

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
AND GUIDANCE
St Matthew with St Paul, Winchester**

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(Incorporating the Winchester Diocese Guidelines and Procedures)

Adoption and updating of policy:

These guidelines were approved by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Winchester, St Matthew with St Paul, at its meeting held on 10 February 2015, and are to be reviewed on an annual basis by the PCC. They were re-checked by the Safeguarding Officer, Niki Bray, on 18.10.17 prior to resubmission to the PCC with a report on what progress has been achieved

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WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

The term 'child abuse' is used to include all the ways a child may be abused or harmed by others. There are four main areas of child abuse:

- **NEGLECT** – inappropriate dress, leaving alone, poor feeding, lack of appropriate medical care
- **PHYSICAL** – shaking, hitting, scalding, burning with cigarettes
- **SEXUAL** – ranging from making a child look at pornographic material to any sexual activity
- **EMOTIONAL** – rejection, telling a child he or she is worthless, bullying.

Where abuse occurs it is usually carried out by someone known to and trusted by the child or young person. In many cases this will be a family member, close family friend or someone in a position of trust.

The cases of abuse being carried out by someone unknown to the child are rare. It must be recognised that in many cases people working for the church – in either a paid or voluntary capacity – will be known to and trusted by a child and his or her family. They may have responsibility for and access to children in a range of situations. It is not acceptable or accurate to assume that everyone involved with church life is above suspicion.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE

The presence of one of these signs does not mean abuse has taken place, but they are useful to keep in mind.

- any injuries inconsistent with the explanation given
- any injuries to parts of the body that are not usually exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- undernourishment, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food
- reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- bruises, bites, burns, fractures, etc., that do not have an accidental explanation
- cuts, scratches, grazes that do not have an accidental explanation
- any allegations made by a child concerning child abuse
- an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, a detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or regularly engagement in age-inappropriate sexual play
- sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia or self-harm
- changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy; also depression, aggression, extreme anxiety
- obsessions or phobias
- sudden underachievement or lack of concentration
- inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- self-harm; drug or alcohol abuse.

DIOCESAN CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

- each PCC should formally adopt the Diocesan guidelines
- never allow a known sex offender to have contact with children in any circumstances
- as far as possible, do not be alone with a child where your activity cannot be seen; always have two leaders working with a group
- be careful of touch – it should always be appropriate to the child’s needs not the leader’s
- set clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour
- do not invite a child or young person to your home alone
- do not give lifts to children on their own other than for short journeys; if they are alone, ask them to sit in the back seat
- Safeguarding Officer, Niki Bray, 01962 869941, 07786 837535, is the nominated person within the church whom children or young people can talk to if they have any problems
- ensure all volunteers working with children are properly recruited and trained
- ensure all staff complete the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check and are cleared prior to an offer being made and work starting.

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

Treat all those who offer to work with children and young people as if they were applying for paid employment:

- find out about their background and experience; seek references
- ensure police checks are requested for everyone working with children and young people
- ensure there are clear lines of accountability and provision of supervision for everyone
- ensure everyone is aware of best practice for work with children and young people.

All requests for police checks are made via the DBS. The disclosure should be sent from the DBS within three weeks and the applicant will need to show the certificate to Revd Mary Copping or Niki Bray so they can record the date and certificate number.

The process will be managed from the Diocesan Office at Old Alresford Place. Forms and guidance can be obtained by telephoning the Director for Social Responsibility, 01962 737347.

REPORTS OF ABUSE

All reports or suspicions concerning abuse will be treated seriously.

Please report to Canon Peter Seal, 01962 854849, or Niki Bray, 01962 869941, 07786 837535, or Revd Mary Copping 07921 886016

Allegations or reports of abuse may come from a variety of sources:

- something you see happening, or worries you have about the behaviour of another person
- something you are told by someone else – a friend of the child, another adult, another child
- rumours about a person’s previous behaviour

- behaviour you observe in the child
- from the child directly.

This means we should be aware of what is happening around us, not actively seeking abuse in every situation.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A CHILD WANTS TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE

- keep calm – do not appear shocked or disgusted
- accept what the child says without passing judgement
- look directly at the child
- be honest
- let them know you will need to tell someone else; don't promise confidentiality
- reassure them that under no circumstances are they to blame for the abuse – even if they have broken some rules
- be aware the child may have been threatened and fear reprisals for having spoken to you
- never push for information or question the child. If at any point a child decides not to continue, accept that and let them know that you are ready to listen should they wish to continue at any time. Also, let the child know that we may need to pass the information on to someone else.

