



Safeguarding Our Children and Young People: Policy, Practice and Procedures



Child Protection: Policy, Practice and Procedures

Parish of St Michael's & All Angels, Cofton Hackett and St Andrew's, Barnt Green

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of this parish has adopted the House of Bishops' '**Promoting a Safer Church**' as our safeguarding policy statement (see Appendix 1) and all our policies, procedures, guidance and guidelines are informed by the Promoting a Safer Church policy statements, the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, the Parish Safeguarding Handbook (A Supplement for Parishes in The Church of England: Birmingham) and established good practice.

Our commitment

As a church we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people; acknowledging that they can be the victims of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept both the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which state that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". We also accept the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse and that they have a right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child."

The PCC attaches great importance to the nurture and care of all children and young people and, in particular, those attached to or are involved in our church activities. For the purposes of this document "children" refers to all children and young people under 18 years and the term "workers" refers to both paid staff and all volunteer Church leaders and helpers.

It is the responsibility of everyone in a church community to take action if they have a concern about a child. Some church members, i.e. children's work leaders, church volunteers, members of the clergy, will have direct contact with children, so it is more likely concerns will come to their attention. However, this does not remove the responsibility from the rest of the congregation.

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.

Our Child Protection Policy Aims

1. We aim to create an environment in which children are safe, feel valued and can be nurtured and supported to learn and grow in their Christian faith.
2. The leaders and volunteers in our children and young people groups represent and work on behalf of the church. As such they will be recruited in a way that ensures the safety of our children.
3. We recognise that all those who work with children and young people need support and training to meet the changing needs of children as they move from birth to adulthood. All those who work with children will be required to complete the necessary safeguarding training appropriate to enable them to fulfil their role. All those who work with our children and young people will be required to be

familiar with and comply with this policy, its procedures and to know and understand the lines of accountability.

4. Any report of concern or allegation of abuse will be treated seriously and sensitively.
5. We will support adult survivors of abuse as well as abused children. We also recognise that there may at the same time be abusers in our congregations. As a community of forgiveness, we will accept their presence but we will not compromise the safety of our children.
6. Our safeguarding records will be securely stored and all essential matters concerning safeguarding will be kept totally confidential and GDPR compliant.
7. We require all organisations working with children who use any of our premises to have a child protection policy and procedures in line with current child protection legislation and have the appropriate insurance cover in place.
8. We agree to review this policy and its procedures at least annually and to consult with the appropriate people when doing so.

Our Procedures

The above policy aims will be achieved through the adoption of the following good practice guidelines and procedures. If anyone becomes aware of a policy or procedure which could benefit from alteration, please contact the vicar or our Parish Safeguarding Officer (**PSO**) whose names and telephone numbers can be found in Section 9.

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Section 1: Providing a Safe Environment.

As a place of worship working with children and young people, we wish to create a safe environment in which our children and young people can learn and grow in their Christian faith and commit to caring for them as valued members of our wider Church family.

To create a safe environment, we aim to promote and operate good working practice. This will enable our workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation. Our aim is to ensure quality childcare, protect children from possible abuse and workers from false accusations. To facilitate this aim all those working on behalf of the church with children and young people will be expected to adhere to our Code of Safer Working Practice (please see Appendix 2). Any breaches of this Code must be reported to the PSO.

In addition to the Code of Safer Working Practice the following additional guidelines will be applied:

Adult to child ratios

Due consideration will be given to how many workers should be involved with a group and whether they should be a male and/or female worker or both. Having two adults present is to be recommended wherever possible. Getting enough people to help can be challenging and the guidance set out below is our recommended 'best practice'. On individual occasions it may not always be possible to meet all these requirements. This should, however, be the exception rather than the rule.

The adult/child ratios reflect current guidelines.

	Adult : Children
Under 2 years	1 : 3
2 to 3 years	1 : 4
4 to 8 years	1 : 6
9 to 12 years	1 : 8
13 to 18 years	1 : 10

It may be necessary to have more helpers available for specific reasons, for example if children have special needs, or if a risk assessment has shown additional hazards that need to be managed, for example in outdoor activities and especially where that activity is considered higher risk or potentially dangerous.

Helping in activities for children can be an excellent opportunity for people under 18 to participate in church life. A young person helping in this way will be a designated 'helper' rather than a 'leader' and supervised by an adult who has been safely recruited. These young people will not be included in calculating the adult/child ratios outlined above; they are additional helpers and not part of the core team. For some situations it may be appropriate to have children under the age of 16 helping on an occasional basis. However, it is recommended that 14 is the minimum age, and that young helpers are utilised only occasionally.

Parents, carers, and occasional helpers can be included in these ratios if they have been formally recruited and trained. If they have not, they can offer additional support under the immediate supervision of a leader who has been safely recruited. For specific activities such as First Church and Messy Church, where the child remains the responsibility of the parent/carer these ratios do not apply. The ratio of workers for that activity is

reflected by the numbers needed to facilitate the group but should ideally have two adult leaders who are not there with their own children.

Registration

When a child becomes a member or becomes involved in an activity run by our church a general information and consent form will be completed and returned giving contact details of parents/carers, plus medical and other details such as allergies or special dietary requirements. This form should be renewed annually. This data will be held securely and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Personal Care

Sometimes young children need support with their personal care (i.e. toileting). Personal care responsibilities will, wherever possible, remain with the parent or carer, and workers will not be involved with assisting. For those who can use the toilet independently they will just be chaperoned to the toilet and the worker will stay by the door. Where a toddler has to be taken to the toilet by a worker in an emergency the toddler will be helped as necessary. As a matter of good practice, the worker should tell another worker that the child is being taken to the toilet and the doors should remain unlocked. The parent or carer should be told that a toilet visit was required.

