



St Michael &
All Angels
ANGERSLEIGH

Safeguarding Policy and Procedure 2023 2024

The PCC recognises the importance of its ministry to children, young people (14-17) and vulnerable adults. It also recognises its responsibility to safeguard these groups in the church community by protecting them from abuse and by being alert to potential abuse happening in other areas of their lives. Abuse has many forms, it may be physical, sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual, neglect or exploitation.

The PCC fully accepts and endorses the **Children Act 1989 & 2004** which affords a child full protection until the age of 18 regardless of circumstance. Childhood is absolute. Also **The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012** which defines vulnerability in adulthood. Vulnerability in adulthood is not an absolute, it is related to circumstance. This might include sensory or physical disability or physical illness, a learning disability or failing faculties due to advancing age. It will also include mental ill health or addiction and any permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events.

The Church is particularly called by God to support the weak and vulnerable in society. Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. ***The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the church.*** Policies and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults. All members of the church community need to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns, know how to do this and take action if necessary.

The PCC will lead in working towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations which create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the attitudes of workers and volunteers and the physical environment. A child or adult who might be considered vulnerable, has the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Have their privacy respected.
- Be able to lead as independent a life as possible.
- Be able to choose how to lead their life.
- Have the protection of the law.
- Have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.
- Be able to use their chosen language or method of communication.
- Be heard.

The PCC adopts The House of Bishops ["Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement"](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf) (<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf>) a booklet copy of which is available with this policy in the church.

The PCC also adopts The House of Bishops and diocesan safeguarding policies and practice guidance and is committed to :-

- 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.

In doing so, St Michael's Church will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The PCC will promote a culture of informed vigilance. It will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager(DSM),Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA), statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote safety and well-being.

Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

The PCC will appoint a lay person(s) who will implement and monitor this policy and work with the Rector on all safeguarding matters. The PSO will undertake Diocesan Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment & People Management training and supported by the PCC will act as "Lead Recruiter" and "DBS Administrator" contributing to the appointment of all volunteer and PCC employees who will have regular contact with children or vulnerable adults. The PSO and the administrative team will maintain records of recruitment procedures, Disclosure Barring Service checks and safeguarding training for all these individuals. Appointments requiring DBS will be reported to and recorded by the PCC.

The role of the PSO is also to receive, but not investigate any suspicions or allegations of abuse which may arise, including allegations against the Rector or church officers and to immediately inform and then subsequently work with the DSM. The PSO will keep a log of incidents, allegations or concerns which arise, in a locked cabinet with access restricted to the PSO. The PSO has a duty to advise the PCC of any safeguarding concerns that arise and inform of any referrals to the DSM but will maintain complete confidentiality of details of both those reporting and those concerned.

Please see Appendix 1 for reporting concerns procedures.

Safer Recruitment.

St Michael's church will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults in line with safer recruitment principles including taking up references and the use of confidential declaration forms and criminal record checks. Written job roles will be in place.

The suitability of an applicant or nominated volunteer for work with children, young people or vulnerable adult will not be solely dependent upon Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

disclosures and vetting checks. Someone whose DBS disclosure is clear may still be unsuitable. They will therefore be assessed through face to face contact and through the taking up of references to assure ourselves, as far as we can, that someone is suitable. Procedures for safer recruitment are detailed in the Safer Recruitment Procedure document which includes copies of the relevant documents to be used. All those who work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced DBS checks. Those who manage, supervise or lead people who work with vulnerable groups will be required to be DBS plus Barred List checked.

Training.

All church officers and activity leaders who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be aware of and work to House of Bishops' safeguarding guidance and **will complete diocesan safeguarding training every three years**. Other safeguarding courses will not be accepted in substitution. The Church of England's Safeguarding training is a requirement because there are safeguarding issues which are specific to church settings and church groups. Christian communities are 'open communities' and families in God. We encourage people to belong and to befriend and care for one another; some of this happens outside the confines of the church, in places where Church officers have little control. Church communities are vulnerable to those who seek to harm others, because of the opportunities for grooming.

The safeguarding training and development programme (2021) details training requirements for church officers and volunteers. The course modules required will be dependent upon the role of the church officers and volunteers and may include some of the following :-

- Basic Awareness,
- Foundation Level,
- Domestic Abuse Awareness
- Leadership Level.
- The first 3 can be accessed online on the Church of England training portal (<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>). Leadership is delivered directly by the Diocese, in person.

Details can be found on the Diocese of Bath and Wells website under safeguarding.

If an individual declines to engage with this requirement after reasonable reminders and support, the Rector, PCC and Diocese will be informed, and the individual may be advised that they can no longer continue as a church officer or volunteer.

Transparency

The PCC will display contact details for the PSO, DSM and Local Authority contact.

The PSO's contact details will also be on the website and in the Parish Magazine.

A Parish Safeguarding Handbook can be accessed in hard copy with this policy in the church.

Safeguarding will be an agenda item on every PCC meeting.

Responding

St Michael's church is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or vulnerable adult or about the behaviour of an adult in a position of trust and to working with the Diocesan Team and the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation is necessary.

