

Holy Trinity Church, Tewkesbury

Policy on Working with Children and Young People

Reasons for the Policy

The aim of this policy is to affirm and support current good practice within the church. The church as a whole has a responsibility to aim for the highest possible standards of child care and to protect children from harm. The church has a responsibility to support those who work with children and in whom children and parents place their trust. This support includes protection of workers as well as children.

The Diocese of Gloucester has adopted a clear policy on working with children and young people to support the parish in its protection of children and the adults working with them. The Diocesan policy, as it relates to Holy Trinity Tewkesbury, is as follows:

1. Scripture teaches that all people are special because they are made in the image of God. This is therefore true for children and young people, who should be respected and protected. Jesus warned that those who exploited or abused children deserved profound condemnation. Within the Kingdom of God, children matter in their own right and are to be taken seriously.
2. The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Clergy and laity who work for the Church in a paid or voluntary capacity need to exercise the greatest care when working with those for whom they have been given responsibility.
3. The highest standards should be maintained, therefore, in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational circumstances. The exploitation of any relationships for any purpose will not be tolerated.
4. The Diocese of Gloucester and Holy Trinity Tewkesbury PCC accepts the principle of the "Children Act 1989" that the welfare of the child is paramount, and will follow the Home Office Code of Practice:

“Safe from Harm”, the guidelines of which are expanded in this parish policy.

5. If allegations of abuse are made, then the Diocese of Gloucester and Holy Trinity PCC will collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with investigating such allegations of child abuse. They will not conduct investigations on their own.

6. It will be standard practice in the parish to require completion of an application form for any work involving children and young people in accordance with guidelines of the Children Act 1989, from the following categories of people prior to selection or appointment:

all candidates for ordained ministry and accredited lay ministry

all clergy and accredited lay ministers moving into the parish

employees of Holy Trinity PCC and volunteers that are likely to have

opportunities for contact with children and young people.

Implementation of the “Safe from Harm” Guidelines

“Safe from Harm” (1993) is a Code of Practice giving 13 guidelines for the protection of children and young people. It also protects all those who work with them from unfounded accusations or from behaving in a way that may be well intentioned but inadvisable. The Code supports and reinforces existing legislation such as The Children Act (1989).

It would be good to feel that children in church-led activities are always safe. However, child abusers can be found in many situations and the church is not excluded. The church, as do other voluntary organisations, seeks to take appropriate steps to safeguard the welfare of all ages to the best of its ability.

The policy for Holy Trinity Tewkesbury takes each guideline in turn and defines the action to be taken.

Guideline One. Policy

This parish document shall form the policy statement of Holy Trinity Tewkesbury PCC. It is to be discussed by the PCC for approval every year and the minutes are to record the PCCs approval. With immediate effect this policy is to be brought to the notice of all new workers having contact with children and young people. It is also to be brought to the attention of those hiring the church hall or other premises whose work would involve children or young people; this will be done by means of the inclusion of the following sentence in the licence for the use of the hall:

The Licensees confirm that they are familiar with the Home Office Code of Practice “Safe from Harm” and have an understanding of it and undertake to follow it in relation to work with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

Guideline Two. Plan work in order to minimise situations where abuse may occur

Potential abusive situations can be avoided by being aware of possible opportunities for abuse to occur. Therefore the following guidelines are to be taken into account when planning work with children and young people:

1. As far as possible, arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of activity being observed. Groups may need to meet in one large room or in adjoining rooms with the door left open.
2. At least two adults should be present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. If possible at least one should be female when young children or girls are present.
3. Whenever possible avoid the situation where an adult takes a single child to the toilet away from the rest of the group. If this is unavoidable, inform another adult of where they will be and for what purpose.
4. Ensure that no arrangement is made to meet a child or young person off church premises without a parent or other adult being present.

5. Never take a group of children or young people off the premises with fewer than two adults.
6. Where children or young people have to be transported by vehicle, the Diocesan guidelines on Transporting Children, reprinted in this parish policy as Annex B, should be followed. In addition, if possible try to arrange to have more than one of them in the vehicle.
7. Consider how children and young people are going to arrive at the activity.

If it is dark ensure that entrances are well lit. Ensure that the premises are opened in good time for the start of the activity so that children are not left waiting around unsupervised.