Food and drink safety and hygiene

Any food that is made and/or consumed on the premises should meet food safety regulations. If food and drink are provided during an activity, the following is expected:

- Workers should follow good personal hygiene with basic health and hygiene regulations being adhered to.
- All food and drink is stored appropriately.
- Hot drinks should not be carried through an activity area and not placed within the reach of young children.
- Snacks are appropriately supervised.
- Systems are in place to ensure that children and young people do not have access to food/drinks to which they are allergic. Typically, this can be peanuts, nuts, milk, eggs, fish, shellfish and gluten.

Health and Safety, Risk Assessments and Accident Recording

All of our groups will have a Risk Assessment undertaken to ensure that the activity meets safety standards and that any risks that are identified are dealt with prior to the commencement of the activity. Our leaders and helpers have a responsibility to report if they discover something that could potentially cause harm.

All accidents should be reported using an Accident Report Form.

Social Media and Communication

Social media is an important part of young people's lives today and whilst we, as a parish, do not have much social media presence we are aware that we should have clear guidance and boundaries for the PCC, staff and volunteers with regards to communicating with young people online and by mobile phone. The general principles to be applied in the use of social media, email, mobile phone use are: -

- Do not use any form of private messaging to communicate to individuals.
- All messages and posts should be within a closed group and with a parent or carer's consent.

- Online communication or text messages are rarely an appropriate response to a young person in crisis. This method of communication should only be used where other forms of communication have failed.
- The tone of communication should be friendly but not over-familiar or personal. There should be no suggestion or offer of a special relationship.
- Staff and volunteer leaders should only use electronic communication for reasons relating to their work with young people, not for general socialising.

Our use of social media, email and mobile phone use will be following the Diocesan guidelines set out in their "A Guide to Using Social Media for Leaders and Helpers" (see Appendix 3).

Photographs and Images

Whilst it is not illegal to take photographs of children participating in church activities, photographs and video images of children and young people are classed as personal data under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. Therefore, using such images for publicity purposes will require the consent of children and young people and their legal guardians. This means that the church will not display images on websites, in publications or elsewhere in public space without such consent.

As well as getting consent the following guidelines are to be observed: -

- Written consent must be obtained from parent / guardian whose child may appear in a photograph, video or web cam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- Images will be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.
- Staff and appointed volunteer leaders should take care when taking any photographic image in any medium, that all young people are appropriately dressed.
- It is not appropriate for any adult to take photographs of children for their personal use.
- If a child or young person does not want their photograph taken, then this will over-ride parental consent of permission.
- Workers must not share, publish or distribute images of children without the consent of the leader and the parents and children contained in the images.
- Young people should not be identified/tagged online.
- It must be made clear why a person's image (adult or child) is being taken, what it will be used for, and who might have access to the pictures.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by a large crowd, such as a worship event, this is regarded as a public arena and permission from a crowd is not necessary.
- If photographs or recordings of children's/youth groups are made and individual children cannot be easily identified, we must still respect the wishes of any parents/guardians who do not want their children to be in the photograph.
- In publicity or on the web children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or by other personal details (including e-mail, postal addresses or telephone number).

Transport of children

Transport of young people may sometimes be necessary, however wherever possible, we will try to encourage parents to make their own arrangements. Where our church is involved in making arrangements best practice guidelines will be followed as with any activity with young people, and our workers will ensure that they have another worker with them in the car. Where this is not possible, and the child or young person would face

some immediate threat of remaining in a unsafe situation, then the young person will be asked to travel in the back of the car, and not in the passenger seat.

Where larger vehicles are used for the transportation of large groups of young people, workers will ensure that the highway code is followed in all aspects of the journey, especially taking care to ensure safety inside of the vehicle. Seat belts will always be worn whilst the vehicle is moving, and passenger numbers will not exceed the number of seat belts available. It will be the responsibility of the car owners to check that their vehicle is taxed, has a current MOT certificate and is appropriately insured. Those organising outings requiring the use of private cars will be responsible for ensuring car drivers are aware of the above. Workers will ensure that there is the appropriate number of adults for the adult per child ratio (see above).

Section 2: Safe Recruitment

All adult volunteers (both leaders and helpers) will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the House of Bishops and government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- Potential volunteers are encouraged to take part in two taster sessions to enable them to get a clearer idea of the role in which they are interested. During these sessions they will be fully supervised by a leader who themselves have had an enhanced DBS check (including a check of the barred list for working with children) and will not be left alone with a child or young person.
- On completion of the 'taster sessions' a written **role profile** for the post, giving details of the post and the skills that will be required, is given to the potential volunteer.
- Those applying will complete a **personal details form**.
- All potential volunteers have a **meeting** with the vicar to discuss the role and what is expected
- **Two written references** have been obtained, and followed up (if necessary). At least one reference will ideally come from a current employer or a previous church
- Both a **Confidential Self Declaration** form and an appropriate criminal records bureau disclosure (**DBS**) application have been completed as required by the role.
- Qualifications, where relevant, have been verified
- The necessary safeguarding training programme is identified and agreed with the new volunteer worker.
- The volunteer has been given copies of guidance leaflets for their role as well as given access to this document.
- The volunteer undertakes to work within the above guidelines and knows how to report any concerns.
- Appointments will be made for an initial period after which the group leader and the volunteer will have the opportunity to discuss the way forward, and either may terminate the agreement if this is appropriate.
- Copies of any interview notes and all associated forms are to be kept securely and passed to the PSO. They will be held confidentially and indefinitely, in accordance with data protection legislation and good practice in safeguarding record keeping. This information will be available only on a 'need to know' basis where it relates to the safety and protection of children. (Summary at Appendix 4)

Positions of Trust and Authority

Many people, apart from those working directly with children and young people, hold positions of trust and/or authority within the church. Such a position means that a person may have influence over a child or young person or may have influence over policies and procedures safeguarding children and young people because of their position.

