**St Patrick’s Church**

**Safeguarding Handbook**

*“The Church of England is called to share the good news of God’s salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.”*

From *‘Promoting a Safer Church’*, The Church of England’s

Safeguarding Policy Statement

**SAFEGUARDING TEAM & KEY CONTACTS**

*If you are concerned that a child or adult has been harmed or may be at risk of harm, please contact one of the following:*

**PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS**

Jane St John / Joan Widdowson [**safeguarding@stpats.org.uk**](mailto:safeguarding@stpats.org.uk)

**DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING ADVISER**

Moira Murry **moira.murray@southwark.anglican.org**

**Office hours: 020 7939 9423**

**For urgent matters out of hours: 07982 279713**

If you have ***immediate*** ***concerns*** about the safety of someone, please contact the police and your local authority Children or Adults Services.

Alternatively:

* **NSPCC** – for adults concerned about a child **0808 800 5000**
* **Childline** – for children and young people worried about anything **0800 1111**
* **Domestic Violence** Helpline – for if you are experiencing domestic abuse **0808 2000 247**
* **Samaritans Helpline** – for someone to talk to if you are struggling to cope **116 123**
* **Action on** **Elder Abuse** Helpline – for help regarding the abuse of the elderly **080 8808 8141**
* **NAPAC** – offer support and advice to adult survivors of childhood abuse **0808 801 0331**
* **Stop It Now** – preventing child sexual abuse **0808 1000 900**
* **Cruse** – bereavement helpline **0808 808 1677**

Contact details for our Vicar & Church Wardens can be found at www.stpats.org.uk

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**INTRODUCTION**

**WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?**

Safeguarding means protecting people’s health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It is fundamental to flourishing Christian communities and is embedded in good pastoral care.

Safeguarding encompasses: Protecting children, young people and adults from abuse and maltreatment. Creation of a safe and caring environment for children through:

* Treating children fairly and equally.
* Building trust and good communication.
* An awareness of individual needs (health, allergies, disabilities).
* Setting appropriate standards of discipline and boundaries.

**SAFEGUARDING IN THE CHURCH CONTEXT**

The actions the Church takes to promote a safer culture and provide a safe environment:

* To **promote** the welfare of children, young people and adults
* Work to **prevent** abuse from occurring
* Seeking to **protect** those that are at risk of being abused.
* **Respond well** to those who have been abused

**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFEGUARDING?**

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. If anyone has any concern for the well-being of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they must report it. Safeguarding is a high priority for St Patrick’s church. The church can’t take responsibility for interaction between its members and children or vulnerable adults outside official church activities. However, the Parish Safeguarding Officers could advise about where to report any wider concerns.

**WHO OVERSEES SAFEGUARDING?**

We have two Parish Safeguarding Officers (see p2). All are trained by the Diocese to carry out their role, which includes ensuring that paid staff and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults are: recruited safely, including DBS checks and have received Safeguarding training, including having their own copy of this booklet, and know who to contact with any concerns.

**WHAT IF I NEED FURTHER INFORMATION?**

St Patrick’s follows the policy of the Diocese of Southwark. This is entitled A Safe Church and can be consulted online at http://southwark.anglican. org/safeguarding/diocesanpolicies-and-procedures or via St Patrick’s website, or in hard copy in the Church Office. The key contacts within our church are listed on p2, and they will be pleased to answer questions or listen to concerns.

**RECOGNISING ABUSE**

**HOW IS ABUSE DEFINED?**

The definition of abuse and neglect includes the maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. This can occur in a family or institutional or community setting. The person responsible may be known to the person harmed, or more rarely, a stranger.

**WHO IS CONSIDERED VULNERABLE?**

All children and young people under the age of 18 are considered to be vulnerable. Any adult can be vulnerable at certain times of their life, whether through illness, accident, stress or age. For some this vulnerability continues because of altered life circumstances. If there are limitations on their ability to understand or express their feelings or wishes, it is possible for exploitation or abuse to take place as with children and young people.

**WHO PERPETRATES ABUSE?**

Abuse can happen anywhere and it can be carried out by anyone. Abuse of adults and children is more likely to be perpetrated by someone that the victim knows than by a stranger. Children are most likely to be physically and emotionally abused or neglected by parents or caregivers. Child sexual abuse is perpetrated by a wider group of people, including parents, other relatives, siblings, friends, or others known to the child (e.g., sports coach, teacher, priest).

**HOW MIGHT I RECOGNISE ABUSE?**

Recognising abuse can be difficult as the signs of abuse aren’t always obvious. A child or vulnerable adult might not even realise that what is happening is even abuse. If they do, they might not tell anyone out of fear of the abuser, or because they don’t think they will be believed.