8. Do not allow anyone not fully known to the group organisers to have unsupervised access to children or young people.
9. Be aware of the Diocesan guidelines on Touching Children and Young People, reprinted in this parish policy as Annex A.
10. No physical punishment is allowed. Sanctions should be carefully reviewed and discussed with parents/carers.

Guideline Three. Giving children a chance to talk with an independent person

The PCC will ensure that there are always two nominated people responsible for child protection in the parish to which children and adults working with them should refer any issues. Their names, pictures and phone numbers will be displayed in a prominent position together with the free Childline and NSPCC phone numbers.

Guideline Four. Apply agreed procedures to all paid staff and volunteers

The PCC is to name all posts, the holders of which must be made aware of this policy in connection with their existing or future contact with children and young people.

Guideline Five. Clear roles given to all paid staff and volunteers

Induction should include safeguarding awareness generally, what to look out for, how to look for concerns, etc. All workers are to be advised of what is expected of them and to whom they are responsible.

Guideline Six. Supervision as a means of protecting children

Regular opportunities should be given for workers to meet together to review and plan work, share experiences, receive training and discuss relationships with the children and young people. Minutes of these meetings should be passed to any workers unable to attend and to any member of the PCC or church leadership who requests them.

Guideline Seven. Treat all would-be staff and volunteers as job applicants

The PCC will ensure all persons working with children and young people, as appropriate, will complete the DBS process. Any confidential information will be held by the vicar or nominated person. Personnel records are appropriately stored. All information will be kept locked away safely and confidentially in line with data protection.

Guideline Eight.

The PCC will ensure it works closely with the diocese to ensure that any required DBSs or other required checks and references including the five year rolling re-check programme are complied with.

Guideline Nine. Interviews

Applicants will need to be interviewed to assess their suitability to work with children and young people. This will be with the children's worker/youth leader. Interviews may be no more than an extended conversation although both parties must be aware that the proposed work involving children/young people is being discussed.

Guideline Ten. Conviction for criminal offences

All situations that involve work with children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants will be required to complete a DBS and acceptance for the post will be conditional upon

clearance. The holding of DBS clearances for other work, including work in schools, does not negate this requirement.

Guideline Eleven. Probationary Period

All workers must be prepared to be supervised for a period of three months after which the position will be reviewed. Short-term volunteers are to be treated as if undertaking a probationary period.

Guideline Twelve. How to deal with the disclosure of discovery of abuse

Upon appointment all workers are to read the Diocesan guidance on "Abuse: What to look for; what to do". This is included in this policy document as Annex D.

Guideline Thirteen. Training

Those appointed to work with children and young people must be prepared to undergo some form of appropriate training. Training days and courses are also conducted at Deanery and Diocesan level and workers with children and young people will be informed of these and encouraged to attend, with financial backing from the PCC where appropriate.

Annexes

- A:** Guidelines on Touching Children and Young People
- B:** Transporting Children
- C1:** Texting Young People
- C2:** Social Networking
- D:** Abuse: What to Look For; What to Do

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Annex A

GUIDELINES ON TOUCHING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- ♦ Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- ♦ Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- ♦ Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- ♦ Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child.
- ♦ Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when they need medical attention or for their own safety.
- ♦ Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact and should express concerns to the designated person.
- ♦ Touch should not be prolonged.
- ♦ Corporal punishment in any form should not be used.

Also

Clear guidelines should be given to workers about listening to what children say.

Professional help should be sought if any disclosure of abuse is made.

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Annex B

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

Our advice on transporting children is as follows:

- ◆ Only those who have gone through the church/organisation recruitment procedures for workers should transport children.
- ◆ All drivers should have read the child protection policy of the church/organisation and agree to abide by this.
- ◆ Parental consent should be given.
- ◆ Seat belts should be worn, the driver should have adequate insurance and the vehicle should be road worthy.
- ◆ Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited till other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk and then arrange to meet with the child/young person at a location where there can be other adults around. (Remember a child/young person may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- ◆ Having checked drivers license and insurance ,it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Ensure a discussion takes place as to the most suitable child to be dropped off last and plan routes accordingly. (We have not suggested two workers in a car as this itself does not guarantee protection for a child – there have been incidents where workers have acted together and two adults in a car with one child could be less of a protection).
- ◆ At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by an appropriate adult.
- ◆ Obviously look at instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a child e.g. where they have had a disagreement that evening, where a child/young person has a 'crush' on a driver etc., and arrange for someone else to transport the child/young person.