Those who hold positions of trust and authority will be required to complete a Confidential Self-Declaration Form and have a Disclosure and Barring Service check. The roles and positions of such people include Church Wardens and all PCC members, as charity trustees.

Offers of help will not be accepted from anyone who is not known to the church or who has not been recruited using the procedure above. Should declaration forms, interview or DBS check reveal reasons why an individual should not work with children and young people, pastoral support will be offered by the vicar. In line with

Diocesan policy, the Bishop will also be informed. Volunteers aged under 18 years can help adult volunteers with younger children's groups from time to time, but never without direct supervision or in a one-to-one situation e.g. they may not accompany a younger child to the toilet. Ultimate responsibility for the safe recruitment of suitable children's and youth workers lies with the vicar.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in 2012 to form the Disclosure and Barring Services. They maintain a list of those individuals who are 'barred' from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. It is an offence for those who are barred to work or volunteer, or try to work or volunteer, with vulnerable groups or for parishes to knowingly employ them or use them as volunteers to work with vulnerable groups. There is also a requirement to inform the DBS if a paid employee or volunteer is dismissed or removed because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or if they would have been dismissed or removed had they not left voluntarily.

Section 3: Training and Accountability

As a church we are committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all our volunteers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All children's and youth work volunteers will undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis to a level that is appropriate to their role. The Diocese of Birmingham recommends that anyone who supervises or works directly with children and young people should repeat this training at least every three years.

Our volunteers will, upon commencement of their role, also be provided with a copy of the Code of Safer Working Practice and the appropriate Diocesan leaflets to support them in their roles. These leaflets include:

- A Guide to Safeguarding Children and Young People for Leaders and Helpers
- A Brief Guide to the Categories of Abuse for Leaders and Helpers
- A Guide to Safeguarding Ourselves in Pastoral Relationships

As well as raising awareness of safeguarding issues with our volunteers, the concept of teamworking, mutual support and responsibility will be fostered together with clear lines of accountability in all areas.

Section 4: Recognising and responding appropriately to concerns and allegations

Defining and understanding child abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child. Anyone can perpetrate abuse, a child or adult of any gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, ethnicity or culture.

Knowledge of and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious patterns is crucial to good safeguarding practice – BUT none of these can ever be used to justify or condone the abuse of a person. Most perpetrators use the fabrication of a trust/secret relationship. Secrecy closes the victim off from others and weakens their links with reality. All abused children experience trauma, although the degree of severity varies. Often the damage done in early life is revealed with time when the effects surface. The reality of what has been happening and feelings about the experience become harder to deal with as adulthood approaches.

Individuals may have concerns about the welfare of a child or suspicions about the behaviour of an adult, because of something a child tells them, because another adult voices concerns, and/or because of the behaviour or appearance of the child.

An **allegation** is when someone, who may or may not be the child concerned, makes a direct statement that abuse has taken place. All allegations of child abuse, from whatever source, should be referred to the children's social care services as soon as possible.

A **suspicion** is where there are indicators that child abuse may have taken place but where there is no direct allegation or disclosure to confirm this.

Responding to a suspicion of abuse or neglect tends to be less straight forward than when a direct allegation has been made. It is important that the absence of an allegation does not deter from taking action when concerned about the welfare of the child.

The protection of children is a shared responsibility and, regardless of our position within the church we should never feel that as an individual we have to adopt sole responsibility for making decisions. It is important that concerns or suspicions are shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis at Parish or Diocesan level. When procedures are being followed and information shared appropriately, we are able to feel confident that carefully considered decisions are being made.

Allegations Against Clergy, Lay Ministry, Volunteers or Other Workers in Positions of Responsibility.

If an allegation of abuse concerns any of the above the Parish Safeguarding Officer must be informed immediately and will advise the Incumbent (except where the Incumbent is the subject of the concerns) and others in positions of responsibility on a strictly "need to know" basis only. If the allegation relates to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, information should be shared initially with the Incumbent. The Safeguarding Officer or the Incumbent must inform the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

The following **CATEGORIES OF ABUSE** can be found to apply to children

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical abuse can include fabricating or inducing illness in a child, inappropriate restraint, the misuse of medicines or force-feeding or other inappropriate sanctions.

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.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 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 seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying 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 maltreatment 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. 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.

Sexual abuse can take place in private or in public. Cases have been reported of children from a few weeks old right through to 18 years old and into adulthood. The key point is that the child is being used in some way to meet the sexual needs of someone who is in a position of greater power. A person may be able to exert power over others by their difference in age, strength, gender, intellect, status, cultural origin or emotional development. Every abuse of a child is an abuse of power. Because children and young people are more innocent and less powerful than adults, they are vulnerable to the damaging actions of those who are stronger and more mature.

In cases of sexual abuse: 80% involve a member of the family or someone known to the child; 5% (only) involve

violence; 90% involve male perpetrators.

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

This is not a formally recognised category of abuse but is of concern to faith communities. It includes using religious belief to justify abuse – such as using physical or emotional harm to ‘deliver’ a person from evil spirits or witchcraft - or for the control or coercion of a person.

GROOMING

Grooming is using a power imbalance in a relationship to control or coerce a person into doing something they do not want to do or gaining a person’s total trust or ‘love’ so that they will do anything their abuser asks.