If you have any concerns about possible abuse, these must be reported without delay to one of the contacts named on p2. If you do not feel your concern receives an appropriate response, please contact the vicar, or if necessary, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (p2).

**TYPES OF ABUSE**

**Physical abuse (Children & Young People)** is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Signs of possible abuse include: injuries not consistent with explanation; or in abnormal locations; or that have not been treated.

**Physical abuse (Adults)** is the non-accidental infliction of physical force, which results in pain, injury or impairment.Signs of possible abuse include: injuries not consistent with explanation; or inconsistent with the person’s lifestyle; unexplained falls; subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person; failure to seek medical treatment or frequent changes of GP.

**Emotional abuse (Children & Young People)** is persistent emotional maltreatment. It may also involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, for example when a child or young person witnesses domestic violence. This can also involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying). Signs of possible abuse include: changes in mood or behaviour; aggression; attention-seeking behaviour; nervousness, obsessions or phobias; persistent tiredness; running away/stealing/lying/ self-harm.

**Psychological or emotional abuse (Adults)** is behaviour that has a harmful effect on an adult’s emotional health and development. All abuse of vulnerable people has an emotional impact. Signs of possible abuse include: an air of silence when a particular person is present; insomnia; low self-esteem; signs of distress, tearfulness or anger; apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment.

**Sexual abuse (Children & Young People)** includes forcing or enticing a child or young person(s) to take part in any sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of what is happening (including viewing pornography). Signs of possible abuse include: allegations made by a child or young person; excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour; severe sleep disturbances; eating disorders.

**Sexual abuse (Adults)** is the involvement of any adult in sexual activities or relationships, without informed or valid consent. Signs of possible abuse include: bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area; unusual difficulty in walking or sitting; self-harming; poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance; excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships; fear of receiving help with pastoral care.

**Neglect (Children & Young People)** is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person’s basic physical and / or psychological need. Neglect may include the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical treatment or response to emotional needs. Signs of possible neglect include: children being out late at night, or left home alone for extended periods; health and other needs not being taken care of.

**Neglect and acts of omission, including self-neglect (Adults)** is the repeated withholding of adequate care which results in the adult’s basic needs not being met. It can be intentional or unintentional and includes acts of omission and self-neglect by the individual themselves. Signs of possible abuse include: poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene; pressure sores or ulcers; malnutrition; untreated injuries or medical problems; accumulation of untaken medication.

**Financial or material abuse (Adults)** is the denial of access of the individual to money, property, possessions, valuables or inheritance, or improper or unauthorised use of funds via omission, exploitation or extortion through threats. Possible indicators of financial or material abuse: missing personal possessions; unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle; unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts.

**Discriminatory abuse (Adults)**, including racist and sexist abuse, exists when values, beliefs or culture result in the misuse of power that denies opportunities to some individuals or groups. Possible indicators of discriminatory abuse: the person appears withdrawn and isolated; expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety; inadequate support on offer, not taking into account an individual’s need.

**Organisational or institutional abuse (Adults)** occurs when an organisation’s priorities, policies and practices are more important than individuals’ needs and wishes. It includes a failure to ensure that the necessary standards are in place to protect and maintain good standards of care according to individual choice. Signs of possible abuse include: poor standards of care; lack of adequate procedures.

**Spiritual abuse (Children, Young People & Adults)** is not a category of abuse recognised in statutory guidance but is of concern both within and outside faith communities including the Church. Spiritual abuse is coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. Signs of possible abuse include: an air of silence when a particular person is present; insomnia; low self-esteem; signs of distress, tearfulness or anger.

**Domestic abuse (Children, Young People & Adults)** is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional. Possible indicators of domestic abuse: unexplained bruises, cuts or injuries; becomes unusually quiet or withdrawn; has panic attacks; stops talking about their partner or family member; is anxious about being out or rushes away; is always accompanied by their partner.

**Online abuse (Children, Young people & Adults)** is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyber bulling, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. Online abuse can be perpetuated by all ages both from people known and from strangers. Possible indicators of online abuse: spending much less time online; being quiet, upset or outraged after using the internet or texting; being secretive about who they’re talking to and what they’re doing online or on their mobile phone.

**Modern Slavery (Children, Young People & Adults)** is an international crime, affecting an estimated 29.8 million slaves around the world. It is a global problem that transcends age, gender and ethnicities, including here in the UK and it’s important that we bring this hidden crime into the open. It can include victims that have been brought from oversees, and vulnerable people in the UK, being forced to illegally work against their will in many different sectors, including brothels, cannabis farms, nail bars and agriculture.

