

Diocese of Bristol



Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults: Policy and Procedure

“Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God’s re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm” Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding Policy 2018

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Section A: Introduction

The following policy and procedures were agreed by the St Andrew's Church PCC on 24th January 2023, and St Peter's Church PCC on 16th January 2023, and will be reviewed annually to ensure that the Benefice can meet its obligations to safeguard children and young people, and vulnerable adults.

Incumbent: Rev Dr Andy Murray

St Peter's Churchwardens: John Maslen & Llewelyn Lawton

St Andrew's Churchwardens: Philip Hands & Esther Mutahinduka

Section B: Parish Policy for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

1. The Benefice of St Andrew's Church, Avonmouth and St Peter's Church, Lawrence Weston, as part of the Diocese of Bristol is committed to working within the Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Bristol and the relevant policies and guidance documents are:

Church of England:

Protecting all God's Children 2010

Promoting a Safe Church 2006

Promoting a Safer Church – Policy Statement 2017

Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment 2016

Responding Well to Domestic Abuse 2017

Responding Well to those who have been Sexually Abused 2011

Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers 2017

Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies 2017

Safeguarding Records Joint Practice Guidance 2015

Safeguarding Records Retention Tool Kit 2015

General Statement on Safeguarding Children In Towers 2015

These documents can all be found on the Diocese of Bristol website:

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/safeguarding-resources/> look under National Policies and Procedures

Diocese of Bristol:

Safeguarding Policy 2018

Allegations Management Procedure 2018

Ministering to those who may present a risk 2018

Safer Recruitment Guidance and Toolkit 2017

These documents can be found on the Diocese of Bristol website:

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/safeguarding-resources/> and descriptions are given where these policies are referenced in this policy document.

Statutory Guidance:

Working Together 2018: This guidance from the Department of Education describes safeguarding processes and the safeguards that every organisation must have in place, including faith organisations, when safeguarding children. See the guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> Or online: www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk

Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016: This is guidance from the Department of Health which describes safeguarding processes for adults and the responsibilities of different organisations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance#safeguarding-1>

2. IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IS AT RISK OF ABUSE, THE ONE THING YOU MUST NOT DO IS NOTHING

It is the responsibility of all members of the Benefice of St Andrew's and St Peter's to give paramount importance to the nurture and care of children, young people and vulnerable adults in a safe and secure environment. It is about preventing harm to children and adults wherever possible.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- Everyone has different levels of vulnerability and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives
- All children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable (regardless of age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse which can occur in all families and communities.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, vulnerable adults and their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

We will develop a culture in our Benefice that:

- Enables a safe and caring community to provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.
- Enables and encourages concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently and protects children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable from actual or potential harm.
- Ensures all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse.
- Values, listens to and respects children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable, encouraging them to be active contributors to the church community.
- Encourages adults who may be vulnerable to lead as independent a life as possible.

The Benefice churches of St Andrew's and St Peter's both have Parish Safeguarding Officer(s) appointed by the PCC. The Parish Safeguarding Officer(s) name(s) and photograph(s) are displayed on the church noticeboard, which will be in a prominent position and clearly labelled.

When concerns are raised we will:

- Respond without delay to every concern raised that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, or may be at risk of harm, through abuse or neglect.
- Work with police, local authority and other partners in any investigation, including where allegations are made against a member of the Church community.
- Challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

If abuse has occurred we will ensure:

- Informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired.
- Supervision is provided for any member of the Church Community known to pose a risk of harm to others.
- Appropriate pastoral care is provided to any member of our church against whom an allegation is made.

