

## Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of  
St Margaret's Church, Ipswich



**'The Church of England 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.'**

**From *'Promoting a Safer Church'*,  
The Church of England's Safeguarding Policy Statement**

### CONTACTS

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**Lucy Collins**, Deputy Parish Safeguarding Officer, email: [office.stmagsips@gmail.com](mailto:office.stmagsips@gmail.com)  
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[Karen Galloway](#), Diocesan Safeguarding Officer on 07785 621319 (available 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday - Friday)

## Supporting Safeguarding

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.

The Parochial Church Council of St Margaret's Church, Ipswich (the PCC) is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the church. Working within the principles of the House of Bishop's Policy for Safeguarding (contained within 'Protecting All God's Children 2010<sup>1</sup>'), the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018<sup>2</sup>, and the Care Act 2014, care and support statutory guidance, 2016<sup>3</sup>.

This policy applies to all church officers. Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from their creation in God's own image and likeness. Christians have a duty to value, understand and respect the rights of children, young people and adults as people of faith in the life of the church.

In accordance with the House of Bishops policy Statement 'Promoting a Safer Church, 2017<sup>4</sup> the PCC 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 present a risk to others**

## Promoting a Safer Environment and culture

The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone within a church community. The church community, including all its members, must be alert to risks and dangers and be prepared to report concerns and act as and when necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/protectingallgodschildren.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>

The child's welfare is the paramount<sup>5</sup> consideration in matters of private and public law. The PCC will apply this principle in all areas of its work undertaken with children, young people and adults. Where a conflict of interest occurs between the welfare of children, young people and that of adults, the welfare of children and young people will be the clear priority. (See Role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer<sup>6</sup>)

For the benefit of this policy the following age ranges apply:

- Children: ages 0-13 years
- Young people: ages 14-18 years
- Adults: ages 18 years and over

## **Lone working with children, young people or vulnerable adults**

In most situations it's best practice to have at least two adults present when in contact with children and young people or vulnerable adults.

Sometimes it may be appropriate or necessary for an adult to have one-to-one contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or supervise a small group on their own, however, whenever possible there should be two adults present.

Where there is a need for a one-to-one situation, it should be agreed with the priest in charge, and/or parents/carers, for an adult to be alone with a child/young person or vulnerable adult. Training and guidance should be offered for the use of any areas of the church which may particularly place the child/young person or vulnerable adult in a susceptible situation. One-to-one situations have the potential to make a child/young person, or a vulnerable adult more open to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working in one-to-one settings with children, young people and vulnerable adults may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Both possibilities should be recognised so that reasonable and sensible precautions are taken when one-to-one situations are unavoidable.

To safeguard all parties, if a one-to-one situation is unavoidable, the following guidance should be followed:

- Avoid meetings in remote, secluded areas.
- Always inform other colleagues and/or parents/carers about the contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by.
- Always report any situation where any child, young person, or vulnerable adult becomes distressed or angry to the priest in charge or the safeguarding office.

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<sup>5</sup> [S.1 Children Act 1989](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Parish Safeguarding Officer - Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich](#)

- carefully consider the needs and circumstances of a vulnerable individual when in a one-to-one situation.

## **Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church**

The PCC is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all Church officers (ministers, volunteers and employees) and accepts and follows the Church of England Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance 2021<sup>7</sup>. A key element of safer recruitment practice includes effective use of references and role outlines/descriptions as well as use of the Disclosure and Barring Service when required. The suitability of an individual, whether paid or volunteer, to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults is never solely dependent on the outcome of a DBS check. Those who work with these groups, and those who supervise those workers as well as those in positions as trustees (i.e. PCC members), who are eligible for a DBS check will be required to undertake that check before starting in any role whether employed or voluntary within the Parish of St Margaret's as well as the complete Safer Recruitment process.

Those working in a role that is not eligible for a DBS check will be recruited by Safer Recruitment practice, including the use of application forms, references, and interviews where applicable.

All those working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults will receive suitable induction, training, and supervision.

(See **Safer Recruitment Toolkit and Guidance**<sup>8</sup> and **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy**<sup>9</sup>).

## **Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation**

The PCC accepts that it has responsibilities, through its workers, to take all reasonable steps to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults when on church grounds, taking part in church led activities off-site and traveling between sites when organised by the Church. The PCC cannot be responsible for incidents or concerns arising outside of church or church led activities but will, nevertheless, endeavour to provide appropriate advice and to refer any concern raised to the

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/section-9>

<sup>8</sup> [Safer recruitment - Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich](#)

<sup>9</sup> [1591893451.pdf](#)

appropriate authorities in order to ensure that the community as a whole is safeguarded appropriately.