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in the context of the child’s whole life. Any number of upsetting experiences, other than child abuse, may cause a child to behave in a demanding way or distressed way. If a child stands out from a group as a ‘problem’ there could be several possible explanations:

- Has there been a recent bereavement in the family?
- Is a parent seriously ill?
- Has there been a major disruption of family life i.e. divorce?
- Is the child being seriously bullied at school?
- Is the child being abused by someone close?

A child can give signals or indicators that something is wrong in several ways; visually, behaviourally, and verbally.

VISUAL

- A child may show general signs of neglect including undernourishment or failure to grow
- May have repeated signs of unexplained bruising or marks, bites, cuts, scratches, burns and fractures
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Persistent tiredness
- Inadequate care

BEHAVIOURAL

- A child may become withdrawn, clingy or depressed
- Become naughty and disruptive
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia
- Stealing or gorging food
- Acts out sexual behaviour of an adult kind
- Becomes ‘frozen’ and fearful, and flinches when an adult moves towards them

- Reluctance to change for, or participate in games
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults

VERBAL

- A child may give inappropriate explanations for bruises or burn marks
- Tells you about being asked to keep a secret or drops hints about abuse
- Confides a story of physical or sexual abuse
- Use sexually explicit language and behaviour not normally expected at their age and stage of development.

RESPONDING TO A CONCERN, ALLEGATION OR DISCLOSURE

Concerns about the welfare of a child can be as a result of concern expressed by:

- another adult
- because of the behaviour or appearance of a child or young person
- a disclosure by a child or young person.

Responding to concerns

All parishioners and especially our volunteers working with our children and young people must be vigilant for suspicious or inappropriate behaviour or other signs of abuse.

If anything appears to be wrong, act immediately

If the situation is an emergency and it is not possible to contact the Vicar or the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) in the first instance, then Social Services or the Police should be contacted immediately. It is essential, however, that the Vicar or PSO be informed as soon as possible after this action has been taken. The Vicar or PSO will inform the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor (**BSA**).

However, where concerns are expressed by another adult or because of the behaviour or appearance of a child or young person and the child or young person is **NOT** in immediate danger the Vicar or the PSO should be contacted in the first instance to share the concerns. A flow chart showing the above reporting procedure can be found at Appendix 5.

Where an allegation of abuse concerns a member of the clergy, lay reader, church officer or church employee then the BSA should be contacted. If there is concern or an allegation has been made against the PSO then the matter must be referred to the Vicar.

Responding to a child wishing to disclose abuse

The key skill is to listen effectively. Avoid asking questions allowing the child or young person to lead the conversation. Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child to talk in private, but making sure other appropriate people are aware the conversation is taking place.

EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
- Above everything else listen without interrupting
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
- Remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen
- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure that there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

HELPFUL RESPONSES

- You have done the right thing in telling
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

DON'T SAY

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe all this
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

AFTER THE MEETING

- Give positive reassurance and information of what you are going to do next
- Make detailed notes that are factual, noting body language and emotional behaviour
- Make a note of your actions and who you are going to inform
- Do not speak to anyone implicated in the allegation
- Do not attempt to obtain further information from the child or young person other than the information volunteered
- Only talk to those people who have responsibility for these matters – Vicar, PSO the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor.

The written report should be dated and countersigned by the Vicar or the PSO who will file it in the child protection file (unless the allegation is against the Vicar). The child protection file will be kept secure, confidential and for an indefinite period. The matters should not be discussed with any unauthorised person.

DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE UNDERTAKE ANY INVESTIGATION YOURSELF

Social Services are legally the only body allowed to deal with reported abuse. They will follow up every report and the police will always be involved. Where a report is made the person may be asked to attend a case conference or provide further information to the investigating authorities.

Guard against making judgements about an allegation and expect to experience your own strong feelings. Do

not hesitate to ask for help if you feel you need it from the Vicar or our PSO as you feel appropriate. On your behalf and at your request, they may contact the Bishop's Chaplain or the NSPCC who will put you in touch with people who can provide support.

Section 5: Pastoral Care and Support of Adult Survivors of Abuse, Abused Children and Abusers

We need to recognise that there may be both abusers and those who have or continue to suffer abuse in our congregations at any one time. Abusers includes both current and past abusers. The Vicar will offer sensitive support to both those who have been abused and to those who have been or are current abusers. Different people should offer support to the (alleged or proven) victim and the (alleged or proven) abuser. The Diocese will provide advice on how this can be practically managed in each situation.

Caring for Survivors of Abuse

The Church is committed to caring pastorally for people who have lived experience of abuse and other affected persons and to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered abuse. Those who have suffered abuse within the Church should always receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously.

Managing Risks from Known Offenders

We know that three quarters of known sex offenders regularly attend a place of worship. It is therefore important that the parish has procedures in place for minimising any known risks which could result. The safety of our children is paramount. An abuser (even those who are no longer abusing) will not be allowed contact with children or young people. This is not to exclude people from the love of God through the church but to recognise that they will need support and boundaries.

In the event that a known abuser seeks to become a member of one of our churches the following procedure must be followed:

- The Vicar and/or the PSO should be informed as soon as possible.
- The Vicar will inform the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser (BSA) and seek advice as to how risks should be managed within the Parish. These risks will include ensuring that the abuser is not doing any work in the church that brings them into contact with our children and whether children and young people outside the church context are at immediate risk. The BSA will formulate a risk management policy determining the level of integration the individual will be allowed to have in the church community

The Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser has established links with those statutory agencies with responsibility for monitoring known abusers, such as Police, Probation and Children's Services. Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) should be in place in respect of known offenders which require strategies to be in place for monitoring and managing risks in local communities. A formal management of risk meeting will be held to agree strategy within the Parish and agree a voluntary contract with the known offender. The small group may include the vicar and the PSO and any necessary agencies and the police. The Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor should be consulted on the constitution of the group. It will be made clear that no one else apart from those identified on the contract will be informed of the facts without the offender's knowledge.