SECTION C: Procedure for the appointment of paid and volunteer staff

The Benefice of St Andrew's, Avonmouth and St Peter's, Lawrence Weston adheres to the Church of England policy "Safer Recruitment, 2016":

<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/c-e-safer-recruitment-2016/>

1. All paid and volunteer jobs with a leadership responsibility within the church, which bring people into regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults will have a description of the post and what is involved in doing it.
Job descriptions will be prepared by the person(s) responsible for the particular area of ministry.
2. The PCC is responsible for 'employing' all workers (whether paid or volunteer) and all staff and volunteers will have a named supervisor.
3. There will be appropriate application forms for all paid and volunteer posts. Information on such forms will be treated as confidential and stored securely in a locked cabinet.
4. References must be taken up. Where anxiety is raised, further advice may be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
5. Suitable candidates for volunteer posts will have worshipped at St Andrew's or St Peter's for a minimum period of six months except in exceptional circumstances (the incumbent and Parish Safeguarding Officer will be consulted in all instances). Candidates will be interviewed by the appropriate Church Leader, and the responsibilities of the candidate and of the church will be made clear.
6. All appropriate criminal record checks will be undertaken before the applicant starts in post and all eligible staff and volunteers will have a repeat DBS disclosure every 5 years. Any lapsed DBS check will require the post holder to stand down until the check has been completed.

7. The person appointed will sign the safe recruitment form indicating that they have read and understood the role description, and Safeguarding policy, and will comply with the expectations laid out in both documents.
8. The Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Recruiting Team will inform the PCC about all appointments.
9. There will be a probationary period of 3 months for all paid and volunteer staff, including those employed on a permanent basis, with a review before the period comes to an end. Those involved in temporary posts (e.g. holiday club) should be offered a debriefing meeting and a note made of any safeguarding concerns.
10. Anyone working in a continuing way will have an annual review with the appropriate Ministry Leader.
11. Training will be available for those working with children, young people or vulnerable adults. This will include both induction training and three-yearly training updates in line with the current Diocesan Training Plan. Information about the Safeguarding Policy should be part of regular training.

SECTION D: Health and Safety

1. An up to date First-Aid Kit should be available at all times. This will be maintained by the Church Wardens.
2. All accidents should be recorded in the Accident Book, indicating what happened, when, who was present and who was affected by the accident. The report should be signed and dated and a copy held in the benefice office.
3. Incidents which occur which could give rise to an accident in the future should be noted and reported to the Ministry Leader for future reference in order that steps may be taken to avoid such accidents.
4. A register should be kept of attendance at all children's and youth groups, including a list of the adults who were present. Parental consent should be obtained for regular attendance at all Youth and Children's groups. These records will be kept by the children's & youth ministry leaders, and then archived at the end of the each year, by the PSO, who will keep these records indefinitely in a locked cabinet.
5. Church premises will not be used to provide sleeping accommodation without the specific permission of the PCC
6. If a church group wishes to take a party of young people on a day trip or for residential activities they should ensure that parental consent to the trip, risk assessments, health forms etc are properly completed.
7. Risk assessments should be completed for all unusual activities.

SECTION E: Insurance

1. A comprehensive insurance policy is in place
2. Organisations which use the building may need to have their own additional insurance arrangements.
3. Where children are being taken out, the organisers must ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for transport to and from the activities involved. The PCC needs to be informed of all planned external activities; alternatively the Leadership team can be consulted on behalf of the PCC if there is no PCC meeting in advance of the trip.

SECTION F: Staffing levels

1. Those responsible for organising particular activities need to think carefully about safe staffing levels, taking into account the age ranges of the children involved, any special needs they may have, the nature of the activities, and staff qualifications where that is appropriate (e.g. if groups of children are being taken swimming).
2. The number of adults needs to be increased to take account of the factors above e.g. if groups are being taken out on a trip to take account of potential dangers and risks. The number of adults needed to deal with under-3s should ensure that no-one would have to carry more than 2 children in the event of a fire or other emergency. If there are children with disabilities they will need special consideration.
3. Specific ratios are recommended for the number of children to adults, and it is necessary to be aware and plan these levels. Wherever possible there should always be two adults with any group of children, however small the group. We recommend:

Age of Children	Maximum group size with TWO ADULTS	ADDITIONAL Adults required
Aged 0-2 years	4	For additional children up to a maximum of 2 – one additional adult
Aged 2-3 years	8	For additional children up to a maximum of 4 – one additional adult
Aged 3-8 years	16	For additional children up to a maximum of 8 – one additional adult
Over the age of 8 years	20	For additional children up to a maximum of 12 – one additional adult

