SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS: POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Parish of Harbour Church Portsmouth (St Alban's, St George's and All Saints)

This Policy and Procedure was written and updated by Sue Donald
It was adopted at the PCC of Harbour Church Portsmouth
Monday 13th March 2026

It follows and is consistent with the
Church of England Promoting a Safer Church Policy alongside other Church of England policies
see appendix i

Each person who is responsible for, and/or works with, vulnerable groups within Harbour Church agrees to abide by this policy.

It will be reviewed annually, accepted and written in the minutes of the PCC/ trustees.

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Introduction

The PCC/Trustees take seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm.

This Policy and Procedure applies to all who have received the Bishop's Licence or Permission to work and all others who are responsible for, and/or work with vulnerable groups in our Bishop's Mission Order (BMO)/Parish/LEP/Benefice.

The term 'BMO' is used to denote the Trustees and Incumbent who are together responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented.

The Trustees/PCC will:

1 Appoint a ***Designated Person*** to work with the Incumbent on safeguarding matters

2 Follow the ***Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy and Procedures*** *appendix i*

3 Report any abuse or suspected abuse if discovered.

4 Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments and insurance cover are in place and these are reviewed regularly.

5 Ensure all those whose work brings them into regular contact with vulnerable groups are safely recruited in line with the latest Diocesan Safeguarding good practice guidance *appendix i*

For additional advice on all safeguarding issues contact:

The Safeguarding Team at the diocese, they can be contacted during office hours, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm via:
Email: safeguarding@portsmouth.anglican.org
Telephone: 023 9289 9665

1. Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy

We recognise that :

- the welfare of the child or young person is paramount
- All children and adults with vulnerabilities (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 which can occur in all families and communities
- domestic abuse if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of child abuse by the perpetrator of the abusive behaviours
- working in partnership with the parents or carers of children or adults with vulnerabilities, as well as other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

We will develop a safeguarding culture in our church that:

- enables and encourages concerns to be raised and responded to openly and consistently and protects children and adults from actual or potential harm
- is child-friendly and ensures that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse
- values, listens to and respects children and adults, encouraging them to be active contributors to the church community
- encourages adults with vulnerabilities to lead as independent a life as possible

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When concerns are raised we will:

- respond without delay to every concern raised that a child, or adult may have been harmed, or may be at risk from harm, through abuse, harassment or bullying; or about the behaviour of an adult or child
- work with the DSAs and the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community
- challenge any abuse of power especially by anyone in a position of trust

If abuse has occurred, we will ensure in partnership with the DSAs and other agencies that:

- informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired
- supervision is provided for any member of our church community known to have offended against a child or adult, or to pose a risk to them.
- appropriate pastoral care is offered to any member of our church community against whom an allegation is made

In all recruitment and selection, we will:

- ensure careful selection of ordained and lay ministers, voluntary and paid workers with children and young people and adults in line with safer recruitment principles
- provide supervision, support and training after appointment
- commit ourselves to support, resource, train and regularly review those who undertake work amongst vulnerable groups.

In our publicity we will:

- share information about good safeguarding practice with vulnerable groups, their parents/carers and all those working with them

2. Responding to a child or adult who may be disclosing abuse

We will endeavour to:

- Listen carefully, take the child or adult seriously
- Tell the child/adult she/he has done the right thing by telling
- Clarify if necessary
- Say if we can what we will do next
- Make an accurate record as soon as possible

We will not

- Promise confidentiality
- Investigate
- Ask leading questions
- Repeatedly question/ask the child or adult to repeat the disclosure over and over

3. Child and Adult Protection Procedure

We will follow the procedure below where there is concern that a child or adult has been harmed as a result of abuse and urgent action is needed

1. If there is concern that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, inform Sue Donald our Safeguarding Representative who will take advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

2. If there are concerns that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of immediate harm, inform the Local Authority Social Care Team Tel no: 023 9283 9111. Out of hours 0300 555 1373 or Police. Consult with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Incumbent or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser at any point in this process, **always** ensure the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is informed of the concern and actions taken.