The church also commits to the pastoral support of those who have been abused in the past. If a child, young person, or vulnerable adult comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, the PSO will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and appropriate authorities to ensure that the matter is on record. Pastoral support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse.

The church will ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a risk to children and /or vulnerable adults are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the DSM. We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, to any member of our Church community known to have offended. We will support them in continuing to attend church services whilst supervising their attendance to reduce the risk of further harm. Pastoral support will also be extended to those who are accused of abuse.

In any situation where there may be a difference of opinion about priorities, the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult will be the paramount concern.

Environment and Supervision

The PCC accepts that, through its workers and volunteers, it is responsible for children, young people and vulnerable adults when in a church building, on church property and other premises being used by the church and during church activities. Risk assessments will be in place.

Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organized by the church. Vehicles used in this situation must have insurance for business use or endorsements for passengers which is evidenced to the PSO. However, a church is not responsible for private arrangements.

The church will have appropriate insurance in place.

All children's activities will be supervised at all times by a minimum of two adults who have been DBS checked and this requirement will extend to any church activity which includes children or young people who attend without their parent, for example, music groups.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is

Mrs Julia McFaul

**Tel: via the Church Office on
01823 330812**

safeguarding.disclosures@gmail.c

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Parish Safeguarding Assistant is

Mrs Odette Lawton

**Tel: via the Trull Church Office on
01823 330812 ext 1**

safeguardingadmin@trullchurch.co.uk

Rector. Rev. Andy Wadsworth

Tel: 01823 330812

Tel: 01823 368084

Mobile : 07974855456

wadsworth.andy@outlook.com

The Diocesan Safeguarding Manager is

Ben Goodhind

Tel: 01749 588917

ben.goodhind@bathwells.anglican.org

Signed by Chair of PCC

AWadsworth

Date

27/11/23

Name

Secretary to PCC

S.M. Allen

Date

27/11/23

Name

Susan Allen

Review date November 2024

Appendix 1

Reporting Procedures

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse the appropriate response is to

- 1) Listen carefully. Avoid displaying a reaction facially or verbally. Don't ask leading questions.
- 2) Let them know they have done the right thing.
- 3) Tell them that you will take them seriously.
- 4) Tell them what you are going to do next. You cannot keep this a secret and will tell someone who can help.
- 5) Don't investigate or talk to the alleged abuser, parent, carer or anyone else.
- 6) Make objective notes.
- 7) Report to the PSO or Rector without delay.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSM) Ben Goodhind (Tel No: 01749 588917) will be informed by the PSO.

If the PSO cannot be contacted then the report should be made directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team in their absence.

If deemed an emergency and significant risk and /or out of hours then the Police should be contacted directly.

If the suspicions concern the PSO then the report should be made directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager Ben Goodhind or Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Jo Austin, 01749 588905.

Alternatively contact:

Somerset Children's Social Care – 0300 123 2224,

Somerset Safeguarding Adults – 0300 123 2224 or

Avon and Somerset Constabulary - 101

Advice may also be sought from the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the PSO, the absence of the PSO should not delay referral to the Diocese or the relevant statutory department.

Any individual can make a direct referral to the Safeguarding agencies, although the PCC hope that members of the church will use the above procedure. If, however, the individual with concerns feels that the PSO has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the PSO as to the appropriateness of a referral, they should contact an outside agency directly.

Concerns must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with church procedures and kept in a secure place.

The PCC will support the PSO in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

Allegations of abuse against a person working with children.

(NB – the allegation need not necessarily relate to the person's work with children within the church)

If an allegation is made against a worker (whether a paid member of staff or volunteer) the PSO will report the allegation to the DSM and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). If the person involved holds the Bishop's Licence or Permission to Officiate, then the Bishop and the Diocesan Register will also be involved.

Ministering to Offenders

When someone attending the church is known to have abused a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or is under investigation for such an offence, the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager will be consulted by the PSO so that a safe course of action can be agreed in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies if required.

A written agreement, drawn up by the Diocesan Safeguarding Manager, will usually be entered into with the offender.

Only those identified on this agreement will be informed of the facts without the offender's knowledge. Only if there is a breach of this agreement will this confidentiality be broken if it is necessary to inform others to protect a child or vulnerable adult.

Legal Duty of Referral

The PCC acknowledge that there is a legal duty as providers of regulated activity to forward relevant information about our workforce (both employed and voluntary) if any of the following circumstances occur:

- A volunteer or employee is dismissed because they have harmed an adult or child
- A volunteer or employee is dismissed or removed from working in regulated activity because they might have harmed a child or adult otherwise
- There had been plans to dismiss or remove a person for either of these reasons, but they resigned from their position first.
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If such a referral is required, the PSO will make the referral under advice from the DSM.

Reporting of serious incidents to the Charity Commission.

The Charity Commission updated its guidance on 14 June 2019 which changed how all Serious Safeguarding Incidents are reported to it. All CofE internal Guidance has been updated to reflect the Charity Commission's changes, effective from 1 August 2019. The PCC of Angersleigh Church will delegate the process of notification to the Charity Commission to the Diocese. All the relevant documentation can be found at <https://parishresources.org.uk/pccs/trusteeship/serious-incident-reporting/>.