

Parishes of St Peter's North Tawton, St Andrew's Sampford Courtenay,
St James' Bondleigh, St Mary's Honeychurch
Diocese of Exeter

PARISH SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION
for ministry to Children and Vulnerable Adults

(Revised October 2022)

If you have a concern about the safety of someone or the actions of someone working with children or vulnerable adults, please speak to someone: Either...

Our Benefice Safeguarding Representative (and DBS Evidence Checker)
Kerry Seabrook... Tel: 01837 82080

Or

The Exeter Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
Acting Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor – Costa Nassaris Tel: 01392 294969

Full details here:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/safeguarding/safeguarding-team/>

Email here: safeguardingenquiry@exeter.anglican.org

If you are a young person and you feel unhappy about something happening to you, you can call Childline on 0800 11 11

Devon Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Tel: 0345 155 1071
Or email mashsecure@devon.gov.uk

Devon's Domestic Abuse Helpline Tel: 0345 155 1074
Rape Crisis Helpline Tel: 0808 802 9999

PARISH SAFEGUARDING POLICY
for ministry to Children and Vulnerable Adults

(Revised October 2022)

Staff/Leader = Revd David Spence, Revd Rita Bullworthy or Mr Wesley Cutler (Parish Worker) or any other employee of the PCC

Worker /Team Member = any volunteer who serves in any area of the church's ministry to youth, children or vulnerable adults.

Part A: Children and Young People

1. The PCCs accept the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy on working with Children and Young people (**Appendix 1**), where the PCC is required to formulate its own policy relevant to its situation. This is that policy and the requirements below will be implemented over and above the diocesan policy.

2. The PCCs seek to provide a caring, warm and consistent atmosphere and environment in which children and young people can develop and grow, and in which they can learn about the Christian faith in safety. Children and young people will be treated as individuals and with equal concern.
3. The PCCs commit to ensuring that Revd David Spence, Revd Rita Bullworthy, Wesley Cutler (Parish Worker) and Kerry Seabrook (Safeguarding Officer and DBS Evidence Checker) are responsible for implementing and monitoring the PCC's policy on the PCC's behalf.
4. The following areas of youth and children's work in the Parish of St Peter's to which this policy applies are:

**Sunday Club (all groups), Regular Youth Groups, Little Fishes (toddler group)
Holiday Clubs and all youth / children's weekends away, days away or trips.**

5. PCCs commitments: (Further details of the following points a-k can be found in **Appendix 3** of the Full Safeguarding Policy)
 - a. **To make this policy clearly and easily accessible for all.**
 - b. **To ensure every worker (current and new) is checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).**
 - c. **To ensure correct ratios of adults to children are maintained in groups.**
 - d. **To ensure good channels of communication between leaders and volunteers.**
 - e. **To ensure regular training of workers.**
 - f. **To ensure parental permission is granted for off-site activities.**
 - g. **To ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities.**
 - h. **To ensure the Child Line number is displayed within the church building.**
 - i. **To ensure accurate lists of all those working with children and young people.**
 - j. **To ensure allegations are reported in the correct manner.**
 - k. **To ensure children's and youth work is adequately insured.**
6. This policy will be reviewed annually at a PCC meeting in each parish.

Part B: Vulnerable Adults

We recognise that:

- everyone has different levels of vulnerability, and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives;
- all adults who may be vulnerable (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- abuse of adults who may be vulnerable can occur in all communities and is most likely to occur within families and by people known to them;

- working in partnership with adults who may be vulnerable, their key workers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- encourage adults who may be vulnerable to lead as independent a life as possible, to choose how to lead their life, and to be active contributors to the church community;
- protect adults who may be vulnerable from actual or potential harm; and
- enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently.

Therefore, we are committed to safeguarding adults who may be vulnerable by:

In all our activities -

- valuing, listening to and respecting adults who may be vulnerable; and
- fostering and encouraging best practice for working with adults who may be vulnerable, and boundaries for acceptable behaviour, in co-operation with key workers and other statutory bodies where necessary.

In our recruitment of paid staff and volunteers, following Diocesan procedures in

- ensuring all necessary checks are made (DBS) to promote the safe selection and recruitment of ordained and lay ministers, voluntary workers and paid workers with adults who may be vulnerable; and
- providing supervision, support and training.

