



stMary's

STOKE BISHOP

St Mary Magdalene Church

Safeguarding Policy for Children & Young People

The following revised policy and procedures were agreed by the PCC on 13th May 2015 and will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that the PCC can meet its obligations to safeguard children. It includes the following sections:

PAGE	SECTION	SUBJECT
2	A	The parish policy on child abuse
2	B	Procedures for the recruitment and support of paid and volunteer staff
3	C	Premises (Health and Safety)
4	D	Insurance
5	E	Staffing levels
6	F	Dealing with suspicions or allegations that a child is being abused
6	G	Material from the Diocesan guidance on what abuse is and what to do when abuse is suspected
7-9		Useful telephone numbers and references

SECTION A

Parish policy for safeguarding children

1. St Mary Magdalene Church, Stoke Bishop, as part of the Diocese of Bristol, is committed to working within the Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Bristol:

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Safeguarding-Policy.pdf>
2. 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.
3. We need to make sure that children are safe by ensuring that:
 - ❖ the **people** who work with children on behalf of the church are safe to do so, competent to do what they do and trained to recognise and deal with issues of abuse if they are suspected or known to occur.
 - ❖ the **building** is as safe as possible, that adults consider the risks of accident which may be present, and that when accidents do occur, (which they inevitably will) that correct procedures are followed and lessons are learned.
 - ❖ the **organisations and individuals** who use church **premises** are aware of the policy to keep children safe from harm. Some organisations are vetted by another agency or by their parent organisation, e.g. uniformed organisations are vetted through their own organisation. Particular attention will be paid to the lettings agreements with those organisations which are not vetted by another organisation.
4. Section G includes material from the diocesan guidance which describes child abuse. Abusers may be old or young, rich or poor, male or female.
5. There is a separate policy for internet communications.

SECTION B

Procedure for the appointment of paid and volunteer staff

St Mary Magdalene Stoke Bishop adheres to the Diocese of Bristol "Safer Recruitment Policy" August 2014:

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Safer-Recruitment-Policy.pdf>

1. All paid and volunteer jobs within the church which bring people into contact with children and young people will have a description of the post and what is involved in doing it.
2. Job descriptions will be prepared by the person(s) responsible for the particular area of work.
3. The PCC is responsible for 'employing' all workers (whether paid or volunteer).
4. 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.
5. References must be taken up. Where anxiety is raised, further advice may be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
6. Suitable candidates for volunteer posts will have worshipped at St Mary'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 Youth Leader or other appropriate Church leader, and the responsibilities of the candidate and of the church will be made clear.
7. All appropriate criminal record checks will be undertaken before the applicant starts in post.
8. The person appointed will sign the job description form.
9. The Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Recruiting team will inform the PCC about all appointments.
10. 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.
11. Anyone working in a continuing way will have an annual review with the Youth or Group Leader.
12. Training will be available for those working with children and young people. 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 C

Health and Safety

1. An up to date First Aid Kit should be available at all times. This will be maintained by the Office Staff.
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 church office.
3. A register should be kept of attendance at all 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 Youth Leader in a locked cabinet for a minimum of 5 years.
4. Church premises will not be used to provide sleeping accommodation without the specific permission of the PCC.
5. 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.
6. Risk assessments should be completed for all children and youth groups and for any unusual activities, e.g. cooking.

SECTION D

Insurance

1. A comprehensive insurance policy will be 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; the Leadership team can be informed on behalf of the PCC if there is no PCC meeting in advance of the trip.

SECTION E

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 who have disabilities they will need special consideration.
3. There should ALWAYS be a minimum of 2 adults but with different ages the child /adult ratio should be:
0–2 yrs: 1 adult to 3 children, **2-3 yrs:** 1 adult to 4 children, **4-8 yrs:** 1 adult to 6 children, **9-12 yrs:** 1 adult to 8 children, **13-18 yrs:** 1 adult to 10 children.
4. The teenagers who help with Sunday School activities can be regarded as adults for the purpose of the ratios, where a parent or other responsible adult is usually in church and can be called quickly if necessary. A leader with DBS check will be in attendance at all times.
5. Swimming activities - there should be one adult in the water with every 3 children under the age of eight. It is also advisable to have a qualified lifesaver available if the activity is not supervised by the swimming pool's own attendants.
6. It can be helpful to check that there is a first aider present.
7. Where other organisations are using church premises they should meet the staffing requirements of their registering authority or umbrella organisation.
8. Only those who have a DBS check for regulated activity should ever be on their own with a child or young person, e.g. toilet trips or mentoring.

