



**St Stephen's and St Wulstan's**  
knowing Jesus + making Jesus known

# Safeguarding Procedures and Practices

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These Safeguarding procedures and practices were adopted by St Stephen's and St Wulstan's PCC at their meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

These procedures and practices set out the specifics of how we aim to implement our Safeguarding policy in the context of our church, and are intended to supplement and clarify wider Church of England guidance including:

- *Safer Environment and Activities* (published September 2019)

We believe that 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 recreation 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.

## 1. Definitions and Terminology

**Ministry Leader** = The person with overall responsibility for a group or activity and the safer recruitment of the ministry team.

**Child/Children** = Any person under the age of 10 (Year 5).

**Young Person** = Any person between the ages of 10 and 17 (Year 6-13). For our purposes we will also treat anyone aged 18 and in full-time education as being part of this group.

**Vulnerable adult** = A person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired. This definition is taken from The Church of England Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, Section 6. We recognise that this may not accord with other definitions used by statutory agencies.

**Church officer** = Any person who has been safely recruited to any role, including Ministry Leaders, and including both paid workers and volunteers.

**Team member** = Any person who has been safely recruited to a role in the relevant team. This includes the Ministry Leader, and both paid workers and volunteers.





## 2. When do these Procedures and Practices apply?

The guidance should be used for all activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults, either within church buildings or in other locations but carried out on behalf of the church. These activities could be Sunday Club, crèches, holiday clubs, youth groups, mixed age groups, trips, music groups, lunch clubs, pastoral home visiting and support, mental health support groups, outreach to the homeless, food banks, youth weekends away, church family weekends and so on.

These procedures and practices **do not** apply to private arrangements made by young people, parents and carers or other adults, or activities organised by organisations outside of our church. If you are not sure whether an activity falls within these procedures and practices, please consult the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator, who may in turn contact the Bishop's Safeguarding Officer for further advice.

### 3. Four Principles

We have four important principles that we aim to keep in mind at all times:

	<p><b>Do not promise confidentiality. (See section 4)</b></p> <p>We cannot promise to keep a secret, because we do not know what may be disclosed. If we receive information about a child, young person or vulnerable adult who has been or may be at risk of being harmed, we need to pass that information on. It is appropriate to tell the person who has disclosed the abuse that you will need to pass on what they have said. (For more information, see <i>Responding to disclosures and recording concerns</i>)</p> <p>The person to tell if you have a concern or disclosure is one of the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators (Helen Buckley or Tom Bryant) You can also speak directly to the Bishop's Safeguarding Officer (Steph Haynes/Andrew Burroughs). Contact details are available at the end of this document, on the website and on the noticeboards in our buildings.</p> <p>Of course, we can keep some secrets, like what you've got for Daddy's birthday present!</p>
	<p><b>Always work within sight of another adult.</b></p> <p>This means taking care to ensure that you are not alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Pay particular attention when exiting a room or area – are you leaving someone on their own with children or young people?</p>
	<p><b>Be careful about the use of touch. (See section 5.5)</b></p> <p>Touch should not be used unless undertaken with consideration, with permission from the other person, and never out of sight of another adult.</p> <p>There will be times when certain contact is acceptable or even beneficial.</p> <p>In the case of children and young people, touch should be in response to their need and not the church officer's need.</p>
	<p><b>Consider how a third party might perceive what is happening.</b></p> <p>Perceptions are really important. However innocent the intentions or actions may be, think about how someone else might perceive them. Bear in mind that a third party will not know about existing special relationships e.g. parent and child.</p>

## 4. Responding to safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding concerns may be about something that has happened in the past, something that is going on now, or something that may happen in the future. If someone is unsure about whether something is a “safeguarding concern” or not, they should proceed as if it is, and then the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer should be consulted.

Take note of the 4 ‘R’s: **Receive, Reassure, React, Record**<sup>1</sup>

### Receive

Do	Do Not
Listen to what is being said calmly.	Display shock or disbelief.
Take it seriously.	
Accept how the individual feels – this is different to agreeing with how they feel or being sympathetic.	
Accept what is being said without judgement.	
Allow the individual to speak in their own words.	Interrupt an individual who is freely recalling events.
Help them by simply being there.	
Think about your body language – show you are actively listening; it might be better to sit at right angles to the individual so that they don’t have to make eye contact. You could give a child something to “fiddle” with.	
Be aware that a person’s age, culture, nationality or any disability may affect their ability to tell their concern or allegation.	
Be aware the person may have experienced harmful spiritual practices as well as other abuse.	

### Reassure

Do	Do Not
Reassure them, but only so far as is honest and reliable.	Make promises that you can’t be sure to keep, e.g. “I’ll stay with you” or “everything will be all right now”.
Reassure them they are not to blame and have done the right thing by reporting – be aware that they may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.	Agree to keep secrets.
Tell them that you will need to tell someone to keep them and others safe, and say who.	Promise total confidentiality – you have a duty to report your concerns.
Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk.	Try to counsel the individual.
Reassure them that he or she is right to tell.	