When concerns are raised, following Diocesan procedures in -

- responding without delay to every concern raised that an adult who may be vulnerable may have been harmed, or be at risk from harm, through abuse, harassment or bullying; or about the behaviour of an adult or child. The PCC's nominated person to whom all cases of suspected or alleged abuse should be reported is Kerry Seabrook. Her contact details are displayed in the church; and
- working with the diocese and the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care -

- ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any vulnerable adult who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired; and
- ensuring that appropriate pastoral care is offered to any member of our church community against whom an allegation is made.

We are committed to reviewing our policy at the Spring PCC meeting / Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

Vulnerable adult – a definition... *“Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”*

APPENDIX 1



Safeguarding Policy for children, young people and adults

Foreword by the Bishop of Exeter and theological statement

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus tells his followers, 'You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill top cannot be hidden' (Matthew 5. 14). Christians are to be a transformative presence in society bringing light and hope to others. In particular we are called to be a beacon of good practice in the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults. As Jesus says uncompromisingly, 'If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea' (Matthew 18.6).

Today safeguarding is at the forefront of public consciousness. In recent years we have become acutely aware of the way in which historic incidents of abuse were sometimes hidden or even tolerated. There must be zero tolerance to such behaviour and the Church needs to be at the vanguard, fostering a change of culture across society. We need to embody best practice in our parishes, schools and chaplaincies. As an organisation, it is vital that we keep people safe and support survivors of abuse, apologising for the wrongs of the past.

The Church is a place where all sorts of people, including perpetrators of abuse, seek acceptance, redemption and forgiveness. Some perpetrators will be genuine in their repentance, but others may not be. This is why forgiveness and vigilance need to go hand-in-hand. Compassion and naiveté are not the same thing.

This document, drawing upon the latest professional wisdom, sets out best practice for all who are working with the young and the vulnerable in our mission communities. Drawing upon the experience of professionals, it sets out principles to prevent abuse, as well as the protocols that must be followed should a problem arise. By operating within the legislative requirements and following this guidance we can ensure that everyone is given the safety and the security which is their right. It also lists information, resources and contact details if further help is needed.

We are determined that those who work with children and adults at risk, many of whom are volunteers, receive proper training and are appropriately supported. As one of the largest providers of voluntary children's and youth work in Devon, we are committed to ensuring that, with God's help, our churches, schools and chaplaincies are safe places where everyone is valued.

+ Robert Exon The Rt Revd Robert Atwell *Bishop of Exeter*

1. Introduction

1.1 The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all. This policy has been informed by, and is consistent with, the Church of England policy entitled 'Promoting Safer Church 2017'.

1.2 Our policy statement is therefore based on five foundations (at section 3 below) and offers the following six overarching policy commitments of:

- Promoting a Safer environment and culture
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

1.3 This is a Diocesan policy which applies to all our Church Bodies (i.e. Parochial Church Councils and other Diocesan related legal bodies) and Church Officers (i.e. anyone appointed or elected by, or on behalf of the Church to an office, post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid). Full understanding of, and adherence to, this policy should lead to a deepening in the understanding of, and respect for, the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults as people of faith in the life of the Church.

1.4 Under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, all authorised clergy, bishops, archdeacons, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and PCCs must have 'due regard' to safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops (this will include both policy and practice guidance). Failure by clergy to comply with the duty imposed by the 2016 Measure may result in disciplinary action and may invalidate insurance cover in the event of a claim being made against the PCC.

1.5 This Policy Statement is supported by more detailed Practice Guidance and Reference documents which can be found at:

Church of England National policy and guidance: [Safeguarding Policy Statements & Practice Guidance](#)

Diocese of Exeter safeguarding guidance and resources: [Safeguarding and DBS - Diocese of Exeter](#)

2. Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Diocese of Exeter

2.1 The Diocese of Exeter [*i.e. the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocesan Synod and the Diocesan Board of Finance, whose clergy and lay membership is drawn from parishes and deaneries throughout Devon*] is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church.

2.2 Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. We will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.

2.3 The Diocese of Exeter affirms the 'Whole Church' approach to safeguarding, which encompasses a commitment, to and support the implementation of, consistent policy and practice across all our Church bodies and Church Officers, and that everyone associated with the Church, who comes into contact with children, young people and adults, has a role to play.