If requested, and with the help of the BSA, the vicar will make a referral to specialised professional counselling. Anyone providing support must be extremely careful not to contaminate evidence or prejudice any investigation that may be imminent or on-going.

Section 6: Records and Confidentiality

Records

The following rules will be applied to all recruitment, interview and review records for our volunteers.

These records will be kept:

- secure and in line with our parish Data Privacy Policy and GDPR requirements
- according to the retention periods required
- and records pertaining to DBS process and Self-declaration forms will be kept secure and will only be accessed by the Vicar and the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Other records to be kept include:

- Where relevant, annually reviewed safeguarding policies & procedures, signed off at the appropriate level
- Ongoing up to date employee and volunteer files, including DBS rechecks
- Safeguarding training completed and scheduled refreshers
- Incident and concern recording – full chronology, signed, timed, dated etc.

Confidentiality

It is essential matters concerning safeguarding issues, disclosure, allegations or suspicions are kept totally confidential. Communication about such matters should only happen with authorised persons (Vicar, Parish Safeguarding Officer, Social Services or Police). Confidential matters should not be discussed 'for prayer' even if names and details are removed.

When cases are closed, move into public domain or are dismissed confidentiality will and must be maintained.

Section 7: The Use of Parish Premises by Non-Parishioners

The PCC has a duty of care to advise individuals and organisations working with children and young people who hire or use church property, of their responsibility as hirers for the welfare and safety of the children in their care and the importance of maintaining a healthy and safe environment.

All hirers should be made aware of the parish policy and a copy should be displayed prominently in each room being hired. Regular hirers will be informed of the name and contact details of the PSO and made aware that their activity is not insured under church insurance.

Regular Authorised Hirers or Users

All regular users will be informed of the existence of our safeguarding policy and procedures for child protection, that a copy is on display in the entrance to the Parish Centre and that a copy of this document is available from the Parish Administrator's office. The Conditions of Hire document provides details of our PSO and his/her name and contact details.

All regular authorised hirers/users of our parish premises will be asked to confirm whether they are engaged in activities with children or young people within their Conditions of Hire agreement. Where this is the case the

hirer/user must demonstrate at the time of entering into the hire agreement that they have a child protection statement or policy in use and asked to provide the name and contact details of their Designated Safeguarding Lead. They are also required to sign a Safeguarding Declaration that they will ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected at all times 'by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring'. The hirer/user will also be required to confirm that they carry full liability insurance for their activity.

Private and Occasional Hirers or Users

Anyone organising an occasional activity that takes place on parish premises (for example the hire of the parish centre for one-off meetings or entertainments and parties) will be notified at the time of the hire agreement being made that the protection of any children is to be of the highest priority and that a copy of our child protection policy and its procedures is on display in the parish centre, and that a copy is available on request.

If the activity for which the premises are hired is to involve children or young people the Conditions of Hire document requires that the Hirer/ User signs a Safeguarding Declaration that they will agree to take full responsibility for the welfare of the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults who attend the event as well as taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

Multiple Hirers and Users and Shared Space

If several activities are taking place on the premises simultaneously, the organisers' attention will be drawn to the necessary care required in respect of contact between the activities and reference to this will be included in the Conditions of Hire contract.

Section 8: Review of this Policy and its Procedures and Dissemination

Our overarching safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually with this supplemental policy and its procedures being reviewed in its entirety at least once every three years by the Vicar and the PSO. Amendments will be made in light of experience of its use in the parish and to incorporate any suggestions from the Bishop and Diocese. Prior to adoption of any desired amendments to this part of the policy, they must be approved first by the PCC. If the review does not result in any changes being made, the PCC should be informed of this by the Vicar and a note made in the PCC minutes.

If, prior to the three yearly review, legislation is passed or diocesan guidelines are issued which affect this policy or its procedures and require it to be changed immediately, the PSO will be responsible for agreeing these amendments with the Vicar, making the amendments to the policy straight away and ensuring that they are distributed to all who hold a copy of the original policy document.

Similarly, should there be a change to any of the identities or telephone numbers of any person or organisation mentioned in this document, the PSO will promptly provide a written amendment to everyone who holds a copy of this document.

All policy and procedure documents and all updates will be publicly displayed on the notice boards in the parish room and on the Church website. A copy will also be kept for inspection in the Parish Office. With the PSO appending any updates to every copy displayed on the parish premises.

When the policies or procedures are updated, the congregation will be informed through the weekly newsletter.

The latest guidance from the House of Bishops is that DBS checks need to be re-checked every 3 years.

The document was approved by the PCC on: 16 July 2024

The proposed date of the next review: July 2027

Section 9: Who's Who and Useful Contact Numbers

Parish Safeguarding Contacts

Vicar

Andy Hobbs
0121 445 1269
hobbsrev@gmail.com

Parish Safeguarding Office (PSO)

Diane Milford
07547 267746
safeguarding@chandbgparish.org.uk

In an emergency and where the Vicar and/or the PSO is unavailable please make contact with one of the Church Wardens.