4. It can be helpful to check that there is a first-aider present on site.

5. Where other organisations are using church premises they should meet the staffing requirements of their registering authority or umbrella organisation.
6. A married couple, or a couple in a close personal relationship, should not be the only leaders of a group. However, as long as there are other adult leaders present, a married couple can count as two individuals for the purpose of the adult/child ratios above.
7. No children or young people under the age of 18yrs will be left in overall charge of other children and young people. A volunteer leader under the age of 18 does not count as an adult in the required child/adult ratios.

SECTION G: Practical Considerations for groups & activities

1. **Toileting:** Parents are asked to take their children to the toilet prior to leaving them to be registered in their group. **Pre-school Children (age 5 and under):** A female leader will accompany the child to the toilet. The leader should wait outside the closed cubicle door unless the child requires assistance, and should be within eyeshot of another leader. The cubicle door must not be closed with the leader and child inside. The child and leader must wash their hands with soap before returning to their group. **Older Children:** Leader will allow individual children to go to the toilet at their discretion.
2. **Physical Contact:** One of the aims of the following guidelines is for us as a church to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour. It may be appropriate to comfort a child or young person who has either hurt him/herself or is distressed, but adults should be encouraged to take their cue from the child/young person. Try to make sure other adults are around. Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature. It is unlikely that appropriate physical contact in the course of work with children and young people could be misconstrued as abuse if the following guidelines are followed:
 - All volunteers must work with, or within sight of, another adult.
 - If any activity requires physical contact make sure that the child/young person and their parents are aware of this and its nature.
 - There must be no physical punishment of any kind.
 - Avoid physically rough games. In the light of these guidelines each group will have discussed what is appropriate within that group
 - Avoid unnecessary touch.
 - Avoid taking young children to the toilet, but when unavoidable make sure another adult is informed or organise a toilet break for the whole group.
 - First aid should be administered by someone suitably qualified and with others present. The child should administer possible first aid itself.
 - Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming him/herself or others. If possible, try to make sure there is another adult present. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible.

- All significant incidents of physical touching (e.g. restraining a child or young person who is violent, physically removing a young person from the group, or preventing a young person from entering the group) that could give rise to concern or complaint should be recorded in the incident book and be reported to the PSOs.
 - All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child/ young person's needs and not the needs of the adult (i.e. initiated by the child/cue from the child).
 - Colleagues must be prepared to support each other.
 - Other adults should be prepared to speak out and take necessary action if any adult is behaving inappropriately and make sure the PSOs are aware of the situation.
3. **Unaccompanied children:** Sometimes children and young people may attend worship or specific groups, apparently without the knowledge of their parents. No hard and fast guidelines can be given, and the age of the child/ young person should be taken into consideration. The following points may assist:
- Establish whether the child/ young person attends with his/her parents'/guardians' knowledge, or at least without his/her parents'/ guardians' objections.
 - Establish their contact details (address and home telephone number). Include these on the register/ signing in book.
 - Provide information about the group to the child to take to his/her parent/ guardian and a registration form. Inform the child or young person that they can enter but if they wish to come to the group on a regular basis, they should ask their parent to fill in the registration form and bring it along next time.
 - If someone turns up for a second time without their registration form we would phone the parent/ guardian to gain verbal consent and explain to the parent/ guardian that we need the form for the next time.
 - If there are very exceptional circumstances where a child is vulnerable and doesn't want to seek parental consent, they can keep coming only after the situation has been checked with one of the church PSOs/Vicar.
 - Bear in mind that the child may have some school, home or personal difficulties, which s/he may not be willing to disclose, and which need sensitive handling.
 - Remember that, for an unaccompanied child/young person, Church may be a rare 'safe place.'
4. **Photographs. Website & Media:** Careful consideration will be given as to why photographs are to be taken of children and what their subsequent use might be.
- Permission will be obtained from parents before photographs of their children are taken
 - Permission will be obtained from parents if photographs of their children are to be used for publicity purposes, either on flyers or on the church website. Care will be taken to try to obscure individual faces and not allocate names to individuals in any photographs posted in a public place (e.g. Notice Boards, church magazine, website etc.)
 - Photos or videos of children or young people attending church activities must not be posted onto personal social media sites online. Where a parent/guardian has

given permission for photos of their children to be used for publicity purposes, images/video may be uploaded onto the church Facebook or Twitter pages.

