

# AVON VALLEY CHURCHES SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN STATEMENT AND POLICY



**Dated:** October 2022 (version 4)

**Review Date:** by October 2024

**Name:** The Parish of Fordingbridge and Hyde and Breamore and Hale with Woodgreen (known locally as Avon Valley Churches) (hereafter, 'The Parish')

The Avon Valley Churches have one Parochial Church Council overseeing the four Local Church Areas of Breamore, Fordingbridge, Hale & Woodgreen and Hyde, each of which has a Local Church Council (LCC).

**Church Office Address:** Church Office, Rainbow Centre, 39 Salisbury Street, Fordingbridge SP6 1AB

## Church STATEMENT

The Parish has an active children's and young people's ministry. The Parochial Church Council (the PCC) takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all children and young people entrusted to The Parish's care or who use its services or participate in any of its groups. This policy outlines the procedures and standards expected by The Parish.

## Church MISSION

As part of The Parish's mission the PCC is committed to:

- Listening to, relating effectively and valuing children and young people ensuring their protection whilst participating in Church activities.
- Encouraging and supporting parents and carers.
- Ensuring that children's and youth workers are given appropriate and ongoing support and training.
- Ensuring there is a robust system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.

## Church POLICY

The PCC recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people. It also recognises that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The PCC has therefore adopted, and will regularly review, the procedures set out in this document.

To ensure the above are achieved, the PCC will appoint a Parish's Safeguarding Officer, supported at each church by an Assistant Safeguarding Officer.

**Current ROLE HOLDERS:** Safeguarding Officer – tba

**Assistant Safeguarding Officers** – Michelle Gosling (Fordingbridge), Jane Greenall (Hale & Woodgreen), Andy Finch (Breamore), Martin Ings (Hyde)

## Correspondence address and contact details:

Safeguarding Officer, c/o Church Office, Rainbow Centre, 39 Salisbury Street, Fordingbridge SP6 1AB

**Phone:** 01425 653163

**Email:** [safeguarding@avonvalleychurches.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@avonvalleychurches.org.uk)

## Diocesan Contacts:

The Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator, Mrs Sonia Jeffery, may be contacted for advice on

**Phone:** 01962 737347

**Email:** [sona.jeffery@winchester.anglican.org](mailto:sona.jeffery@winchester.anglican.org)

**Concerns may be registered 24 hours a day:**

**Phone:** 01962 737317

**Email:** [safeguarding@winchester.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@winchester.anglican.org)

**Procedures:**

The Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the Incumbent/Rector and the PCC to ensure that the list of people requiring Enhanced Clearance from the Disclosure & Barring Service is kept up to date. Records will consist of Contacts, Certificate and Disclosure Codes and relevant Dates. This record will be kept securely on the AVC Office computer and that of the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer and Assistant Safeguarding Officers will attend Diocesan Training courses as required to keep knowledge of procedures and issues up to date with current legislation and practices. All volunteers carrying out any Regulated Activity will also be required to complete relevant training as provided by the Diocese, as will any support volunteers.

**Signed:** .....

**Signed:** .....

**Incumbent/Rector  
(on behalf of the PCC)**

**Safeguarding Officer**

**Date:**

**Date:**

# AVON VALLEY CHURCHES SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN STATEMENT AND POLICY

## AMPLIFICATION:

### Areas of Policy

The PCC recognises that many children and young people are the victims of neglect, or physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The PCC has, therefore, adopted the policy contained in this document, and contained in the manual *'Safeguarding Children – Winchester Diocesan Guidelines and Procedures'*, which is available for downloading from the Winchester Diocese website, setting out agreed guidelines to the following areas:

- Appointing children's / youth workers
- Supporting / supervising workers
- Supervision of activities and practice issues
- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against leaders/members of The Parish
- Helping victims of abuse
- Working with offenders
- Good practice in children's and youth work

Further guidance is available on:

- Transporting children by private car
- Protocol for visiting groups to cathedrals and parishes
- Seeing children on their own as befriender or counsellor
- Youth churches and youth cells
- Sleeping on church premises.
- Taking and publishing images, including websites.
- Internet and communications policy
- Protocol for outside groups using church premises
- Guidelines for taking young people away
- Identifying risk in Youth and Children's work (risk assessment)
- Investigations of abuse involving someone in close contact with a Church worker
- The care of adult survivors of abuse

### The Diocesan Manual also includes:

- Definitions of abuse
- Recognising and responding to abuse
- What to do if you suspect abuse may have occurred
- Information on the work of the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)
- The role and responsibilities of the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Co-ordinators
- Numerous samples of forms for consent and parents' information

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

For the purposes of this Safeguarding Children Policy, all references to:

*'child', 'children', 'young person', 'young people'*, – whether singular or plural – are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to those under 18 years of age.

*'workers', 'staff', 'volunteers', 'helpers'* are used interchangeably and are taken to refer to anyone interacting with children on behalf of The Parish

*'child abuse'* refers to any of the recognised forms of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect.

## WHY WE HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

- *A Safeguarding Children policy will help protect **children**.*

A Safeguarding Children policy helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and, although no procedures or processes can offer complete protection for children, following these procedures and implementing a policy minimises the risk to children from abuse and exploitation.