4. Safeguarding children and adults training

Harbour Church, St Alban's and St George's will make every effort to ensure that clergy, licensed workers and lay ministers, volunteers and employees working with children and vulnerable adults regularly seek and obtain safeguarding training to the level of their responsibility every three years.

5. Safer Recruitment

- All church workers with children and adults will complete and sign an application form and confidential declaration.
- Written references and identification will be required and will be carefully checked.
- A criminal disclosure will be required in relation to all eligible roles (*see nominated persons appendix ii)*
- All church workers with children and adults will be interviewed in relation to a role/job description or person specification.
- After appointment support and training will be offered.

6. Those Who Pose a Risk to Children and Adults

When it is known that a member of the congregation, or someone wishing to join the congregation has sexually abused a child or young person, or is not a sexual offender against children but nevertheless may pose a risk, we will consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team so that a safe course of action in accordance with recommended Church of England procedure can be pursued in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies.

7. Care of Survivors of abuse and their families

We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care. Informing and working with outside agencies where appropriate.

8. Record Keeping and Storage

Notes will be made of all safeguarding incidents involving children or adults. Records will be clear, concise and accurate. They will be a record of facts not opinions. Records will be treated confidentially and will be securely stored by the incumbent or designated person. They will not be retained for longer than necessary. (*Promoting a Safer church 7.7 Recording data, data protection and information sharing)*
During an interregnum, the designated person will be responsible for all safeguarding records which will be passed to the incoming incumbent.
Records will be reviewed 6 monthly to ensure that they are accurate and relevant. Discussions will be documented.

9. Safer Practice with children

We will ensure our work with children is carried out in a 'safe' environment in accordance with Safe Parish Guidelines

- The ratio of leaders to children will comply with current Diocesan guidance and legislation
- Each group will have a minimum of two adults and a gender balance will be maintained where possible.
- Adults will not work alone with children
- We will seek to ensure meeting places are safe, secure and suitable for purpose
- We will be clear about boundaries with regard to touching always related to the child's needs and normally initiated by the child.
- We will obtain parental/guardian permission for attendance at groups, trips, use of images and transporting children in private cars
- All those who drive children on church-organized activities should have held a full driving licence for over two years which must be "clean" i.e. with no current points.
- All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.

10. Unaccompanied Children

If children attend our church services without their parents' or carers' knowledge we will welcome the child(ren) and try to establish whether their parents are aware of where they are. We will make sure an adult recruited for work with children takes care of the child and try to discover when they are due home and encourage them to keep to that arrangement. Depending on the age and competence of the child, we will ring the parents or ask the young person to ring to gain the parents' consent to the child remaining. If the child comes regularly, we will endeavour to establish regular contact with the parents or carers.

11. Visiting adults who may be vulnerable, in their homes (including residential homes)

Church workers will always complete an assessment of risk before visiting someone in their own home. They will always carry a mobile phone on a home visit, and ensure that someone knows where they are and when they are expected to return. (*lone workers policy appendix i*) They will always call by appointment and carry identification. Where our workers need to refer the person to another agency we will talk this through with the vulnerable adult, seeking his/her permission before passing on personal information. Our workers will always endeavour to be clear about what behaviour from the vulnerable adults is acceptable and what is not.

12. Organisations hiring Church Building or Premises

In relation to all activities and events which are not run directly by the church but which take place in church buildings or grounds the responsibility for implementing safeguarding policies rests with the hiring organisation and not with the PCC/Trustees. However, the PCC/Trustees needs to take reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are being practised by the hiring organisation. The Trustees will require visiting groups to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, follow safe recruitment procedures, and are aware of health and safety issues in the building. Visiting groups will be required to sign a hire agreement and abide by the Parish Safeguarding Policy.