2.4 The Diocese of Exeter will take appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment for all and to practice fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and adults; to respond sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm.

3. Foundations

In our implementation of this Safeguarding Policy, the Diocese of Exeter, is guided by the following foundations:

I. Gospel

The Church is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

II. Human Rights and the Law

We recognise the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework supported by government guidance which sets out a range of safeguarding duties, responsibilities and best practice to which we will adhere.

III. Core Principles

The following key principles underpin our approach to safeguarding practice:

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount;
- Integrity, respect and listening to all;
- Transparency and openness;
- Accountability;
- Collaboration with key statutory authorities and other partners;
- Use of professional safeguarding advice and support both inside and outside the Church;
- A commitment to the prevention of abuse;
- The active management of risk;
- Promoting a culture of informed vigilance;
- Regular evaluation to ensure best practice.

IV. Good Safeguarding Practice

We will promote and maintain a safer culture that protects and promotes the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and in order to do so we will ensure:

- A leadership commitment, at all levels, to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- A safeguarding policy that is available to Church Officers;
- A clear line of accountability within the Diocese of Exeter for work on safeguarding;
- Clear reporting procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns and allegations;
- Clear roles for Church Officers;

- Practice and services informed by on- going learning, review and by the views of children, young people, families and vulnerable adults;
- Safer recruitment procedures in place;
- Clear arrangements for support and/or supervision;
- Safeguarding training is made available for all Church Officers working with or in contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- Effective working with statutory and voluntary sector partners;
- Publicly advertised arrangements for children, young people and vulnerable adults to be able to speak to an independent person, as required;
- Complaints and whistleblowing procedures that are well publicised;
- Effective information sharing;
- Good record keeping.

V. Learning from the past

The recent statutory reports and independent reviews into abuse that have involved the Church of England and other faith organisations highlight past errors and significant lessons to be learnt to improve safeguarding. As a Church we continue to commit to a journey of truth, healing, learning and abuse prevention. We will be open with and fully commit to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and will promote a culture that takes every opportunity to learn from experiences, however recent, whether they directly relate to the Diocese of Exeter or not, to inform and develop improved practice and response to safeguarding in the Diocese of Exeter.

4. Policy Commitments

Based on the foundations outlined above the Diocese of Exeter commits to:

4.1 Promoting a safer environment and culture

All Church Officers will respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults and promote their well-being. We will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within our churches for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments through the provision of training, support, communication, learning, governance and quality assurance processes. We will strive to support all Church Officers to adhere to safer working good practice and to challenge the abuse of power. We will ensure that processes are in place that listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the knowledge that they will be cared for.

4.2 Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church

We will select and vet all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church, in accordance with the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance and will train and equip Church Officers to have the confidence and skills they need to care and support children, young people and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by providing and coordinating consistent and accessible safeguarding training in accordance with House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

4.3 Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the House of Bishops safeguarding

policy and practice guidance. All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the House of Bishops safeguarding practice guidance. All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the diocesan safeguarding adviser or designated safeguarding adviser/officer in another church body to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person. All Church Officers will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases. In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to Church Officers, the Church will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.

4.4 Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

We will endeavour to offer care and support to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.

The Church is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered abuse. Those who have suffered abuse within the Church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously. The Church will respond to any disclosure of abuse in accordance with House of Bishops policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support - according to the agreed need. An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order will be considered, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

4.5 Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons

The Diocese and its Church Officers, in exercising its responsibilities in respect of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse, will endeavour to respect the rights under criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law of an accused Church Officer including the clergy. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the process progresses additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered. The Diocese will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others when any Church Officer is considered a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to a safeguarding agreement. Church Officers who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families, congregations and church communities. We will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, parishes and congregations affected by the Church Officers in such situations.

4.6 Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others

Our churches, based on the message of the gospel, open its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church community whom may present a known risk. We will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding agreement in accordance with House of Bishops policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law.

