



The Parish of  
South Gillingham  
Team Ministry

## Parish of South Gillingham Team Ministry

(Comprising the churches of St Matthew's Wigmore, St Peter's Bredhurst, St Paul's Parkwood Green and All Saints Hempstead)

### Safeguarding policy for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Our Parish policy is based on "Promoting a Safer Church; Safeguarding Policy Statement for Children, Young People and Adults" approved by the House of Bishops' of the Church of England in 2017; and the safeguarding policies issued by the House of Bishops' and guidance issued by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

#### Definitions

**Child (including young people)** - anyone under the age of 18 years old.

**Church bodies** – includes the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

**Church Officer** – is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

**Domestic Abuse** – is defined as 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 and emotional.

**Safeguarding situation** – includes reports of domestic violence and abuse – and may relate to anyone in the church community and includes a church officer who has:

- behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult; or
- behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult or presented him or herself in a way that indicates they pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults.

**Vulnerable Adult** – is a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.

## **Our Mission**

1. The Parish of South Gillingham is committed to ensuring the care, nurture of and safeguarding of all children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable by:
  - promoting a safer environment and culture
  - safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Parish
  - responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
  - caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected people
  - caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected people
  - responding to those who may pose a present risk to others.

## **The role of the Incumbent and the PCC**

2. The Incumbent will provide leadership concerning safeguarding and encourage all within the team ministry to promote safer churches.
3. The PCC with the Incumbent will create an environment which is welcoming and respectful and enables safeguarding concerns to be raised and responded to openly, promptly and consistently.
4. The PCC and the Incumbent, exercising their duty of care, will ensure the protection of the vulnerable in their parish community.
5. The PCC will ensure that all church officers who work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are recruited following the House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment Guidance 2017 (or subsequent guidance) and are aware of and work to the House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance.
6. The PCC and the Incumbent will ensure there is a plan in place to raise awareness of, promote training and make sure that safeguarding is taken seriously by all in the parish.
7. The PCC will ensure that in each church an "activity risk assessment" is completed and reviewed regularly for all activities including each activity which involves children or vulnerable adults. In some instances DBS checks may be necessary for people who are transporting adults who are vulnerable.

8. The PCC will arrange appropriate insurance to cover all activities in the Parish which involve children and vulnerable adults.

9. The PCC will have a procedure in place to deal promptly with safeguarding allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance and in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA).

10. Our safeguarding policy will be reviewed and endorsed annually at the first meeting of the new PCC. The Incumbent and Church Wardens will sign the Parish Policy Statement and ensure that all members of the PCC understand their responsibilities regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

11. Safeguarding will be an agenda item at each PCC meeting. At the APCM the PCC will provide a report in relation to safeguarding. Within this report there will be a statement as to whether or not the PCC have complied with the duty to have "due regard" to the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding.

### **The Parish Safeguarding Officer**

12. The PCC will appoint a suitably experienced lay person to be the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). The PSO may also be the Lead Recruiter (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Administrator) for church officers who work with children or vulnerable adults. But, if not, the PCC will appoint another individual. The PSO will be supported, trained and be in possession of the Parish Safeguarding Policy and relevant guidance procedures.

13. The PSO will communicate regularly with the Safeguarding Officers, and have meetings as necessary, to ensure that all are updated on guidance provided by the Diocese of Rochester.

14. The PSO will liaise regularly with the Incumbent and, as necessary, with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers.

15. The PSO will report regularly to the PCC.

16. The names of the PSO and Safeguarding Officers will be published in the Parish newsletter and these details will be included in the Safeguarding report for the APCM.

### **The Safeguarding Officer**

17. Each church will appoint a Safeguarding Officer/Recruiter for DBS issues.

18. The Safeguarding Officer will ensure that all new volunteers complete the appropriate forms and complete the appropriate safeguarding training

modules/courses.

19. The Safeguarding Officer in each church will display:

- a formal statement signed by the Incumbent and the PCC of the Parish's adoption of the House of Bishops' "Promoting a Safer Church Safeguarding policy statement";
- contact details of the PSO, Church Warden and any other local leaders
- information about where to get help with child and adult safeguarding issues e.g. local authority contact details, domestic abuse and key helplines (e.g. Child Line, Parent Line plus and the Child Exploitation and On-line Protection Centre website).

### **Working with Children**

20. The minimum staffing levels for children's groups based on NSPCC guidance is as follows:

0-2 yrs	1 adult to every	3 children
2-3 yrs	1 adult to every	4 children
4-8 yrs	1 adult to every	6 children
9-12 yrs	1 adult to every	8 children
13-18 yrs	1 adult to every	10 children

Each group should have at least two adults, even for smaller groups, and if possible one male and one female. Staffing ratios for all groups should always be based on a risk assessment. For example, staffing numbers would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk, potentially dangerous or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved.