13. Social Media and Engaging with Young People

Social media is a great way of communicating with young people. It is important as a church that we are able to engage with young people in this way, however this must be done appropriately and safely.

This method of communication can be difficult to monitor, the youth team must be accountable for what is said and must follow safeguarding guidelines in the same way as they would with face to face contact. (Policy Statement for safeguarding in social media appendix iii)

Children and Young people's workers should also be familiar with the policy set out in the 'Parish Safeguarding' handbook.

14. Photography

We are aware of child protection and safeguarding issues when taking photos or filming at events. We are aware of the potential for misuse of images and have aimed to reduce this by putting appropriate measures in place. (Policy statement for safeguarding in photography Appendix ii)

15. In the event of a safeguarding emergency

Should a member of staff be unable to get hold of a leader out of hours:
The following is a list of contact details of other agencies that are available to assist either on a 24 hr basis or through specialist helplines and services

- **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline**: 0808 800 5000 (lines free and open 24 hours). Phone if you are worried about a child.
- **Child-line**: 0800 1111 (lines free and open 24 hours). Phone if you are a child or young person and are worried about anything.
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline**: 0808 2000 247 ((lines free and open 24 hours). Phone if you are experiencing domestic abuse.
- **Samaritans Helpline**: 08457 90 90 90 (open 24 hours). Phone if you feel you are struggling to cope and need someone to talk to.

Local Authority Social Care Team Tel no: 023 9283 9111. Out of hours 0300 555 1373.

Appendix i

Policies and Guidance referred to in this document can be found on line or on Portsmouth Diocese Website under safeguarding

The Church of England 'Promoting a safer Church: Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Adults'

‘ Safer Recruitment' and people management guidelines 2021

Diocese of Portsmouth ' Lone Working Policy' Nov 2016

Safeguarding records: 'Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church 2015

Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2018
Chapter 12 Use of social media

Appendix ii

Policy Statement for Safeguarding in Photography

Harbour Church Portsmouth guidance incorporates our City location, Gunwharf location and Copnor location.

Photography is an integral part of our services in all three locations. As a church that wants to be outward facing we believe it is important to show life at Harbour with the aim to encourage people to attend services and help people feel at ease so that they know what to expect.

We are aware of the risks and challenges associated with photography in a group setting.

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who take part in Harbour's services, events and activities, specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken
- set out the overarching principles that guide our approach to photographs/videos being taken of children and young people during our events and activities
- to ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using and sharing images of children and young people

This policy statement applies to all staff and volunteers at Harbour Church.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children.

Summaries of key legislation and guidance is available on:

- online abuse learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- child protection learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to take, share and use images of children safely.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the children and young people taking part in our activities is paramount

- children and their parents/carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- consent to take images of children is only meaningful when the children and their parents/carers understand the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images
- there are potential risks associated with sharing images of children online.

More information about this is available from
learning.nspcc.org.uk/researchresources/briefings/photography-sharing-images-guidance

Consent

- Children under the age of 13: consent should be gained from their parents
- Children aged between 13 and 18: consent should be gained from parents and the children themselves

Consent is not needed if children appear in a wide angled group photograph in a public space ie church fete etc

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

We endeavour to obtain written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking photographs

Only photographs with written consent are used by the church.

Children should never be named when their photographs are used.

never publishing personal information about individual children

making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored. (guidelines referenced on consent form)

reminding children, parents and carers about who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

Photography and/or filming for personal use

We would like to remind parents and carers that they should not share photographs and videos of children that are not their own in the church.

Storage and use of images:

We will store photographs and videos of children securely.

Photographs will be deleted from memory card within a week after they were taken.

We will never store images of children on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.

We only use memory cards belonging to the organisation.

We will always obtain consent before using photographs. The Kids team check on a regular basis that parents are still happy with the consent given.

Parents and children who do not wish their child to be photographed will have a mark on their name badge and it will be highlighted on the register.