Church Wardens

Geoff Hall
0121 445 4023
Geoff.sue@outlook.com

Jill Newton
0121 445 2795
rjnewton@lineone.net

Jonathan Lucas
0121 445 4670
jandtlucas@btinternet.com

Bill Sedgwick
0121 445 2252
billsedgwick60@gmail.com

Diocesan Safeguarding Contacts

Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor (BSA)

Stephanie Hayes
07342 993844
StephH@cofebirmingham.com

Safeguarding Training and Development Officer

Claire Wesley
0121 426 0432
ClaireW@cofebirmingham.com

Safeguarding Support Officer

Sarah Rose
0121 426 0407
safeguardingsupport@cofebirmingham.com

Emergency Contact Numbers

Bromsgrove Social Services Child Protection Team	01905 822666
Thirtyone:eight	0303 003 11 11 (formerly CCPAS)
NSPCC	help@NSPCC.org.uk
Police	101 or 999
ChildLine	0808 11 11
Samaritans	116 123
Family Lives	0808 800 2222
NAPAC	0808 801 0331 (National Association of People Abused in Childhood)
Cruse	0808 808 1677 (Cruse Bereavement)
Stop It Now!	0808 1000 900
Rape Crisis Helpline	0808 500 2222
Safe Spaces	0300 303 1056

Appendix 1

The Parish of St Michael and All Angels, Cofton Hackett and St Andrew's, Barnt Green

SAFEGUARDING POLICY PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

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.

In accordance with both the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and practice guidance and The Church of England: Birmingham's procedures our church 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

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all
- Ensure the welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount
- Ensure a leadership commitment, at all levels, to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with a clear line of accountability within our church for work on safe-guarding
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse and offer appropriate support to all those with lived experience of abuse
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, including concerns and allegations against church officers*, to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and statutory agencies immediately
- Make referrals to, and work with, statutory and voluntary sector partners in accordance with legislation and House of Bishop's requirements
- We will inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, and ensure appropriate supervision of anyone who is known to have offended against a child, young person or adult at risk of abuse due to their age, illness or disability who attends activities organised by the Parochial Church Council and will follow all advice and recommendations of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor in this regard

- Display in church premises, and on the Parish website, the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs together with details of other agencies available to be contacted for support and advice
- Ensure good record keeping and effective information sharing
- We commit to the safe recruitment of new and current Church Officers* who have contact with or any responsibility for children, young people, and adults
- We commit to providing every Church Officer with clear instructions and information in respect of their role, adequate resources and support and regular opportunities for review
- We will assess all new and current Church Officer roles and, in every case where the role is deemed to be eligible, apply for appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks every three years
- We will ensure that all Church Officers working with children, young people and adults experiencing or at risk of abuse due to their illness or disability, or are in a trusted role, attend Church of England safeguarding training every three years
- We will keep all records in relation to safeguarding concerns, allegations and the recruitment of volunteers and paid workers securely
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish
- We require all hirers of our premises to have their own safeguarding policy and procedures, and to provide us with a copy
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually
- This policy will be clearly displayed on church premises (and our website) with both the policy and its implementation being reviewed annually

This church appoints **Diane Milford** as the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.

**A Church Officer is anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.*

Appendix 2

The Code of Safer Working Practice

The Code of Safer Working Practice expresses our commitment to demonstrating God's love by placing the highest priority on the safety of those to whom we minister. It sets out what we expect from anyone who ministers in our church, in both paid or voluntary roles, and is one of the ways we ensure high standards of safeguarding in all we do.

Upholding the Code

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Staff and volunteers who breach this code may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral made to the relevant statutory agency.

All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity;
- Respect people's rights to personal privacy;
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful;
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to about a personal concern;
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker with their activity leader and/or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. All written records should be signed and dated;
- Obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.

In addition, those working with children and young people must:

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult;
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet;
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around;
- Ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and of its nature before the activity takes place.

All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must not:

- Use any form of physical punishment;
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual;
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group;
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group;
- Allow an individual to involve them in excessive attention seeking;
- Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person;
- Allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the group;
- Befriend children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable on social media;

- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

In addition, for children and young people, must not:

- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity);
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people, except when this is a social situation with family members/carers present, eg a parish party¹
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include family members/carers) outside organised group occasions.

Acceptable Touch

Sympathetic attention, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, can be wholly appropriate. However, abusers can use touch that appears safe to 'normalise' physical contact which then becomes abusive. As a general rule, the use of touch between adults in positions of responsibility and those with whom they are working or volunteering should be initiated by the person themselves, and kept to the minimum. In addition to this, always follow the guidelines below:

- Ask permission before you touch someone;
- Allow the other person to determine the degree of touch except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention);
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual, abusive or offensive;
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors;
- Touch should be in response to a person's needs and not related to the worker's needs. Touch should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the worker.

Appendix 3

If you become aware of inappropriate/harmful posts:

DO

- ✓ Take seriously, keep calm, accept without judgement
- ✓ Make contact offline to respond to disclosures
- ✓ Let them know who you must tell to help stop the abuse

DO NOT

- Show shock or disbelief
- Respond online
- Push the person into giving details of the abuse – your role is NOT to investigate
- Ask direct or leading questions – this could be harmful to the investigation
- Jump to conclusions or use words the person has not already used

Respond

- Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material – posts, images, messages etc
- Only discuss what they have told you with others on a 'need to know' basis – and not with others who are not involved (friend/colleague/partner)
- Never comment on or alert the alleged abuser – or anyone else who may tell them

Record

- **ALWAYS** make a record of what the person has told you and pass it, with any saved posts, messages, images etc to your Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- Keep the record factual – who, why, what, where, when, how – sign and date it
- If you can, agree with the person that your record is accurate

Report

NEVER promise to keep a secret

ALWAYS report any concerns about a child - or someone who works or volunteers for the church - however small they may seem, all disclosures and all allegations

TELL Parish Safeguarding Officer or Vicar...