5. Putting the policy into action

All parts of the Diocese, including Parochial Church Councils, are required to adopt or take account of this Policy Statement within their own safeguarding policy. The Policy Statement will actively underpin all safeguarding work within the Diocese and the drive to improve safeguarding practice. We will ensure that:

- All Church Officers have access to and understand this Policy Statement;

- The Policy Statement is promoted and publicised across the Diocese and its churches;
- The Church’s safeguarding message is communicated as reflected in the policy;
- We will have a “Promoting a Safer Church” action plan in place that sets out, in line with national and local priorities, how the policy is being put into action and is reviewed regularly and will support churches and church groups across the Diocese in implementing this policy at a local level.

Practice guidance

Latest versions of the Church of England’s Safeguarding documents can be found at:

[Safeguarding Policy Statements & Practice Guidance](#)

Diocese of Exeter safeguarding documents and resources can be found at:

[Safeguarding and DBS - Diocese of Exeter](#)

Version control		
Date	Amendment	Amended by:
07/10/17	Adopted at Diocesan Synod	N/A

APPENDIX 2

Supervision of children and young people

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to children for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of group
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs
- Nature of activities
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Type of any accommodation
- Competence of adults, both general and on specific activities
- Requirements of the organisation/local to be visited
- Competence and behaviour of pupils
- First Aid cover

Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe, as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. However, a general guide for visit in normal circumstances might be: **One adult for every six children.**

The above is an example only. Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one adult in charge. In addition to the adult in charge there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.

Below are suggested ratios of adult to child, recommended for a specific indoor/outdoor activity or holiday event. These are the ratios required in regulations governing day care for under 8s.

	Adult : Children
Two years and under	One : Three
Three years	One : Four
Four to eight years	One : Eight

For children over eight, there is no official guidance. A suggested ratio is two adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children, with an additional leader for every 10 children. Following a risk assessment, this ratio would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered high risk or dangerous, or when catering for children with disabilities/special needs.

APPENDIX 3

5. PCC commitments:

a. To make this policy clearly and easily accessible for all. Everyone involved in the care of children and young people must be personally made aware of the PCC policy. New workers will be given a copy and taken through it by a staff member. This policy is displayed in the church.

b. To ensure every worker (current and new) is checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). New workers must be interviewed by a member of staff and required to complete a DBS check, which will be checked by a diocesan counter signatory (evidence checker). (It will be strictly confidential and except under compulsion of law will be seen only by the above-named person or those acting on the bishop's behalf.) The completed forms will be held in Church Records and renewed on expiry. Without a satisfactory DBS check a person cannot under any circumstances be involved in the supervisory role in youth or children's work. When a disclosure is deemed marginal Revd Rita Bullworthy is to seek advice from the diocesan safeguarding team and exercise discretion.

c. To ensure correct ratios of adults to children are maintained in groups. The required diocesan ratios for adults to children are recorded in appendix 2. A minimum of 2 adults is required for any activity. These ratios must be maintained for all regular activities, but in some instances an activity may be allowed to continue without the required ratio. For example, an occasion where one worker does not turn up for Sunday Club. In this situation the workers present (at least 2) must inform a staff member. If children or workers are endangered or unwilling to continue then the activity should not go ahead. For off-site activities correct ratios must be in place at the start of the activity.

d. To ensure good channels of communication between leaders and volunteers. Everyone involved in children's and youth work must be clear about the nature of the work they have agreed to do and the name of the person to whom they are responsible.

e. To ensure regular training of workers. Regular training opportunities must be encouraged and taken by all workers. For example, at least one conference per year for leaders, and one training event for volunteers.

f. To ensure parental permission is granted for off-site activities. Parents must complete a consent form for their child for any off-site activity, particularly if it includes transport.

g. To ensure risk assessments are completed for all activities. Leaders must ensure risks are thought through, documented and minimised for any activity. Risk Assessments for regular activities will be reviewed by a staff member at least once a year.

h. To ensure the Child Line number is displayed within the church building. The number is displayed in the Mortimer Room.

i. To ensure accurate lists of all those working with children and young people. The PCCs will hold a list of the names of those who work with children and young people and will be notified of any changes.

j. To ensure allegations are reported in the correct manner. The PCC's nominated person to whom all cases of suspected or alleged abuse should be reported is KERRY SEABROOK.

k. To ensure children's and youth work is adequately insured. The PCC will make adequate provision for insurance cover and inform the insurers should the need arise in accordance with the insurance policy.