- *A Safeguarding Children policy will help protect **workers***

A Safeguarding Children policy clarifies what The Parish requires in relation to the protection of children. It sets out standards of behaviour for project staff and volunteers when they are working with children and what to do if they notice, or are told about, inappropriate behaviour in others.

- *A Safeguarding Children policy will help protect **The Parish**.*

A Safeguarding Children policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates The Parish's commitment to safeguard children from harm. Safeguarding Children policies will help move The Parish towards best practice in this area and deter those who would wish to abuse children from seeking to work with children on behalf of The Parish.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (oral sex). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and /or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE**

Recognising possible signs of abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

### **PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE**

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect -under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation\*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse\*

### **INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE**

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders -anorexia, bulimia\*

### **EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Also depression, aggression or extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults

- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

*\*These signs may indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming, mostly by cutting, burning, self-poisoning. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.*

## **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Under no circumstances should a children/youth worker carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should:

- Discuss concerns with the Director for Safeguarding and Inclusion.
- Suspicions 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 Co-ordinator / Deputy Co-ordinator 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.
- All reports or concerns must be treated seriously.

## **APPOINTMENT, SUPPORT, SUPERVISION & TRAINING OF LEADERS & WORKERS**

The PCC will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised appropriately.

### **APPOINTMENT OF WORKERS**

The Parish has a robust recruitment procedure, including: all prospective workers will be asked to complete an application form and apply for Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service clearance and be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

The procedure for appointment will be:

- Informal discussion
- Completion of application form and a self-declaration of any criminal record
- References taken up
- Check the person is registered with the ISA
- An application is made to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) for an enhanced Disclosure
- Receipt of the Disclosure from the DBS
- Meeting with Children's Work Overseer/Youth Work Overseer
- Allocation of worker into children's/youth work
- Contract completed

The Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator and/or Children's Overseer, Youth Leaders and/or the PCC will make a judgement on whether it would be appropriate to appoint a person.

Workers will be given a contract on appointment.

### **SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION**

All workers will be provided with appropriate support and supervision within their roles.

## **TRAINING**

All workers will be expected to undertake regular training and The Parish will ensure that appropriate opportunities are made available.

## **SUPPORT TO THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE**

The PCC is committed to offering pastoral care and support to those attending The Parish who have been affected by abuse.

## **WORKING WITH OFFENDERS**

When someone attending The Parish or wishing to join The Parish is known to have abused children, the PCC will ensure an appropriate Agreement is put in place (where possible the Director for Safeguarding and Inclusion will work with statutory agencies to ensure known risks are identified and included) to supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. The Agreement will detail the conditions under which the person may attend The Parish.

## **GOOD PRACTICE:**

### **HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE**

- Above everything else listen, listen, listen
- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know -don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared (see "Making notes")

### **DO SAY**

- You have done the right thing in telling
- That must have been really hard
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

### **DON'T SAY**

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

## **CONCLUDING**

- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- Contact the Diocesan Director for Safeguarding and Inclusion or The Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed

## **MAKING NOTES**

Make notes as soon as possible, preferably within one hour of the child talking to you. Write down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (eg. a description of the activity). Note if anyone else was present. Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

## **TOUCHING**

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is quite different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be instigated by / related to the child's needs, not that of the worker.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc), encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE**

### **What is discipline?**

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.

### **Why discipline?**

It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart.

### **Don't**

- NEVER smack or hit a child
- Discipline out of love NEVER out of anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with the situation unwisely in your anger)
- Do not shout in anger or put down a child/young person

### **Do**

- Lay down ground rules eg. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, a respect for property
- Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what procedure will be taken if they are not followed



- Never reject a child, just the behaviour (Tell the child that you value him/her, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour)
- Remember that each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We therefore need to be asking ourselves “Why is the child behaving like that?”
- Work on each individual child’s positives, do not compare them with each other, but encourage and build them up.
- Help the child learn that they will be noticed more when they obey the rules, rather than when they break them. Try to create an environment of care and offer more tangible rewards, where each child feels that it is worth keeping to the rules.

## **CAMPS / RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES / OFF SITE ACTIVITIES**

From time to time activities may be arranged which will take place away from the usual meeting place and may include overnight stays. A comprehensive risk assessment of each activity will be undertaken, and appropriate risk management measures put in place.

Parents / guardians will be given full details of all such activities and clear behaviour guidance will be issued to children prior to attending.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying of any sort will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any such behaviour will be dealt with and those perpetrating the bullying will be made aware that such behaviour is not acceptable.

Children experiencing bullying in any situation will be offered support to address the issues.

## **STORAGE AND USE OF INFORMATION, AND IMAGES OF CHILDREN**

Specific procedures for the making, storage and use of images of children are available. No image will be taken, stored or used without the permission of the parent/carer.

## **USE OF INTERNET, TEXTS AND E-MAIL**

Modern communication technologies may be used as a means of communicating with children. Clear guidelines exist about how these will be used.

## **TRANSPORTING CHILDREN**

It may, on occasions be necessary for children to be transported to or from events. A policy for the transport of children is available.

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