<sup>1</sup> These are adapted from the Church of England Birmingham’s *Responding to disclosures and recording concerns*.

## React

<b>Do</b>	<b>Do Not</b>
Listen quietly, carefully, and patiently, allowing the person to continue at their own pace.	Minimise what the person is saying or showing disbelief or denial.
Ask open or clarifying questions like "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?", "Are you able to say a bit more about that?".	Ask leading questions, e.g. "What did he do next?" (This assumes he did something, instead you could ask "What happened next?"), or use language they have not used.
Think carefully before offering scripture or prayer – especially if spiritual abuse is disclosed.	Suggest using Matthew 18, or that the person speak to their alleged abuser.
Ask them what they need/want, in line with their age (under/over 18).	Criticize or make comments about the alleged abuser.
Explain what you have to do next, whom you have to talk to and why – to keep other adults/children safe.	Ask them to repeat what they have told you to another person.
Tell your Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator (or the Bishop's Safeguarding Officer).	Investigate, interrogate, probe for further information or decide if they are telling the truth.
	Speak to or alert the person about whom the allegations have been made.

## Record

<b>Do</b>	<b>Do Not</b>
Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible.	Destroy your original notes in case they are required by the Bishop's Safeguarding Officer or the statutory authorities.
Record the date, time, place, words used and how they appeared to you.	Assume anything, speculate or jump to conclusions.
Record the actual words used, including any swear words or slang.	
Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any marks or to explain complex situations (such as family relationships) if this would be helpful.	
Record statements and observable things.	Record your own interpretations or assumptions.
Record all subsequent events and actions up to the point where the individual is no longer in your care or you have passed the record on (to Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Bishop's Safeguarding Officer).	

## 5. Safer environment and activities

### 5.1 Staffing levels

Our minimum staffing levels for children and young people's groups are given below. They are based on the NSPCC's minimum staff-child ratios<sup>2</sup>. More help may be required if children or young people have additional needs, are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it. Risk assessments for particular groups and activities should consider whether higher ratios than these minimums are needed.

0-3 years	1 adult team member for every 3 children.
4-8 years	1 adult team member for every 6 children.
9-12 years	1 adult team member for every 8 children/young people.
13-18 years	1 adult team member for every 10 young people.

Each group must have at least two, unrelated (i.e. not spouses, not parent/child etc.) adult team members and ideally there should be at least one male and one female.

If small groups are in the same room then it is possible to have only one adult team member per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.

Young people who are being encouraged to serve by helping with groups should always be overseen by an appointed adult team member who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and that the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding. It must be noted that young people serving as team members are still counted as young people, and as such should be counted as young people and should not be counted as adult team members for the purposes of the ratios set out above or relied upon as the second adult team member in a room – they should always be in addition to this.

Adult guests/speakers who visit children's or young people's groups on one or two occasions must be supervised by an appointed adult team member. If an adult is expected to visit on more than two occasions in any academic year, they will need to be safely recruited for the role.

### 5.2 Electronic communication and social media

Sensible precautions should be taken in the use of electronic communication and social media within our church context. In many ways, these precautions are simply online versions of safer practice in the offline world:

- Do not work alone in the online world: Practically, this means there is no one-to-one online chat (e.g. direct messaging, WhatsApp) between church officers and children or young people, and church officers do not ask children or young people for their phone numbers.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries in the online world: Just as in the offline world, it is important to keep a distinction between our private lives and our work within church, and to pay particular attention to the dynamics of power and influence.
- Do not use personal social media accounts to contact children/young people: Church officers should not add/follow children or young people on social media.
- Further information for those who administer official church social media accounts is available in our *Use of Social Media* policy.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children>

### 5.3 Photographs, videos and live-streaming

We will seek consent before taking or displaying photographs or videos of children and young people.

We will never display the names of children or young people with their photographs/videos.

We will only ever take and display images of people in suitable dress or kit. We will be particularly careful about some activities (e.g. swimming).

We will not display pictures of children or young people in school uniform where the name of the school is visible.

It is considered best practice to use a church owned camera to take photographs. Personal devices may be used in some circumstances, but any photographs taken should be transferred to the church storage system and deleted from the device as soon as possible. We will not allow the use of mobile phones to take photographs of children or young people for church purposes.

Anyone taking photographs or video recordings without consent at church events should be challenged, asked to stop, and asked to delete the photographs/recordings. If there is a related safeguarding concern, this must be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator. We will communicate this periodically at church events.

Care must be taken to avoid naming any children or young people who appear in live-streamed services. Consent from a parent or carer should be obtained before any child or young person is invited to take part in view of the cameras (e.g. to light an Advent candle).

