boarding home, adult family home, or soldier’s home, residential centre, or any facility licensed or required to be licensed by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS); or
 - Receives in-home services through a licensed health care agency, hospice, or an individual provider; or
 - Self-directs his/her own care using a ‘Carer’

For the purposes of this document, it would also include any adult who is ill at home or in hospital.