Arrangements when using mini buses

Ensure full compliance with mini bus regulations

Ensure you have adequate adult supervision. As well as a driver another responsible adult sitting with the children/young people will be needed.

Ensure the responsible adult has also undergone appropriate recruitment and selection in accordance with the church's procedures.

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Annex C 1

Policy on Texting Young People

- ◆ When texting, leaders and helpers should use straight forward language and the meaning should be transparent
- ◆ Communication with young people should not be before 7am or after 10pm.
This protects everyone's privacy
- ◆ To ensure accountability and integrity all communication outside these hours must be kept and be communicated to a member of staff or leadership
- ◆ Texting should preferably be based on group texts rather than individual texts
- ◆ Messages should always end with the sender's name
- ◆ Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on or shown to a nominated person responsible for child protection or the vicar
- ◆ Confidentiality does not extend to high risk situations

Policy passed: March 2011

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Annex C 2

Policy on Social Networking

When using social networking sites (e.g. FaceBook, MySpace, Bebo etc.), we will ensure that the following guidance is used by all workers:

- Workers should not add young people to their personal social networking page if they are involved with the youth activities and are under the age of 18.
- Workers should in preference set up a FaceBook group/Fan page for the centre and invite young people to be members. (If they are over the required minimum age limit i.e.: 13 for Facebook)
- Workers should only use an agreed social networking account for contact with young people with whom they are working. This should normally be an account set up specifically for this purpose on behalf of Holy Trinity rather than an individual.
- Workers should seek to ensure that their personal profiles on any social networking sites should be set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature.
- Messages sent to young people regarding youth activities should be posted openly and 'inbox' messaging should be avoided.

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Annex D

ABUSE: WHAT TO LOOK FOR; WHAT TO DO

1. Kinds of Abuse

Definitions of Abuse (England & Wales)

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999) are as follows:

Abuse and Neglect

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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.

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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally or inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. 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, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. 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.

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, 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.

Spiritual Abuse

Abuse can occur in all cultures and religions. Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or obstructing medical healing and deliverance ministries, any of which may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in the usual way.

Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of children should help prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of spiritual harm include the denial to children of the right to faith or the opportunity to explore a range of belief systems including growth in the knowledge and love of God.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

(A child may suffer more than one category of abuse)
You therefore may wish to change the definition of abuse in your child protection policy.

2. The following may be signs of abuse

Those who work with children have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child. It is important to keep an open mind and consider carefully what is causing you concern.

- ◆ Physical abuse: unexplained injuries or those, which have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, signs of neglect.
- ◆ Sexual abuse: allegations made by the child or young person, preoccupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults;
- ◆ Emotional abuse: regression of behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared for.
- ◆ Other: unexplained reluctance of children to be left in the care of an individual – unexplained mood changes.

NB: Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

3. If a child or young person wants to talk about abuse

It is usually very difficult for a child or young person to tell someone that they are being abused.

So

Let them know that you will listen to anything they have to tell you, but that there are some things so serious that you have to tell someone else.

Do not promise confidentiality;

Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly;

Listen carefully and do not stop a young person who is revealing painful events;

Never push for information or ask leading questions

- ◆ Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened;
- ◆ Reassure the child or young person they were right to tell you;
- ◆ Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens
- ◆ Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. *Record the date, time and location and whether other people were present. Keep the hand-written record.*

4. What to do if you suspect abuse

- ◆ The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that his/her concern is taken seriously.
- ◆ Suspicion may vary from a vague disquiet about possibly inappropriate behaviour to clear evidence of serious abuse with many intermediate levels
- ◆ Information may reach you from a variety of sources:
 - ◆ a child or young person claiming that he/she has been abused
 - ◆ another child or young person who is concerned about a member of the child's family
 - ◆ a fellow worker of the suspect
 - ◆ someone who believes he/she is the object of malicious or unfounded rumour
- ◆ think through your own concerns