*Reference Source: Paragraph 11.3 of the House of Bishops Parish Safeguarding Handbook.*

21. A register will be kept, and regularly updated, for all children and young people attending groups and activities. At each meeting or activity each attendee will be ticked in and the names recorded of the leaders and helpers present. Registers will be kept indefinitely.

22. Registration/Parental Consent forms will be completed for every child who attends regular group activities. Forms giving permission for special activities will be used when undertaking one-off events and activities eg swimming, sleepovers, outings, away trips.

23. Where there are mixed age activities (where the parents are not present and taking full responsibility for their child) at least one person, as well as the person leading the activity will be recruited safely and have received a DBS clearance and be designated to supervise the welfare of the children involved.

24. Activities which are planned to take place away from a church will only occur with the approval of the PCC and parental consent will be required.

25. DBS clearance will need to be obtained if children are being transported on behalf of the church. It will be made clear to all concerned at which point the responsibility for the child is passed from the person with parental responsibility to a church officer and at which point returned to the person with parental responsibility.

### **The taking of photographs**

26. If a photograph of a child or young person is taken at church or at a church-run event, this will only be done with the written consent of the child's parent(s) and if the child is over 13 years old from the child. Publication of the photograph in any journal will only occur with the parents' written permission and the written consent of the child if over 13 years old. The only occasion when consent is not required is where the individual photographed is unrecognisable e.g. if they have their back to the camera, or they appear out of focus in the foreground of a photograph while the camera zooms in on objects in the background.

***Note.** No photograph of a child or young person will be shared digitally by the photographer with any other person without the written permission of the child's parent(s) and the consent of the child if over 13 years old., unless the child or young person is a member of the photographer's family. These principles apply equally to any video images of a child or young person.*

### **Hiring out of church premises**

27. The PCC or relevant District Church Council will ensure that:

- any hire agreement with any person/body wishing to hire any part of church premises contains a provision whereby the person/body agrees to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops' and the Diocese;
- the hire agreement contains a provision whereby all those hiring church premises are required to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring. Unless the event is a private party, all staff assisting the hirer will be required to have had appropriate DBS checks.
- all those hiring church premises carry full public liability insurance for the activity, or will be covered through the church insurance (e.g. a children's party).

## **The Data Protection Act and the keeping of records**

28. The PCC will ensure that the principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 as amended by the 2019 Regulations. These state that the data must be:

- fairly and lawfully processed;
- processed for limited purposes;
- adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- accurate;
- not kept for longer than is necessary;
- processed in line with the individual's rights; and
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection.

29. The PCC will ensure that each church maintains records relating to appointments, including a note of when a DBS check was obtained, the certificate number and the date received. Records will be kept secure and retained after the people concerned have left the parish.

### **Reporting of safeguarding concerns**

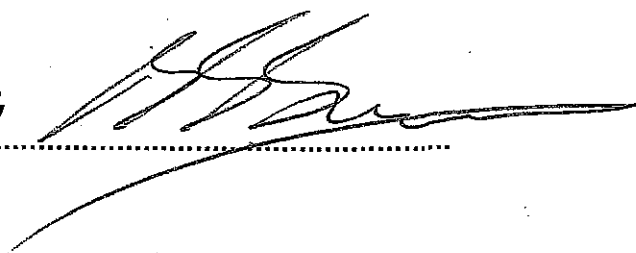
30. The PCC will report all safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers to the DSA; and ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the DSA. The PCC will ensure that any information relating to a safeguarding incident/enquiry is filed securely in the Parish Office or the Team Rector's office as appropriate.

31. The PCC will inform the DSA, to enable them to inform the Charity Commission, of all serious safeguarding situations and inform them of how they are responding. Reference to the situation will also be made on the annual return.

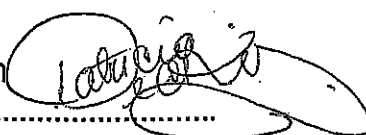
32. In accordance with the House of Bishops' Guidance relating to the reporting of serious incidents, the PCC will inform the DSA should such an incident occur.

**Signatories**

Rev Canon Brian Senior,  
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Incumbent.



Revd Pam Alexander, Revd Pat Dickin  
.....  
Clergy



Andrew Mann



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Vice Chair PCC

*Paul Horsman*     *D.W. Fuller*     *L.C. Wainwright*  
*Paul Bellerby*

Lesley Wainwright, Paul Horsman, Paul Bellerby, David Fuller

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Church Wardens



Valerie Jenson

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Parish Safeguarding Officer

June 2021