HELPFUL THINGS TO SAY

- I take what you are saying seriously.
- I am pleased you have told me; thank you for telling me.
- It isn't your fault and you are not to blame at all.
- I am sorry that happened to you.

THINGS NOT TO SAY

- Why didn't you say something before?
- I really can't believe it.
- Are you sure this is what happened?
- Why? Where? When? Who? What? How?
- Don't make false promises to the child – like confidentiality – be honest now, as any lies will be a further betrayal and abuse.
- Never say 'I'm shocked' or 'Make sure you don't tell anyone else'.

DISCLOSURE FROM AN ADULT ABOUT PREVIOUS ABUSE

In cases where an adult discloses details of abuse when they were younger, and the abuser is known and may continue to pose a threat to children, please advise them to speak to Canon

Peter Seal, 01962 854849, or Niki Bray, 01962 869941, in the first instance. They will then be advised to contact either Social Services, the police, other relevant statutory services or the Bishop's Child Protection Advisor or Director of Social Responsibility.

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE CONVERSATION WITH THE CHILD

- Make notes about the conversation as soon as possible after the discussion. Record exactly what the child said and when he or she said it. Note the time, date and place of the conversation and the name of any other person present. If the initial note is handwritten, keep it if it is subsequently typed up.
- Immediately refer to Niki Bray, 07786 837535, Revd Mary Copping, 07921 886016, or Canon Peter Seal, 01962 854849. If unable to contact them, phone Children's Services, 0845 603 5620 (out-of-hours 0845 600 4555) or the Bishop's Child Protection Advisor, 01962 737347.
- Do not be tempted to try to investigate the claims further – this could lead to contamination of the evidence and could jeopardise any police investigation and criminal prosecution.
- Agree with the Bishop's Child Protection Advisor what action will be taken and anything else you need to do.
- Consider your own response and seek pastoral support if necessary.

KEY POINTS

- Ensure the safety of the child.
- Remember that the child will be frightened, confused and hurt.
- Write down everything that happens and is said.
- Do not discuss with anyone other than those named above. You do not know who else may be involved, the risk to the child or what action others may take – an angry father may take the law into his own hands.

BEST PRACTICE

1. A child is any person under 18 years of age. It does not matter if they look, act or dress older. As well as age, always remember the nature of the relationship and the position of trust you are in. The requirement to behave responsibly will always rest with the leader and can never be put onto the child or young person.

If you feel an attraction for an individual child or young person forming, it is your responsibility to control it and, if necessary, to remove yourself from the group.

2. Do not be alone with a child where your activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving adjoining doors open. Where possible use a room with windows which is clearly visible to others, although doors may be closed for confidentiality. If this is not possible (for example, in a counselling situation) another adult should be on the premises, aware that the meeting is happening. The child should know that the adult is there and who he or she is.
3. Treat all children and young people with the respect and dignity befitting their age; watch language, tone of voice, where you look, what you wear and where you put your body. What may be acceptable 'banter' between adults of a similar age may not be acceptable

between an adult and a young person.

4. Do not engage in any of the following:
 - invading the privacy of children when they are toileting or showering or changing clothes for any reason
 - rough, physical or sexually provocative games
 - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in 'fun'
 - inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
 - any scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting a child
 - teasing or joking that might be misunderstood or hurtful to the child
 - showing favouritism or special attention to any child.
5. Agree ground rules with your group – e.g. no swearing, no racist remarks, no name-calling; respect property – and ensure that those rules are observed by everyone.
6. Explain clearly how children and young people should behave.
7. Set boundaries for acceptable behaviour, both in respect of adults to children and between children. Unless children and young people know what the boundaries are, how will they know if they are being abused or that boundaries are being broken?
8. Consider whether as a church or as a group within the church you should be teaching children (and parents?) personal safety skills.
9. Control and discipline without using physical punishment, or language or behaviour that might be interpreted as belittling.
10. We need to guide children in their behaviour, being firm, loving and consistent. As adults, we must show children the kind of behaviour that they can copy. Never smack, hit or shake a child. Do not shout in anger, or 'put down' a child.
11. Talk to a child who has misbehaved aside from the group, not in front of everyone.
12. Reject the behaviour, not the child: 'You told a lie', not 'You are a liar'.
13. Be consistent and transparent – standards apply either to all or to none. Discipline is directed at all or none. Show no partiality.
14. Treat each child or young person as an individual in their own right; do not refer to them as: the vicar's son, the organist's daughter or Chris's sister. Do not expect standards or behaviour dependent upon who the parents or siblings are. Do not compare them with others.
15. Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled his or her underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed, or if a child needs a change of nappy.
16. Do not let children involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature. Seek advice from your line manager if you have any concerns about a child in this respect.
17. Do not invite a child or young person to your home alone. Invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the house. Ensure the parents know where the child is.
18. Do not give lifts to children on their own other than for short journeys. If they are alone, ask them to sit in the back seat.