5. If you suspect abuse or feel that inappropriate behaviour is taking place but the way forward is unclear, take the following action

If abuse or inappropriate behaviour is suspected inform one of the following people of your concerns:

- the Nominated Person responsible for child protection in your parish; or your parish priest; or the Diocesan Human Resources Manager
- If the suspicions concern your parish priest or an authorised lay worker you should consult the Diocesan Human Resources Manager immediately

It is important to be aware of the far reaching consequences of making a referral and naming names. The Diocesan Human Resources Manager is available to help if you have any doubt

6. If there is clear evidence of abuse or an allegation is made

While no-one will want to react without careful consideration, when there may be evidence, and/or where an allegation has been made it is important to avoid delay in order to forestall further abuse.

Clear evidence is:

Where a child is making a clear allegation of abuse
Where injuries to the child are raising strong suspicions

An allegation may be made against a parent or carer, or against a member of staff/volunteer working with the children

There is a key difference between **allegations made against a parent/carers and a staff member or volunteer**

You should inform Safeguarding children service and/or the police immediately if it is a parent/carers

The Safeguarding Children Service Child Protection Unit:
01452 583638 (office hours 9.00 – 5.00)

Police Child Protection Unit (24 hrs):
01242 261112 (if no reply **01242 276086**)

Where the allegation concerns a staff member or volunteer

You should immediately inform the Diocesan Human Resources Manager (01452 410022 / 01452 835526) who will inform Jane Bee, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) so that links are immediately made to the local Allegations Management Board – on no account should other investigations begin prior to this because this may interfere with a criminal investigation. If the alleged abuse is taking place under the care of the church or one of its organisations you should also inform one of the following: the parish priest or the nominated person for child protection and/or the Diocesan Human Resources Manager named at the back of the book. The diocesan policy will then be followed with appropriate pastoral care given.

If an allegation is made against the parish priest, then the Nominated Person should immediately be in touch with the diocesan Human Resources Manager (who will inform the Bishop of Gloucester or the individual should contact the Bishop or Archdeacon directly) after they have spoken to The Safeguarding Children Service or the Police.

A confidential record must be kept of any accusation and this will include a record of phone calls, letters and conversations about the allegation. These records will be sent to the Diocesan Human Resources Manager, using a reliable and confidential means, ideally delivered by hand to church house.

If you suspect a child or young person is at risk of abuse you must do something.

Additional Information

Children's and Young People's groups: Adult to Children Ratio

*Crèche	birth–2 years	1 to every 3 children
Pebbles	2-3 years	1 to every 4 children
Bubbles	3-5 years	1 to every 6 children
Splash	5-7 years	1 to every 6 children
X-Stream	7-9 years	1 to every 8 children
Whirlpool	9-11 years	1 to every 8 children

*Crèche may also include children birth to 3 years if Pebbles is not running. Therefore, the ratio for this group is 1 to every 3 children.

Youth Groups – various on Sundays and midweek meetings for 10-18 years

Youth ages	10-12 years	1 to every 8 children
	13-18 years	1 to every 10 children

To have at least 2 adults (aged 18 or over) present with each meeting.

In certain situations, it will be necessary to have a higher number of adults than our recommendations suggest. If, for instance, the children or young people have specific support needs, or a risk assessment identifies behaviour as a potential issue for the group or event, the number of supervising adults will need to be higher. NSPCC

TJC and Youth Volunteers:

All volunteers must fill in a Confidential Declaration Form before helping in either TJC or Youth Groups.

After 6 weeks, anyone wanting to continue in either of these groups will need to apply for the appropriate level of DBS certificate.

Details for applying for the DBS will be forwarded by the checking to the named person.

DBS stands for Disclosure and Barring Service.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Local Authority Designated Office for Allegations (LADO)

Jane Bee

01452 426994

The Safeguarding Children Service Child Protection Unit:

01452 583638 (office hours 9.00a.m. – 5.00p.m)

Police Child Protection Unit (24 hours):

01242 261112 (if no reply **01242 276086**)

Social Services Child Protection Unit

01452 425144 (office hours 9am-5pm)

The Diocesan Human Resources Manager is

Judith Knight, Church House **01452 835526 / 01452 410022**

Reviewed and added to by the PCC January 2018