... or, when the concern is about them/you can't get in touch with them/you don't want to tell anyone at your church, tell the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser

If you need immediate advice and can't wait to get in touch with any of the above call the duty social care team or NSPCC helpline or police

If a situation is not safe and someone is in danger or needs immediate help call the police

Contact Numbers:

Parish Safeguarding Officer:	07
Vicar:	
Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser:	07324 993844
Social Services:	
Out of Hours Social Services:	
31:8 (formerly CCPAS):	0303 003 11 11
NSPCC:	0808 800 5000
Police:	101 or 999
ChildLine:	0808 11 11
Domestic Violence:	0808 2000 247



SAFEGUARDING

A Guide to Using Social Media for Leaders & Helpers



Social Media ...

... allows users to create rather than just consume online content – upload photographs, updates, comments etc. The Church of England's community guidelines for using social media have been created to reflect our values and help Christians to live out their calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Be safe | Be respectful |
| Be kind & honest | Take responsibility |
| Credit others | Disagree well |
| Be a good ambassador | Follow the rules |

<https://www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines>

For many young people there is little distinction between their 'on' and 'offline' worlds and excessive restrictions 'online' can lead them to taking greater risks to get around these. The world of social media changes rapidly. Keep up to date at websites such as <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> or <https://www.childnet.com/>

The PCC must approve the use of social media and mobile phones by the church and appoint a named person to monitor church accounts on their behalf.

For further guidance see The Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2018, section 12 and the Safer Environments practice guide 2019 at <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church-safeguarding>

Sexting is ... the sending or posting of sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs via mobiles or over the internet - always refer to [your Parish](#) Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser. The sharing of sexual imagery of people under 18 by adults constitutes child sexual abuse and must also be reported to the Police.

Using Images

Images – photos or films – are sensitive personal data - you need consent to use and store them.

Ensure images and posts are regularly updated and remove 'old' images

Think *Who? Why? What?* before using images of under 18s online. Under 18s should be fully clothed and not named.

Store securely – locked cabinet or protected file. Use church, *not personal*, devices to take and store images.

Communicate clearly any 'rules' about taking their own images to attendees at an event – and have procedures to respond to and manage any concerns.

Consent

Update consent at least annually. Over 16s with capacity can give consent – but also let parents know. Under 16s should be asked if it's okay to take their image – but their parents must also give consent too.

DO NOT use images of adults who lack the capacity to give informed consent – no one else can give consent on their behalf.

Group images in a public space – individual consent not needed - but make participants aware that images will be taken and for what purpose. Those who freely gather for a group photo have given their implied consent by virtue of gathering.

Be honest, transparent, consistent, accountable, vigilant

When using social media for church:

DO

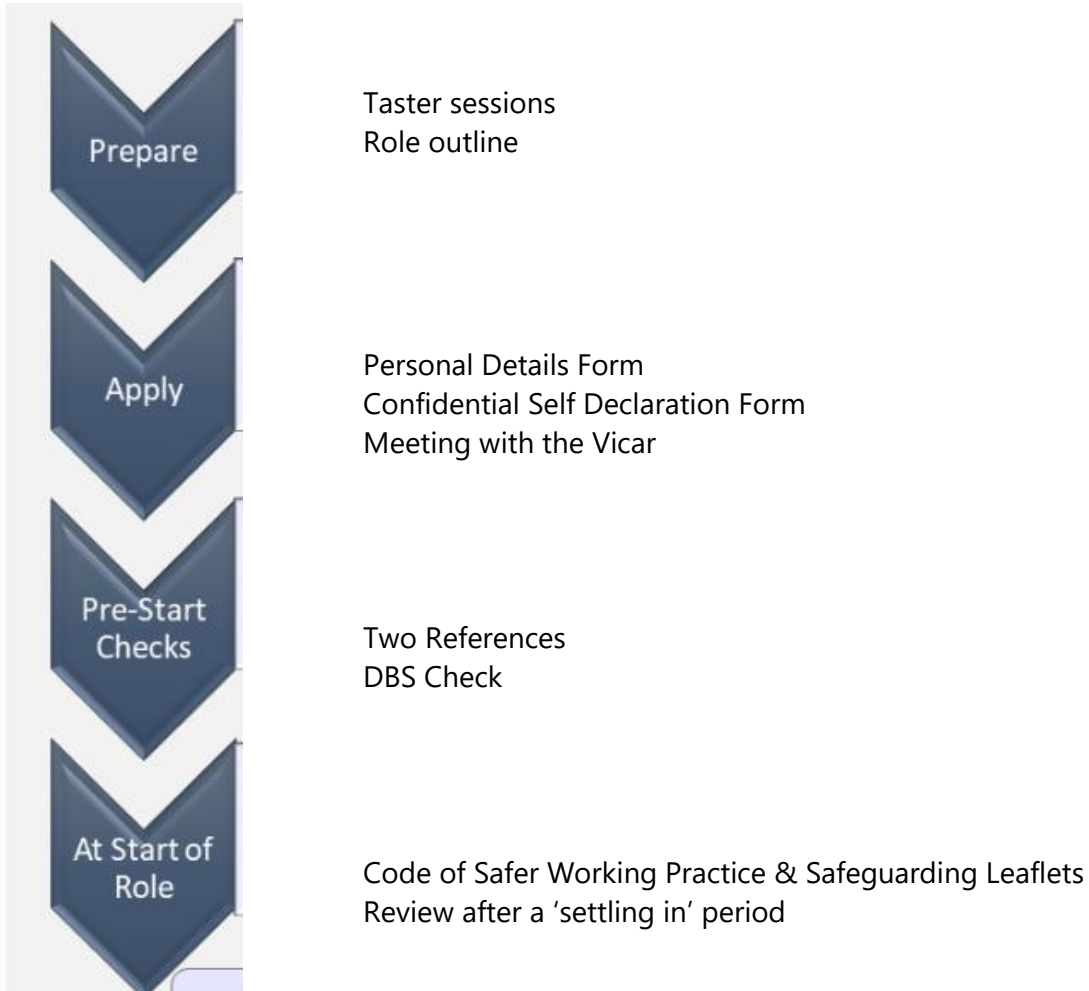
- ✓ Maintain appropriate boundaries
- ✓ Think before you post – social media is 'public' and can be traced back to you
- ✓ Behave online as you would offline
- ✓ Avoid online 'lone working' e.g. 1:1 chat
- ✓ Use 'official' church or group accounts/phones where possible – keep private media separate
- ✓ Obtain consent from over 16s or carers of under 16s to use and store their info & images online