Photographs are checked by a senior member of the team to ensure that any photograph uploaded to social media containing pictures of families who have signed consent form and are happy to have their photographs online.

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing.

Safeguarding policy.

Brand Guidelines.

Church of England Safer Environment activities 2019

Contact details

Photography and images co-ordinator

Name: Lewis Dean

email: Lewis@harbourchurchuk.org

Senior lead for safeguarding and child protection

Name: Sue Donald

Phone/email: safeguarding@harbourchurchportsmouth.org

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Signed: ……*SDonald*…… Date: 12/05/2025

[this should be signed by the most senior person with responsibility for safeguarding in your organisation]

Reviewed and incorporated into Safeguarding Document October 2020

Updated May 2025

Appendix iii

Policy Statement for use of Social Media

Information and communication technology are very much part of our everyday social and working lives. For children and young people in particular, it is the norm to communicate electronically through mobile phones, e mail and social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, snapchat, instant messenger and Whats app.

This way of communication offers a wealth of experiences and possibilities for the church to engage with our community. We need to be aware that these platforms can also be used inappropriately by adults and young people.

Adults who work with young people need to be aware of how to use them appropriately and responsibly, in order that children are protected and the integrity of the workers safeguarded.

All communication between young people and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit boundaries, and only for reasons related to the church, so as to avoid any possible misinterpretations of motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny, and they maintain open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with children.

Safeguarding Concerns:

Cyber bullying

This is where a child uses digital technologies to bully another child. If an adult bullies a child on social media it is known as cyber stalking and is a serious safeguarding issue. Cyber bullying may involve the use of visual images, texts, phone calls and hits on social networking profiles.

On line Grooming

This is where an adult contacts a child with the sole purpose of preparing them for sexual abuse either on or off line.

Sexting

This is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photographs by mobile phone. Leaders should remain vigilant to this and report any instances immediately.

Be prepared to talk about sexting in wider conversations with young people. Help young people to understand that they should not be pressured into doing anything they do not want to do. Explain that if pictures are shared without a person’s permission this is bullying and they could be breaking the law.

Do

- Obtain parental agreement before communicating with young people
- Make sure language is clear and unambiguous, avoid ending communications with 'love'.
- Keep communications between the hours of 9am – 8pm, if a project takes place in the evening and it is necessary to send an e mail/txt this should be in agreement with the team leader and there should be no communication after 8pm.
- Be ready to make all conversations available for viewing by a workers supervisor if asked
- Set profiles to the highest setting.

Don't

- Use live chat facilities with children/YP as they cannot be recorded
- Add children/YP to personal social networking page
- Contact children/YP using personal social networking or instant messaging
- Poster tag pictures of children without asking first, see photography appendix ii

If social networking is to be used then the safest form is to use group e mails/facebook/whats app etc. Groups must be closed spaces for small groups and in agreement with all members.
For young people who have left the group and are now over 18 (no longer in full time education), please use discretion and seek advice if necessary.

Mobile Phones

- Leaders should be allocated a dedicated work phone
- They should use group texts wherever possible
- There should be an agreed length of time for conversations and a curfew as above
- Conversations causing concern should be saved and passed to supervisor
- Photos should only be taken in accordance with safeguarding photography guidance

All of the do s and don't s should be shared with young people.

Communication and behaviour on line should be no different to off line and in person.
Any communication that you feel uncomfortable with contact your line manager and or Safeguarding lead.

Safeguarding Officer

Teresa James – safeguarding@harbourchurchportsmouth.org

Safeguarding location leads:

St George's Portsea	Teresa James, Rev Lewis Dean
St Albans Copnor	Liza Gatrell, Rev Katherine Message
All Saints Portsea	Julie Miller, Rev Alex Coakley-Youngs

DBS checks:

Lead recruiter:	Teresa James
Additional ID checkers:	Johanna Swales
	Julie Miller
	Liza Gatrell