



# Violence & Aggression Policy

## All Saints' Church, Walsoken

Please refer to Document S&S\_Doc\_001 for all Safeguarding and Social requirements.

### Specific Policy

This Safeguarding & Social (S&S) sub-policy addresses violence and Aggression at church.

The purpose of this policy is to address instances of unacceptable behaviour which may cause harm or the fear of harm to any person within All Saints' Church, Walsoken. The scope of this policy is therefore, "Instances of violence or aggression committed by any person, towards any other person at All Saints' Walsoken, or whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the Priest in charge, PCC, or whilst using parish social media accounts".

### Definitions

- 1) Violence is the use of force against a person and has the same definition as "assault" in law (i.e., an attempt, offer or application of force against the person). This would cover any person unlawfully touching any other person forcefully, spitting at another person, raising fists or verbally threatening to strike or otherwise apply force to any person.
- 2) Aggression is regarded as threatening or abusive language or gestures, sexual gestures or behaviour, derogatory sexual or racial remarks, shouting at any person or applying force to any property in All Saints' Church, Walsoken.

### Reference Documents

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

### Procedure

#### Responsibilities of Office Holders, and Volunteers

Officer holders and volunteers should:

- 1) Take responsibility to ensure their own safety and that of their colleagues. It is essential, therefore, that all are familiar with policies and procedures, equipment and precautions adopted to combat the risk of physical and verbal abuse.
- 2) Familiarise themselves with policies and procedures, guidelines and instructions.
- 3) Use any equipment or devices provided for 'at risk' situations, i.e., alarms, or mobile phones etc.
- 4) Participate in any relevant training made available by the church.
- 5) Report all incidents of physical and verbal abuse (threatened or actual).
- 6) Record details of incidents in compliance with parish procedures.
- 7) Contribute to reviews concerning any incidents in which they have been involved.
- 8) Suggest precautionary measures involving changes in the layout of the work environment that can reduce risk.
- 9) Make use of any available support and counselling.
- 10) Advise the Health and Safety Officer of any perceived risks involved in parish activities.

#### The Responsibilities of the Church:

- 1) Carry out risk assessments to assess and review the duties of office holders, staff and volunteers, identifying any 'at risk' situations and taking appropriate steps to reduce or remove the risk.
- 2) Assess and review the layout of premises to reduce the risk to officer holders, staff, volunteers, visitors and worshippers.
- 3) Assess and review the provision of personal safety equipment, i.e. alarms.
- 4) Develop policies, procedures and guidelines for dealing with physical and verbal abuse.
- 5) Provide support and counselling for victims of any incidents of violence and/or aggression or refer to suitably qualified health professionals.
- 6) Make officer holders, staff and volunteers aware of risks and ensure the provision of relevant training courses.
- 7) Record any incidents and take any remedial action to reduce the risk of similar incidents taking place.

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### What to do if Violence and Aggression are Encountered

If violence and aggression are encountered:

- 1) In the first instance, office holder or volunteers should ask the perpetrator to stop behaving in an unacceptable way and request assistance as soon as possible. Sometimes a calm and quiet approach will be all that is required. If the situation allows, try to obtain the person's name and address as this will assist with recording the incident.
- 2) If the unacceptable behaviour continues after reasonable requests to stop, then the perpetrator should be requested to leave the parish premises.
- 3) If the person is acting in an unacceptable and unlawful manner, causes damage or strikes another, then the police should be called immediately.
- 4) If the police have been called office holders or volunteers should attempt to evacuate the area and move themselves and visitors away from the person who is being violent or aggressive.
- 5) Should it prove necessary to protect others or themselves from harm, then office holders or volunteers should not, except on the most extreme occasions, attempt to physically intervene and use only reasonable force when doing so.
- 6) Office holders and volunteers who are involved in or witness an incident of violence or aggression must complete a written note of the incident, detailing in chronological order what has taken place, and the exact words used, prior to leaving the building where possible.
- 7) It is the policy of the parish to press charges against any person who damages or steals parish property or assaults any office holder, staff member or volunteer.

### Procedure Following an Incident

The Relevant Person will:

- 1) Review the incident with the office holder or volunteer immediately to determine severity.
- 2) Determine if the police should be called if they have not already (e.g., if a crime may have been committed).
- 3) Make a record of the incident (even a brief record if it is a 'low-level' or repeat incident) to assist with building up a chronology of events should it be required by the police or another statutory agency. The Parish Safeguarding Officer should be informed of additions to this log.
- 4) If a person has been physically hurt, the incident must be additionally recorded in the relevant accident log.
- 8) Carry out a risk assessment to determine whether any additional measures or changes in practice are needed.

### Support for Office Holders or Volunteers Subjected to Abuse.

All saints' Church, Walsoken takes a serious view of any incidents of physical and verbal abuse against those individuals affected and will support them if assaulted, threatened or harassed. The first concern the church after an incident is to provide appropriate debriefing and counselling for those affected. Depending on the severity of the incident this counselling may be undertaken by trained professionals.

The Relevant Person will assist victims of violence with the completion of the formal record of the incident and where appropriate will report the incident to the police.

## Forms

None

## Diagrams

None

## Appendices

None

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