**Extremism / radicalisation (Children, Young People & Adults)** goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable- including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Potential indicators of abuse: use of inappropriate language; possession of violent extremist literature; behavioural changes; the expression of extremist views.

**Trafficking (Children, Young People & Adults)** is the movement of a person from one place to another into conditions of exploitation, using deception, coercion, the abuse of power or the abuse of someone’s vulnerability. This is an emerging aspect of abuse and as awareness grows, we may find there are people in our church congregations who have been trafficked and who seek help from the church to escape their situation.

**HANDLING A DISCLOSURE OR ALLEGATION**

If a child, young person or adult tells you of something which has happened:

* Take the person calmly to a place out of earshot of others, but not out of sight of another adult.
* Listen attentively, showing concern but not shock; encourage the person to say all they want to, but do not ask probing questions.
* Do not promise confidentiality, even if you are asked to; reassure the person that it was right to share the problem, and explain that you will need to tell someone who will understand and know what to do.
* Do not attempt to investigate or address the issue yourself; if you think there is a risk of immediate further abuse, seek immediate help If the risk is not immediate, make a written note of the conversation as soon as possible – see guidelines below.
* Report the matter initially to your team leader, or to one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers (see p2) on the same day, giving them your written note of what happened.

**RECORDING ENCOUNTERS WHERE SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION IS SHARED**

Emails, letters, phone calls, texts, meetings, interviews should be recorded as part of the safeguarding record. A record should include, as relevant:

* Date, time and place.
* Who else was present at point of disclosure?
* Summary (factual, qualify if opinion).
* Potential or actual safeguarding issues.
* Actions taken and decisions made, including advice taken and who shared with.
* Document must be signed, named and dated before being passed onto the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

**SAFE RECRUITMENT**

Anyone who wishes to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults under the auspices of St Patrick’s Church must follow our Safe Recruitment Procedure:

1. Find out what the job involves – approach the team leader, look at role description found in Volunteers Serving Responsibilities, visit the group under the leader’s supervision.
2. Fill in an application form and provide two referees.
3. When asked, complete an online Disclosure Barring Service (police records) check and confidential declaration.
4. When references have been taken up and DBS clearance obtained, undertake Basic Awareness (C0) and Foundation (C1) online safeguarding training. [https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org](https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/)
5. Read the St Patrick’s Volunteers Serving Responsibilities document and the Safeguarding Handbook, sign and return the Declaration form.
6. Receive immediate induction training from the team leader as you begin work with the group.

**SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES**

Please take care reading through these guidelines as we look to implement high standards of safeguarding across all areas of St Patrick’s Church life. These guidelines are designed to enable you to keep all your activities and environments as safe as you can for children and adults who may be vulnerable, whilst at the same time maintaining a healthy dollop of realistic common sense.

**ADULT TO CHILD RATIOS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ages 0 – 2 years | 1 adult: 3 children |
| Ages 2 – 3 years | **1 adult: 4 children** |
| Ages 4 – 8 years | **1 adult: 6 children** |
| Ages 9 – 12 years | **1 adult: 8 children** |
| Ages 13 – 18 years | **1 adult: 10 children** |

No-one under 18 must be left in charge of a group of children.

Young people in school Year 10 and above may help with groups under adult supervision. If under 16, they should be counted as a child when deciding the adult to child ratio.

**Notes:**

* These ratios are guidelines only: in certain situations, it will be necessary to have a higher number of adults than those recommended above.
* There must always be two or more adults for each group, and where appropriate these should include both men and women where the group is of mixed gender.
* Where possible, if only two adults are supervising, they should not be related in order to protect them should an allegation be made.

**BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

Clear instructions should always be given, so that children and young people know what is expected of them. Expectations should be enforced in a consistent and positive way - with children or young persons being reminded of expectations where required, and given time and responsibility to respond to these.

Necessary additional behaviour management strategies may be used, depending on the child and the situation, for example it may be helpful in some circumstances for example to redirect a child’s attention to something else.

A child who has hurt another should be shown how to say sorry to that child and helped to understand how they might be feeling. Children and young people who behave well should be praised. Time out should be used as a last resort, and persistent difficult behaviour should be brought to the attention of the group leader, who will discuss it in a constructive way with the child’s parent/ carer.

All children and young people must be treated with respect, and must not be disciplined in a punitive manner. It is totally unacceptable to physically reprimand a child or young person in anyway. Our goal is to encourage children and young people to develop respect, self-control, self-confidence, and sensitivity in their social interactions during the sessions that are provided.