SECTION F

Dealing with suspicions or allegations that a child may have been harmed

- ❖ St Mary Magdalene Church will have a Parish Safeguarding Officer appointed by the PCC.
- ❖ The Parish Safeguarding Officer's name will be displayed on the Safeguarding noticeboard, which will be in a prominent position, and clearly labelled.
- ❖ In the event of any suspicion or allegation of abuse, the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Children's Team will know when to seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and when it is necessary to inform Bristol Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB), Social Services or the police.
- ❖ St Mary Magdalene Church will adopt a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, and taking any allegations seriously.

SECTION G

a) How to react to a child's disclosure

Most professionals working in Child Protection would emphasise that, of the various signs of abuse, WHAT THE CHILD SAYS is by far the most significant feature.

It is usually very difficult for a child or young person to tell someone else that they are being abused. If you are the person a young person has chosen to tell, you owe it to them to react appropriately.

Here are some guidelines:

- ❖ Always take what the child tells you very seriously, even if you believe it to be untrue.
- ❖ Listen carefully and do not stop a young person who is revealing painful events.
- ❖ Do not promise confidentiality - make it plain that you may have to tell someone else.
- ❖ Do not ask leading questions (who, why, where) or push for unoffered information - this could make it impossible to pursue the case later.
- ❖ Do not artificially prolong a discussion.
- ❖ Reassure the young person that he/she was right to tell you.

- ❖ Explain what you are going to do next.
- ❖ Make careful notes of the conversation as soon as possible, recording in particular the DATE, TIME, LOCATION and whether OTHER PEOPLE were present.

REMEMBER – the CHILD’S STATEMENT is the most significant indicator of abuse. BUT it is NOT your business to investigate or check out a story; that is for the Police or Social Services.

b) What to do if you suspect abuse

The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that their concern is taken seriously.

If you **suspect abuse** or feel that inappropriate behaviour is taking place you should:

- ❖ inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer of your concerns / or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer if the Parish Officer is unavailable.
- ❖ Keep a written record of your concerns and conversations.
- ❖ Maintain a high degree of confidentiality and only those who need to know should be informed of the circumstances.
- ❖ If you have suspicions concerning the **clergy or other licensed staff** the Parish Safeguarding Officer should contact the Bishop (0117 9730222)

Where there is clear evidence of abuse

While no-one will want to react without careful consideration, when an allegation has been made it is important to avoid delay in order to forestall further abuse. There is an information sharing protocol (2007) on the Bristol Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) website:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/bscb-protocols-for-multi-agency-action#jump-link-10>

Where a child or young person is making a clear allegation of physical or sexual abuse, or where injuries to the child are raising strong suspicions, the correct course of action is to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer, or

**INFORM BRISTOL CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE TEAM IMMEDIATELY
AND IN ANY EVENT WITHIN 24 HOURS**

Telephone:

First Response 0117 9036444

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

Some useful telephone numbers:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): 0117 9037795
- Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) 0117 9454320
- NSPCC 24 hour helpline 0808 8005000
- Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for Children 0117 903 6444 (out of hours) 0844 8920104
- Childline 0800 1111

Some useful references:

- **Protecting All God's Children**
the guidance issued by the Church of England available on the Diocese of Bristol website
www.bristol.anglican.org (Safeguarding)
- **Safeguarding Training Plan 2015** – details and grid available on the Diocese of Bristol website www.bristol.anglican.org (Safeguarding)
- **'Worth Doing Well'**
Methodist Publishing House
- **'Safe from Harm'**
Published by the Home Office 1993
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children** (HM Gov. 2013)
<http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/documents/Working%20TogetherFINAL.pdf>

N.B. This Safeguarding Policy is compliant with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 and the Bristol Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) protocols for multi-agency action <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/bscb-protocols-multi-agency-action#jump-link-10>

Extract: Section 11 of the Children Act 2004

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Various other statutory duties apply to other specific organisations working with children and families and are set out in this chapter.

4. Section 11 places a duty on:

Faith Organisations

Churches, other places of worship and faith-based organisations provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families. Like other organisations who work with children they need to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as described in paragraph 4 of this chapter.

Paragraph 4. These organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

- a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements;

In addition:

- a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services;
- arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB);
- a designated professional lead (or, for health provider organisations, named professionals) for safeguarding. Their role is to support other professionals in their agencies to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect. Designated professional roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Professionals should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively;
- safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check;
- appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training:
 - employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role;
 - staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare; and
 - all professionals should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.
- clear policies in line with those from the LSCB for dealing with allegations against people who work with children.