Live-streaming camera angles should be chosen to avoid displaying the faces of those who have not consented.

During the time when communion is being received, and for All-Age services, the live-stream should broadcast audio only.

### 5.4 Driving

All those who drive on church-organized activities must be over 21 and have held a full driving licence for at least two years, and never have been convicted for any serious road traffic offence.<sup>3</sup>

Drivers must always be in a fit state to drive i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.

For church-organized activities, children and young people must not be transported without the prior consent of their parents/carers.

All cars must be insured and in a roadworthy condition.

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<sup>3</sup> In practice this means that those who have received speeding tickets/fines but have less than 6 points on their licence may drive for church activities.

All occupants must wear seat belts.

All children and young people must use appropriate child/booster seats.

When transporting children and young people, there should be a non-driving adult escort (who is not the spouse of the driver). If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child or young person alone, the child or young person must sit in the back of the car.

## 5.5 Touch

### 5.5.1 Use of touch with children

There will be times when certain contact is acceptable or even beneficial, but this should be undertaken with consideration, with permission from the other person, and never out of sight of another adult.

Church officers are encouraged to take responsibility for monitoring one-another regarding physical contact, and to challenge one another if necessary. Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.

In the case of children and young people, touch should be in response to their need and not the church officer's need. It is difficult to give a comprehensive explanation of what is or is not an appropriate use of touch at various stages of development, however the below are some indicative examples.

Age group	Examples of appropriate use of touch	Examples of inappropriate use of touch
Sparks (0-3 years)	Holding babies. Holding hands (initiated by adult) to lead around. Lifting in and out of a highchair or sit-in toy. Arm around shoulder to comfort.	Kissing. Stroking. Hair brushing. Hugging. Applying sunscreen.
Climbers (3-6 years)	Holding hands (initiated by adult) to lead around. Arm around shoulder to comfort.	As above. Sitting child on lap/knee. Carrying.
Explorers (6-10 years)	Administering first aid. Light touch/contact involved in a game/sport.	As above. Holding hands (initiated by adult) to lead around.
Pathfinders (10-14 years)	Administering first aid. Light touch/contact involved in a game/sport.	As above. Arm around shoulder to comfort.
Cross Section (15-18 years)	Administering first aid. Light touch/contact involved in a game/sport.	As above.

Every effort should be made to de-escalate situations where a child or young person is harming him/herself or others without use of touch or restraint. If de-escalation is not working, it is preferable to move others away from the situation. As a last resort it may be necessary to restrain a child. Only force that is proportionate and reasonable should be used, and a parent/carer informed as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and reported to the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator.

Parents and carers are made aware that activities involving light physical contact such as football and hockey take place in some of our groups, and are asked to give consent to these activities.

### **5.5.2 Use of Touch with adults**

- You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side-by-side.

### **5.6 Toileting and baby-changing**

Church officers can escort children, young people and vulnerable adults to the toilet area, but must not go into the toilet with them. They must inform another adult if a child needs to be taken to the toilet.

If a baby or child needs to be changed or assisted in toileting a parent or carer must be called to do this. Church officers do not change nappies or assist with using potties.

### **5.7 First aid**

It is recommended that at least one of the ministry team present for a group or activity is a trained first aider, and this is a requirement when children, young people and vulnerable adults are in attendance. A first aid kit is kept in the foyer at St Stephen's and in the kitchen at St Wulstan's. A portable kit should be taken on any outings or trips (one is available from the Parish Office).

Administer any necessary first aid in the presence of another adult.

You should follow our standard practices such as completing an accident form, noting that there is a form for minor accidents involving children and young people.

## 6. Important contact details

Police	101 or 999 for emergency	
NSPCC Helpline	08088005000	
Childline	0800 1111	
Local Authority Social Care – Adults	01213031234	Out of Hours: 01214649001
Local Authority Social Care – Children	01213031888	Out of Hours: 01216754806

Parish Safeguarding Coordinators	Helen Buckley	07870617551	<a href="mailto:helen.buckley@sssw.org.uk">helen.buckley@sssw.org.uk</a>
	Tom Bryant	07446239890	<a href="mailto:tom.bryant@sssw.org.uk">tom.bryant@sssw.org.uk</a>
Bishop's Safeguarding Officer	Steph Haynes (Mon-Wed)	07342993844	<a href="mailto:stephh@cofebirmingham.com">stephh@cofebirmingham.com</a>
	Andrew Burroughs (Wed-Fri)		<a href="mailto:Andrew.Burroughs@cofebirmingham.com">Andrew.Burroughs@cofebirmingham.com</a>
Parish Domestic Abuse Contact	Helen Hobbs	01214720050	<a href="mailto:hnehobbs@gmail.com">hnehobbs@gmail.com</a>