



Concerns & Allegations (Safeguarding) Policy

All Saints' Church, Walsoken

Please refer to Document S&S_Doc_001 for all Safeguarding and Social requirements.

Specific Policy

The church of England safeguarding code of practice places requirements on our PCC as the “relevant persons” to enable the assessment and management of safeguarding concerns and allegations at our church.

The whole code is designed more for diocesan and national safeguarding officers and those who are involved in the management of cases rather than our parish officers.

This Safeguarding & Social (S&S) sub-policy controls the initial interactions between our church and the diocesan and national safeguarding officers following concerns & allegations raised.

Note: The PCC at All Saints' Church, Walsoken has formally adopted 'he House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy 'Promoting a Safer Church'.

Enforcement

Failure by a member of the clergy to comply with a requirement under this Code may constitute misconduct. Failure by a reader or lay worker to comply with a requirement may be grounds for the revocation of that reader's or lay worker's licence.

Other officers, such as Churchwardens, may be suspended from office for failing to comply with a requirement under the Code. Breaches by trustee bodies, such as our PCC, also trigger an intervention by the Charity Commission.

Reference Documents

Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021

Clergy Discipline Measure 2003

Safeguarding Policy 'Promoting a Safer Church' (Church of England)

Procedure

Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse is given as appendix 1. If you have a concern that a child or adult is, or may be, being abused, or that a church officer is, or may be, abusing a child or adult, then.

- 1) Respond well to the victim/survivor, if it is a direct disclosure, ensure they feel listened to and taken seriously. They should be informed that their identity and the identity of the respondent will be shared with key church officers, and may be shared with statutory agencies, if there is any current risk to children or adults. The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know (e.g. the statutory agencies and appropriate church officers).
- 2) In an **EMERGENCY**: If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, contact the emergency services on 999.
- 3) For a **NON-EMERGENCY**: In the first instance contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) or incumbent. They must then contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA). If both the PSO and incumbent are unavailable, contact the DSA directly. If the concern arises in an activity, discuss with the group/activity leader, who will contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent.
- 4) Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSA within 24 hours.
- 5) If the PSO and incumbent and DSA are not available within 24 hours, contact Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care and/or the police directly if the concern is that a child or adult is being abused. Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or police if the concern is that a church officer may be abusing a child or adult. Advise the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent as soon as possible that you have made a report, they will advise the DSA.

If in doubt don't delay, seek advice from statutory agencies

Concerns & Allegations (Safeguarding) Policy

All Saints' Church – Walsoken

- 6) Do not contact the respondent or anyone who may be implicated in the allegation or disclosure, even if they would normally be contacted as part of the procedure, until advice has been sought from the DSA or statutory agencies.
- 7) Record the details of the concern or allegation. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time (usually it will not be), make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the concern or allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face to face conversation, letter, etc. The written record should include details of information provided. Always sign and date the record. Keep it factual. Pass on a copy to the DSA (and/or the PSO/incumbent). The records should be kept secure and confidential.

The DSA will then act in line with the House of Bishops' guidance. They will offer advice, support and guidance and help to make the required referrals. **At this point parish officers follow the DSA directives.**

A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and adults and respecting the rights of the person against whom an allegation is made. In such circumstances the welfare of the child, young person or adult must come first. The rights of the person against whom the allegation is made are important and must be given due weight, once the immediate safety and protection of the child, young person or adult has been assured.

The Overriding Safeguarding Principles are given as Appendix 2

Forms

Form 1: Safeguarding Reporting Form

All Saints' Church, Walsoken	
Safeguarding Reporting Form	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"><p>This form should be used to record safeguarding concerns relating to Children and/or Vulnerable persons. In an emergency please do not delay in informing the police or social services. All the information must be treated as confidential and reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer within one working day or the next working day if it's a weekend. The form should be completed at the time or immediately following disclosure, but after all necessary emergency actions have been taken. Please complete the form as fully as possible.</p></div>	
1 Your details (the person completing the form)	
Your Name	
Position	
Telephone	
Email	
2 Details of the person affected	
Name	
Position	
Address	

Diagrams

None

Concerns & Allegations (Safeguarding) Policy

All Saints' Church – Walsoken

Appendices

Appendix 1. Guidelines for Responding to a Person Disclosing Abuse

Do

- 1) Listen.
- 2) Take what is said seriously.
- 3) Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with only a 'yes' or 'no')
- 4) Remain calm.
- 5) Consider the person's age and level of understanding.
- 6) Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- 7) Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.
- 8) Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your activity leader/ Parish Safeguarding Officer/ DSA and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- 9) Check out what the person hopes to result from the disclosure.
- 10) Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

Do Not

- 1) Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information).
- 2) Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- 3) Investigate.
- 4) Contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- 5) Do a physical or medical examination.

Record

- 1) Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- 2) Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or the statutory authorities.
- 3) Record the date, time, place, words used and how they appeared to you. Record the actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- 4) Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- 5) Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

Report

- 1) If there is immediate danger to a child or adult contact the police.
- 2) Otherwise report to your activity leader/ Parish Safeguarding Officer/incumbent immediately.
- 3) Within 24 hours the PSO/incumbent reports the concerns to the DSA.
- 4) The DSA will advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies within 24 hours.
- 5) If there is any doubt seek advice from social services or the police.

Concerns & Allegations (Safeguarding) Policy

All Saints' Church – Walsoken

Appendix 2. Overriding Safeguarding Principles

- 1) The safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount.
- 2) Consistent with Christian theology and acceptance that each human being is made in the image of God, complainants, respondents and others impacted by the concern or allegation will be treated with dignity and respect.
- 3) Complainants and respondents will have access to appropriate support whilst action under this Code is undertaken, recognising the potential of these processes to cause distress and lead to trauma.
- 4) The importance of statutory processes and services is recognised, and responses to complainants and respondents should meet legal requirements and be underpinned by guidance from the relevant statutory authorities (e.g. the police, social care).
- 5) Effective partnership work, within our Church and with relevant organisations and professionals outside of our Church, is key in ensuring that risks are effectively managed, processes are not duplicated, and complainants and respondents receive coordinated responses.
- 6) The safeguarding processes under this Code should be carried out in a transparent manner, and complainants and respondents will have access to information explaining these processes.
- 7) Complainants and respondents will have the opportunity to state their views, be listened to and be heard.
- 8) The safeguarding processes under this Code should be conducted efficiently and seek to avoid delays.
- 9) Clear records should be maintained at all stages, including records of key decisions, referrals and outcomes for all cases.
- 10) Whilst the requirements set out in this Code must be followed, in certain circumstances, flexibility can be applied to meet the specific needs of individual complainants and respondents, or to apply the Code effectively in specific Church settings. This can only be done on the advice of the statutory services or a Regional Safeguarding Lead on behalf of the National Safeguarding team.

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