5. **Social Media:**

Introduction

Social Media sites enable users to create and share content and keep in touch with other users, including maintaining a profile on a networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat; writing or commenting on a blog, whether your own or that of another person, and taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards. For many, especially young people, using social media is an extension of physical face-to-face relationships. It is therefore important that churches also engage with their community and worshippers through these platforms. However, this must be done safely to avoid the risk of:

- Forming inappropriate relationships
- Saying things you should not, such as offensive, sexual or suggestive comments
- Blurring the boundaries between public/work ministry and your private life
- Grooming and impersonation
- Bullying and harassment

Mobile phones

It is our intention that church ministry staff/clergy are supplied with a mobile phone line, dedicated for work purposes. Ministry staff/Clergy to provide a phone handset for this purpose. Having a separate work phone allows for the phone to be switched off outside working hours, and for usage to be accountable. This means that the work phone number is the only number that is given out to the church or community contacts, and the church officer's personal number can remain private. Texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to the named person or the PSO/incumbent (or if unavailable the DSA).

It is recognised that ministry staff who do not communicate directly with children, young people or vulnerable adults are not obliged to use a work phone line or social media account. If the member of staff/clergy wishes to continue using their own private mobile phone number, they may do so with the agreement of their line manager.

The role of the PCC

The PCC agrees that St Andrew's & St Peter's Churches may use Facebook as part of their mission and ministry, and that posts and Facebook messages are overseen by the church office. Church ministry staff also have the ability to communicate with parishioners via these church Facebook accounts. Where there are Facebook or similar online groups set up on the church's behalf, the PCC to ensure there is a **named person** to whom all workers are accountable.

The **named person** must be a church officer, and should be aware of the social media account name and password so that they can at any time log on to the account to monitor the communications.

The **Named person** to be proactive in fulfilling this role.

The named officer for our Benefice is Esther Mutahinduka (Church Warden)

Communications to be shared with the **named person**. Church officers to remain bound by professional rules of confidentiality. Where there is concern that a young person or adult is at risk of abuse, or they themselves pose a risk of abuse to others, safeguarding procedures must always be followed.

Church Officers to:

- have eyes open and be vigilant
- Maintain the utmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key. Treat online communication with children, young people and adults as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.
- Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA)
- Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post.
- Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church accounts and profiles separate from personal social media accounts (e.g. only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, while keeping a separate Facebook profile for private life.
- Always ask parents/carers for written consent to:
 1. Use and store photographs of children/young people from activities or events in official church publications, or on the church's social media, website and displays.
 2. Use telephone, text message, email and other messaging services to communicate with young people
 3. Allow young people to connect to the church's social media pages
- Only use an approved church/ministry account to communicate with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. The **named person** should be able to access this and review conversations, and the account should be visible to young people and their parents. Young people must be made aware that any communication will be viewed by all users. Save any messages and threads

through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence to the named person of your exchange when required.

- Avoid one-to-one communication with a child or young person.
- Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
- Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the **named person**, PSO, incumbent or, if appropriate the DSA.
- Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

Do not:

- Use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Add children, young people or vulnerable adults as friends on your personal accounts.
- Facebook stalk (i.e. dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them)
- Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper on on headed notepaper.
- Comment on photos or posts, or share content unless appropriate to your church role.
- Use visual medial (e.g. Skype, Facetime) for one-to-one conversations with young people – use only in group settings.