DO NOT

- Harass, stalk or post inappropriate material
- Allow content to contain, or link to, harmful, libellous, illegal, bullying or abusive material
- Accept or invite young people as 'friends' who know you as a 'church leader'

Appendix 4

Safer Recruitment Process Summary



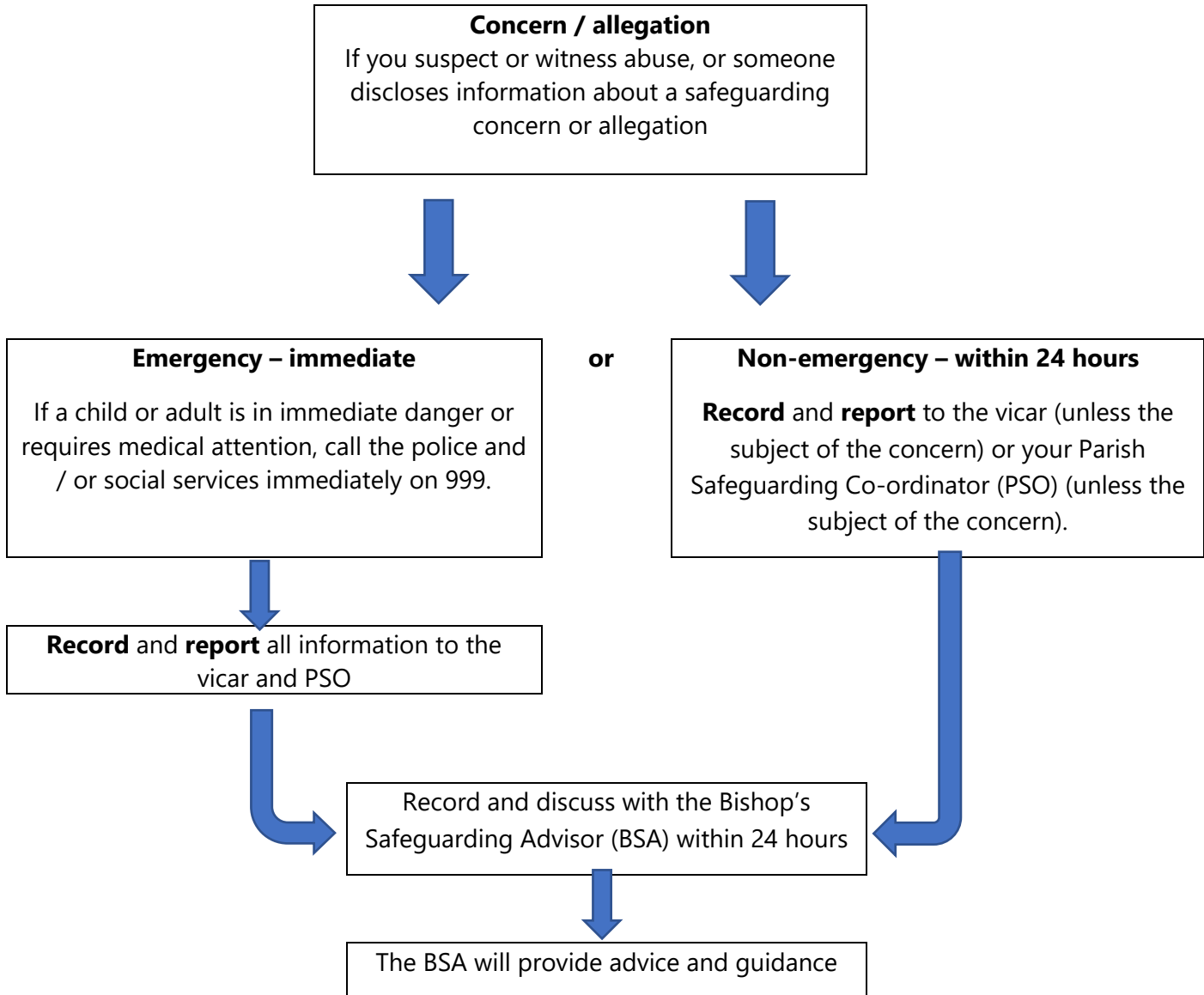
Followed

Ongoing support, accountability, oversight, learning & development, review, record keeping

Appendix 5

A Quick Guide to Responding Promptly to a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

Although particular people bear formal responsibility for Safeguarding, 'the care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church' (Promoting a Safer Church, 2017).



Contact details:

Vicar (Rev Andy Hobbs): 0121 445 1269 / hobbsrev@gmail.com

PSO (Diane Milford): 07547 267746 / safeguarding@chandbgparish.org.uk

BSA (Steph Haynes): 07342 993844 / StephH@cofebirmingham.com