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 promptly in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures

The PCC adopts the Church of England's Practice Guidance: 'Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers, 2017' as its Allegations Management Procedure.<sup>10</sup> This details how concerns should be reported and managed.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the required threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported via the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer to the appropriate statutory authority. The PCC and all church officers therein will fully co-operate with the statutory authorities in all circumstances.

Where allegations of abuse concern church officers the PCC will always act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law: respecting and upholding the rights and safeguards within the law as they apply to both individuals who are victims/survivors of abuse and individuals who are subject of concerns or allegations relating to abuse.

The PCC does not (and should not) investigate current allegations of abuse or harm of children or young people itself but refers them to the appropriate statutory authorities via the Diocesan Safeguarding Office for investigation in line with multi agency safeguarding children procedures. The Diocese may complete internal investigations once statutory authorities have completed their own investigations.

The Diocese will only investigate allegations of harm or abuse of a vulnerable adult where a statutory authority requests that this action be undertaken or where the allegation does not meet the criteria for a referral to the police or Local Authority. The Diocese may make inquiries to gather information so that it can provide accurate information to the relevant statutory authorities.

If it comes to the attention of the PCC that a child or young person has experienced abuse in the past that information will always be passed to the statutory authorities.

If it comes to the attention of the PCC that an adult has experienced abuse in their past, the adult's wishes will be taken into consideration and that adult encouraged to report the matter to the statutory authorities. Where there is a reasonable belief that others may be at risk of harm the PCC will refer the matter to Diocesan

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<sup>10</sup>[practice-guidance-responding-to-assessing-and-managing-safeguarding-concerns-or-allegations-against-church-officers.pdf](#)

Safeguarding Office for referral to the statutory authorities within the guidance provided by the Data Protection Act 1998<sup>11</sup>).

### **We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.**

The PCC is aware that those in positions of trust and responsibility, in the Church, as elsewhere, may be subject to temptation to abuse their power and exploit or harm others. We seek to take action to deal with any abuse.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to children and young people by church officers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, as well as other statutory bodies as appropriate, and investigated in accordance with his/her advice.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to adults by church officers will be referred, via the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, to the police and/or Local Authority where appropriate and investigated in accordance with their advice. Where appropriate allegations of this nature will be managed according to the Church of England 'Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers, 2017' and or the appropriate disciplinary and or complaint procedures.

The PCC will always endeavour to offer care and support to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, where it occurred or by whom it was perpetrated.

The PCC, in conjunction with the Church as a whole, is committed to continuing to learn how best to respond in a supportive, sensitive, and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered and experienced abuse.

Anyone who has suffered and experienced abuse within the church will be listened to, taken seriously and treated with compassion. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling, and support, according to the agreed need.

Disclosures of abuse will be responded to effectively by the PCC. in accordance with the Diocesan Safeguarding Office and House of Bishops guidance, *Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers, 2017*.

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<sup>11</sup> [Data Protection Act 1998](#)

For other affected parties (Family, Parish, congregation etc.) an appropriate pastoral response from the PCC will be considered, with due regard to the right to privacy of all directly involved and the administration of justice.

Where there are concerns regarding a Church officer who is considered to pose a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults the PCC will take the necessary steps to protect others. This may be done by working to mitigate any identified risks through a safeguarding agreement with the church officer.

Church Officers who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse also belong to a family, congregation and wider church community. The PCC will remain mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, parishes and congregations who are also affected by an allegation against a church officer.

### **Responding to those that may present a risk to others**

The Church, based on the message of the Gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member, or anyone who seeks to become a member of a church community who may present a risk of harm to others due to:

- having a conviction or caution for offences against children, young people or adults or
- who has been barred or prohibited in some way from working with children, young people or adults.
- Or is considered to present a risk to any of these groups but the outcome of an investigation is as yet unknown

Where an individual comes to the attention of the PCC, we will seek to implement a Safeguarding agreement where it is safe to do so in line with advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. Any agreement will contain safeguards for the individual, children and/or young people and/or vulnerable adults, and the Parish. Until a suitable agreement is implemented, the individual will have restricted, or no, contact with the congregation.

The PCC will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer where appropriate to ensure adequate risk assessment and management of any agreement are consistently implemented.

### **In all these principles, we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.**

This policy and all following procedures and guidance will be regularly reviewed and updated in order to reflect current legislation, guidance and best practice.

The PCC is committed to positive information sharing practice including appropriate seeking of consent to share, confidentiality, sharing of information internally and with statutory bodies. The PCC also undertakes to retain, store and destroy records in line with current best practice.

This Policy and associated procedures and guidance will be published on the PCC Website and made available to any persons on request.

<b>Document Control Information</b>		
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