19. Do not share sleeping accommodation with children if you take a group away.
20. If you see another worker or any other adult acting in ways that might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your church leader about your concerns.
21. Give encouragement to each child, noticing their good behaviour and commenting on it.
22. Give positive eye contact to encourage a child.
23. Be careful how much personal information you divulge to a child or young person.
24. Pray for your group and with your group.
25. Be aware of any precedents you may set – you may know that any child is safe with you, but if you let a particular form of behaviour become custom and practise, it could provide an opening for another person to abuse a child. Ensure that your example and behaviour does not create a situation in which children or young people could become vulnerable (e.g., if you saw a member of your Sunday School/youth group walking home from school in the rain, would you stop to offer them a lift? Would you say to a member of the Sunday School, 'If you help me put the chairs away I'll give you a bar of chocolate'?).
26. Do not work in isolation as either a leader or as a group. Ensure as a leader that you receive supervision when needed. As a group, ensure you are accountable within the church – perhaps to the PCC or, if possible, to a specific 'support committee' whose leader would ensure the group was accountable to the PCC.
27. Where possible meet and introduce yourself to the parents of the children and young people within the group. Let the parents know who you are and how they can contact you if they want to.
28. Ensure that children and young people know how to complain and to whom if they are unhappy at the treatment they receive from any leader.
29. Do not ignore any concerns you have that a child may be being abused – whether in the church/group or in another situation.
30. Consider having a nominated person within the church that children or young people can talk to if they have any problems. This may usefully be someone who does not have any other involvement with the children's and youth work.

THE ISSUE OF TOUCH

The whole issue of 'touch' is very difficult and needs to be carefully considered.

- What is acceptable?
- What is appropriate?
- Can I cuddle a child in the crèche?
- Can I hug a young person in the peace?
- Can I rub better the knee of a child who has fallen over?
- Can I show physical affection to the child who is upset – a hug, a kiss, picking up?
- If a young person asks to talk to me and breaks down in tears, can I put an arm round him or her?

We need to ask ourselves some questions when considering how we set our standards for physical contact:

- Why am I doing this?
- For whose benefit am I doing this?
- How would I feel if someone else touched me/my children like this?

If the answers to any of these questions raise the slightest doubt in our mind, then we need to stop immediately and reconsider our behaviour.

GUIDELINES ON TOUCH

- keep everything in public
- any touch should be related to and in response to the child's needs and wants, not the worker's
- avoid any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexual in nature or sexually stimulating to the adult or child
- any physical contact or touch that causes physical pain or discomfort to a child, or that may have a negative effect on their self-esteem or standing in the group, is not acceptable
- any concerns about abuse should always be reported.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

'Special needs' includes physical disabilities, learning disabilities, emotional or behavioural difficulties and mental health difficulties. Children and young people with special needs can be subject to all forms of abuse. In reality, those with special needs may be at more risk of sexual abuse than others. Some abusers will target this group because they know the communication difficulties these children experience and assume there is less possibility of being found out.

In working with children with special needs we need to be aware of particular issues:

- They may have difficulty in understanding what has been said to them or in expressing their concerns and/or experiences in ways that others understand.
- The onset of puberty and growing sexual awareness may be extremely difficult and

confusing for them. In many cases they will experience extreme frustration as they are limited in their opportunities to explore these feelings in a healthy environment. This may make them more vulnerable to abuse, possibly from older members of the group.

- In attempting to explore their developing sexuality and sexual feelings, they may behave in ways that are sexually inappropriate to other children, young people or adults.

NB Ensure that you, as a leader, have someone to whom you can talk about issues that worry or concern you. This may just be for 'downloading' or 'letting off steam'.

CONTACTS

Parish of St Matthew with St Paul

Children and Youth Co-ordinator: Revd Mary Copping, 01962 844878, 07921 886016

Rector: Canon Peter Seal, 01962 854849

Safeguarding Officer: Niki Bray, 07786 837535

Winchester Diocese

Diocesan Safeguarding Manager: Jackie Rowlands, 01962 737347

Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator: Siona Jeffrey 01962 737347

Safeguarding concerns Mon- Fri 8am -6pm 01962 737317

Safeguarding concerns Mon-Fri 6pm-8am, weekends, bank holidays 0300 5551373

Hampshire Children's Services

Children's Services 0300 555 1384 (out-of-hours 0300 555 1373)