

## **PLEASE READ AND KEEP FOR REFERENCE**

### **ST. OSWALD'S, CROXLEY GREEN, BEST OPERATING PRACTICE**

For work with children and young people

Guidance for Health and Safety and minimising opportunities for abuse

#### **Introduction**

The following guidelines have been produced as a supplement to the Best Practice Guidelines produced by the Diocese of St Albans and are in line with the Policy for Safeguarding Children adopted by the PCC. They are to be read in conjunction with the Parish policies on Data Protection and the Safe Use of Images and with other relevant policies that from time to time the PCC may adopt.

- 1) Subsequent to the appointment of a volunteer and at an appropriate time within the first three months of service, the relevant group leader will meet with the volunteer and one of the Child Safeguarding Team to review the volunteer's suitability for continuing to work with young people. A record will be kept that this meeting has taken place.
- 2) Each person who has had a DBS clearance through St. Oswald's will be required on an annual basis to re-familiarise themselves with the Policy for Safeguarding Children and the Best Operating Practice documents approved by the PCC, and to sign a declaration that they have done so. This procedure will be supervised by the recognised group leader or, where appropriate, the church's Child Safeguarding Team-
- 3) Leaders and helpers, including anyone with responsibility for a specific and distinct activity or sub-group within a larger group, are required to undergo appropriate training as directed by the Diocese of St Albans. Non-compliance may result in temporary suspension of authorisation to work with young people.

#### **Best Practice Guidelines**

- 4) All children and young people should be treated with respect in line with the Diocesan Preventing Bullying and Harassment Policy, Racial Equality Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy (available at <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/policies>).
- 5) A young person's right to personal privacy should be respected
- 6) Appropriate attitudes and behaviour should be encouraged in young people by example and teaching.
- 7) Avoid being behind closed doors whenever you are alone with young people. Leave doors open if this is practicable. Care will have to be taken that fire door rules are not contravened.
- 8) Always seek the parents and child's consent if he or she is very young or disabled and needs help to go to the toilet.
- 9) Make sure another leader knows if you need to take a child to the toilet - so that they can note your temporary unavailability and your return. This is largely for your own protection.
- 10) Young people and adults should be encouraged to feel comfortable and confident enough to point out attitudes and behaviours they are concerned about.

- 11) Children should not be driven home without a parent's consent. In exceptional circumstances this may be unavoidable, in which event, another adult should be told you are taking the child, and the child should ALWAYS travel in the back of the car. Be aware that under current safety legislation, some children may require booster seats because of their height (although this is not vital for unexpected journeys).
- 12) Always have more than one passenger in the car when driving children home, but if that is impossible the child must be in the back.
- 13) Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned.
- 14) Recognise that caution is required in sensitive moments of counselling such as dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- 15) Be aware of the position of emergency exits, fire extinguishers and first aid equipment.
- 16) Do not touch a child in an intrusive or sexual manner. It is acceptable to touch a child in a way that is not intrusive or disturbing to him or her, or to others, but this must be kept public and never behind a closed door.
- 17) Do not make suggestive remarks or gestures, even as a joke.
- 18) Never use any physical discipline.
- 19) Exercise care if playing 'contact sports' e.g. soccer, with young people. Do not have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- 20) Records should be kept of incidents, accidents, injuries, -and any first aid administered.
- 21) Distance yourself from any inappropriate attention seeking behaviour, e.g. tantrums or crushes. Please report them to the Parish's Designated Child Safeguarding Officers. Seek advice if necessary. Do not leave yourself vulnerable or unprotected or leave any concerns for others unexpressed.
- 22) Do not permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. demeaning, ridiculing, bullying) but promote an atmosphere in which young people and adults feel able to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- 23) Do not rely on your good name to protect you.
- 24) Do not believe "it could never happen to me".
- 25) Do not show favouritism to any individual.
- 26) Under 18's should not be given overall responsibility

#### Guidance for Working with Children

- 27) There must be at least two adults present whenever there are children on church premises, ideally one male and one female with every group. Activities should be planned such that they involve at least one other person being present, or at least which are in sight or hearing of others
- 28) Two people must always be on the premises until the last child has left.
- 29) For days and weekends away and any activity which is off site, there must be at least two adult leaders, one male and one female. Always remember that the required ratio of adults to children is:  
Aged between 0 and 2 years 1:3;

Aged between 2 and 3 years 1:4;

Aged between 3 and 8 years 1:8;

Over 8 years 1:10 and there must always be one male and one female leader

30) Leaders should have all parents' telephone numbers with them at all sessions and this information must be kept secure in accordance with GDPR rules. At least one leader must have use of a mobile phone.

31) Separate sleeping accommodation should be provided for leaders and for young people.

32) There should be a definitive drop off and pick up procedure that all parents and youth workers are made aware of and follow.

33) Written permission must be obtained from parents/guardians for any activities outside the normal meeting times.

34) Leaders/helpers must not arrange to meet individual children without specific permission of either a parent or guardian.

35) Photographs or videos of children or young people in your care must not be taken, except in circumstances permitted by the Parish Policy on the Safe Use of Images.

36) For any activities that are undertaken online or on social media e.g. Skype, Facetime, Zoom etc. there should always be one adult designated as the moderator to deal with any unforeseen circumstances.

37) Children and young people should be supervised when moving from one part of the church premises to another and be made aware of any potential hazards when doing so.

### **Disclosures and Reporting Abuse**

38) If you are receiving information about abuse, your role is simply to listen and receive information. Avoid asking questions, other than to confirm what you have been told. If you have a feeling that a child is about to disclose an experience of abuse, do say calmly before they begin, that you may not be able to keep what they are about to say to yourself, and that you may need to share it with someone else. Do not make a promise of confidentiality where there has been a disclosure of abuse, as we are required by law to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor where abuse is suspected, even if that abuse has happened to a minor in the past and is not currently happening.

39) Do not jump to conclusions about others. Do check facts with the child and record anything that gives you cause for concern. Use the exact words or terms used by the child. Do not make any investigations yourself. Do not discuss with people who do not need to know.

40) a) Suspected child abuse must be reported to the Vicar

b) Should an allegation be made against any member of the church, details must be recorded as soon as possible, and the allegation should then be reported to the Vicar without delay.

In the Vicar's absence the report should be made to the Parish's Designated Child Safeguarding Officers. No other person, including the parents of the child, should be told. It is not your job to tell anyone other than the Vicar or the Designated Child Safeguarding Officers, if the Vicar is unavailable" If both the Vicar and the Parish's Designated Child Safeguarding Officers are

unavailable the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor should be contacted - Jeremy Hirst: Te no. 01727 818107 Mob. 07867 350886.

c) Should an allegation be made against the Vicar, it must be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (see above)

41) Incidents of inappropriate behaviour involving clergy, church staff or congregation members should be dealt with according to the recommended guidelines contained in the relevant Diocesan policies ([www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/policies](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/policies)). It is hoped that incidents will be resolved with understanding and respect.

Revised September 2023

Authorised by the PCC 13th September 2023

Current Safeguarding Officers are Val Edwards and Catherine Farman.

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