If a significant behavioural incident occurs, this should be recorded on paper as ‘serious incident’ including the date, names and signature of the leader. This should then be passed onto either the leader; staff member or parish safeguarding officer. If the matter is considered too confidential to record in this way it should be reported directly to a Parish Safeguarding Officer.

**CONSENT FORMS**

The parent or guardian of any child or young person attending a St Patrick’s church activity should complete a relevant consent form. A different form is used for regular and one-off activities. The forms should be kept securely as they contain personal data but should be readily accessible while activities are in progress, as they include information necessary in case of an incident.

**FACE-TO–FACE MEETINGS**

Where a face to face meeting between a leader and a young person(s) is required, such as a mentoring session, this must be arranged in advance with the parent / guardian’s consent. Meetings must take place in a public setting, where the leader and young person are not alone. Discipleship and mentoring must only be done with children or young people of the same gender.

**FIRST AID**

When on church premises, leaders should be familiar with the location of first aid facilities. If off-site, they must ensure each group carries a portable first aid kit. Where possible at least one member of the adult team should be trained in first aid. Parental contact details should be accessible in case of illness or accident.

**GOVERNMENT DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR) 2018**

All personal details are held securely for both children and adults in accordance with Government legislation and the Data protection procedures followed by St Patrick’s Church.

**PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Physical touch must be related to the child or vulnerable adult’s needs and not those of the helper. For children, touch must be age appropriate and always in sight of another adult. It should normally be initiated by the child, unless needed to remove a child from danger.

Hugs should not be prolonged, and holding an adult’s hand or sitting on their lap is only acceptable where appropriate. Tickling games and piggy-back rides are not permitted, and any physical touch that could be misunderstood or misconstrued should be avoided.

Physical contact with vulnerable adults should be sensitive and appropriate to the needs and wishes of the individual. It is important to be aware of the ‘power’ of trust which is held by the helper. It is therefore important to avoid all physical contact that has the potential to be misunderstood.

**TOILET TRIPS**

Parents / guardians should be asked to ensure their children have been to the toilet before bringing them to the group. While the group is running, parents must be asked to assist their own children with toileting and nappy changing where this is required. All children in Year 2 or below who are independent at toileting must be accompanied by a DBS checked adult to the toilet door. Children who are in Year 3 or above may go to the toilet unaccompanied.

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS**

From time to time official photos and videos may be taken for St Patrick’s communications and publicity. This will be arranged in advance with the group leader, and parents will be asked to give their written permission for photos of their child to be used in this way.

No other photos of the children and young people should be taken, or allowed to be taken by others; including photos taken by other children.

**SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAILS, TEXTS, CHAT AND MESSAGING**

We do not recommend that leaders have children or young people that they supervise as contacts / friends on social media, however where they do:

* They must ensure that all content displayed on their profile or page is appropriate at all times (whether generated by them or by others).
* They must not tag photos with any children or young people from the group in them.
* They must not communicate with children under the age of 13 (the minimum age requirement to use social media with parents/carers permission).
* They should keep as much communication as possible with children and young people from the group in the public domain.

Where communication happens outside of the public domain – for example through emails, texts, chat or messaging, this should generally only be for communicating arrangements of activities or events.

These forms of communication must not be used for prolonged conversations of a personal nature. As a general principle, if the young person’s parents / guardians were to read the message, would they understand it and find it appropriate? If in doubt, don’t send!

Should an issue of a pastoral nature be raised, an appropriate face to face meeting to discuss it should be arranged.

**RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Risk assessments should be in place for all regular activities. They should be updated annually in consultation with one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers, and filed in the church office. Any hazards or significant risks should be removed or reduced. Specific assessments must be made in the case of off-site activities.

**OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES**

For special events, including those away from the church premises, a written risk assessment should be made in consultation with a Parish Safeguarding Officer. For all off-site activities a summary of the proposed trip must be submitted to the standing committee for their approval.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

Those working with children, young people or vulnerable adults must always:

* Abide by this Safeguarding Policy
* Listen to, respect and value every person in the group.
* Treat every person fairly, without prejudice or favouritism.
* Challenge any unacceptable behaviour in an appropriate way.
* Use language that is positive and polite.
* Set an example of good teamwork and appropriate relationships.
* Always behave as an ambassador of Christ in your service.

**DECLARATION**

I have…

* Read the St Patrick’s Volunteers Serving Responsibilities
* Read the Safeguarding Handbook
* I agree to abide by the St Patrick’s Church Safeguarding policies and procedures.
* I have undertaken Basic Awareness and Foundation online training.
* I understand this Declaration will be stored securely my St Patrick’s Church.

**Name (print)**: .................................................... **Date**: ..................

**Signature**: .............................................................................

\*Please return to St Patrick’s Church office or member of Staff.