In particular, do not allow content to contain or share links to other sites that contain:

- Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements.
- Breaches of copyright and data protection.
- Material of an illegal nature.
- Offensive sexual or abusive references
- Inappropriate language

- Anything which may be harmful to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or which may bring the church into disrepute or compromise its reputation.

SECTION H: What to do when a child or vulnerable adult tells you they have been abused.

It is not easy to give precise guidance but the following is a guideline to what to say:

General Points:

- Above all else, listen, listen, and listen!
- Show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else – don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a child has broken a rule they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware the child may have been threatened
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let the child know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful things you might say or convey:

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

Things to avoid saying or doing:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it
- Are you sure this is true?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as 'I am shocked, don't tell anyone else.'

Concluding:

- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and that you believe them
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Report your discussion to the PSO or Vicar for advice. If the PSOs or Vicar are implicated then telephone then telephone the Bristol Diocesan Child Protection Adviser, or 'First Response' if they are unavailable (contact numbers are available at the end of this document)
- Consider your own feelings and get confidential pastoral support if needed.

SECTION I: What to do after a child or vulnerable adult has disclosed incidents of abuse to you

- Under no circumstances should a church volunteer or employee investigate allegations of abuse.
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when he/she said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand e.g. description of the activity.
- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record.
- Keep all hand written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.
- Take action to report the disclosure of abuse to the PSO or Vicar immediately
- You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than the PSOs or Vicar.
- Once a child has talked about abuse and PSO/Vicar has been informed, they will follow the Diocesan reporting procedures. They should consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services (First Response) and/or the police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home. The PSOs or Vicar will make this decision.

SECTION J: What to do when you have suspicions or concerns of abuse or have received information that may point to abuse

The correct course of action is:

- Keep a written report of the concerns and decisions made, with outcomes and other relevant details. Keep the report in a safe place
- Do not ignore your concerns, but take advice on what to do.
- Act quickly. It is important to take advice on the same day.
- Inform and discuss with the PSO. The PSO may already be aware of other concerns about the child or family and your information may help to fill out the picture
- You may also wish contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for further advice

**IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT IS AT RISK OF ABUSE,
THE ONE THING YOU MUST NOT DO IS NOTHING**

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SECTION K: USEFUL CONTACTS:

Vicar

Rev Dr Andy Murray (07966 790 535) – Please note Andy’s regular day off is Friday, so any phone messages left on his voicemail will not be responded to until his next working day, at the earliest.

Benefice Safeguarding Officers

Judy Helme Tel: 0117 982 9893 (St Andrew’s, Avonmouth)
Julie Morgan Tel: 0117 982 6885 (St Andrew’s, Avonmouth)
Martin Horton Tel: 0117 968 1440 (St Peter’s, Lawrence Weston)

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

Adam Bond Tel: 0117 9060100 (office hours) Email: adam.bond@bristoldiocese.org

Out of hours: For any urgent out of hours concerns contact the Thirty One:Eight (formerly CCPAS) helpline on 0303 003 11 11. Please state that you are calling from a Diocese of Bristol church and contact your PSO as soon as possible to report that you sought advice from Thirty One:Eight and action taken. When calling, please state that you are calling from a Church within the Diocese of Bristol. This will enable Thirtyone: to ensure that relevant information is passed to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or to other Diocesan staff as required to support you. Further information about Thirtyone:eight is available at: <https://thirtyone:eight.org>

BRISTOL CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE TEAM: First Response - 0117 903 6444

Bristol Adults Safeguarding Team: You can call ‘Care Direct’ on 0117 922 2700, 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. There’s an answerphone service outside these hours. In an emergency, call 999.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0117 903 7795

NSPCC 24 hour helpline: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

Police: 999 (emergency) or 101 (non emergency)

Some useful references:

❖ **Protecting All God’s Children**

The guidance issued by the Church of England available on the Diocese of Bristol website <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/safeguarding/>

❖ **Safeguarding Training** – details on the Diocese of Bristol website www.bristol.anglican.org (Safeguarding)

❖ **‘Safe from Harm’** Published by the Home Office 1993

❖ **‘Keeping children safe in education’.** Department for Education: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>