

St. Gabriel s Parish Church Weoley Castle Safeguarding Policy

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1. Introduction

This safeguarding policy takes account of the House of Bishops Safeguarding Policy Statement *Promoting a Safer Church* (2017) <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf> which states that 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. It sets out **five foundations** summarised here:

1. The Gospel

The Church 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 and therefore we take with utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening, in responding well where it has and in protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm.

2. Human Rights and the Law

Safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework supported by government guidance which sets out a range of safeguarding duties, responsibilities and best practice.

3. Core Principles

- The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount;
- Integrity, respect and listening to all;
- Transparency and openness;
- Accountability;
- Collaboration with key statutory authorities and other partners;
- Use of professional safeguarding advice and support both inside and outside the Church;
- A commitment to the prevention of abuse;
- The active management of risk;
- Promoting a culture of informed vigilance;
- Regular evaluation to ensure best practice.

4. Good Safeguarding Practice

- A leadership commitment, at all levels, to the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults;

- A safeguarding policy available to Church Officers; (this is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid).
- A clear line of accountability within the Church for work on safeguarding;
- Clear reporting procedures to deal with safeguarding concerns and allegations;
- Clear roles for Church Officers;
- Practice and services informed by on- going learning, review and by the views of children, young people, families and vulnerable adults;
- Safer recruitment procedures in place;
- Clear arrangements for support and/or supervision;
- Safeguarding training for all Church Officers working with or in contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- Effective working with statutory and voluntary sector partners;
- Publicly advertised arrangements for children, young people and vulnerable adults to be able to speak to an independent person, as required;
- Complaints and whistleblowing procedures that are well publicised;
- Effective information sharing;
- Good record keeping.

5. Learning from the past

The statutory reports and independent reviews into abuse that have involved the Church of England and other faith organisations highlight past errors and significant lessons to be learnt to improve safeguarding.

As a Church we continue to commit to a journey of truth, healing, learning and abuse prevention.

These five foundations are worked out through **six policy commitments** which inform St. Gabriel s Safeguarding Policy and which are publicised in our Church building.

- 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.

Everyone who uses our facilities has a part to play in keeping one another safe and protecting others from harm and accidents. Firstly, that means that we are mindful of the possible effect on others of our actions, behaviour or words. What we mean well or may seem harmless to us, may

be interpreted or received differently by others. Developing a sensitivity to others in this way is a value we want to encourage. Secondly, if we see or hear something that causes us safeguarding concern, either for ourselves or for others, then we have a responsibility to raise that and to seek clarification or advice or to allow others to take action. Please also see our Anti-Bullying Guidelines.

2. Safeguarding Responsibilities

This safeguarding policy applies to all church members, staff, volunteers, and any hirers using the church or centre facilities and grounds (see sections 4 below). Section one above explains the Church's ethos behind our safeguarding policy and how we are committed to preventing abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Sections two to four are expected to be complied with by all users of the site.

2.1 Church Leadership Responsibilities

The safeguarding of individuals is the responsibility of everyone at St. Gabriel s, but the overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the Parish Church Council (PCC). The PCC will:

- Ensure that safeguarding is a priority in the life of the church.
- Review and update the safeguarding policy and procedures annually.
- Appoint a **Parish Safeguarding Administrator** who will coordinate safeguarding efforts and records and ensure that appropriate training is available.
- Ensure that DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are completed for all staff and volunteers working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults and that safer recruitment procedures are followed. Currently, the PCC receives the support of the Diocese of Birmingham in ensuring safer recruitment compliance.
- Ensure that there is a clear procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns and that these are acted upon promptly.

2.2 The Parish Safeguarding Administrator will be responsible for:

- Sharing and publicising information so all know the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that safeguarding training is provided to all church staff, leaders, and volunteers.
- Keeping confidential records of any safeguarding incidents and concerns safely and securely.
- Supporting the PCC to have a "Promoting a Safer Church" action plan in place that sets out how the policy is being put into action and that is reviewed regularly.
- Liaising with the Diocesan safeguarding team and statutory agencies when necessary, including local authorities and the police
- Promoting a culture of safeguarding and encouraging individuals to come forward with any concerns.

2.3 All Volunteers and Staff Responsibilities

Everyone who works with children, young people, or vulnerable adults must:

- Be safely recruited.
- Attend safeguarding training as required, at a minimum of every three years.
- Follow church safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Administrator / Church Warden or Interim Vicar at safeguarding.stgabrielsb29@gmail.com or if it is a serious concern or involving one of those three St. Gabriel s Church Officers, report it to the **Diocesan Safeguarding Officer on 07342 993844**. See **Procedure for Reporting** box below.
- Avoid situations where they are alone with children or vulnerable adults.
- Currently St. Gabriel s Church has no activities where volunteers or staff are responsible for children, children are their Parents /Carers responsibility at all times. Hall Hirers policies must have sufficient checks in place to ensure staff and volunteers are not alone with children or vulnerable adults AND that they have correct information to contact a Parent/Carer if an emergency arises whilst a child is in their care.

3. Procedures for Reporting Concerns

We recognise our responsibility to always respond to and report abuse in whatever context and if a safeguarding concern arises, the following steps should be taken:

1. **Listen and Reassure:** Listen to the individual, reassure them that they are being heard, and ensure they feel safe. Do not promise to keep it private.
2. **Record the Concern:** Write down the details of the concern as soon as possible, noting the time, date, and what was said. **DO NOT TRY TO INVESTIGATE THE ABUSE YOURSELF**
3. **Report the Concern:** Report the concern to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer on **07342 993844** and inform the Parish Safeguarding Administrator.
4. **Referral to Authorities:** If the concern involves immediate risk of harm you must contact the relevant authorities, such as local safeguarding teams or the police **AND** inform the **Diocesan Safeguarding Officer**. See box below.

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

Who to contact if you have...

An URGENT CONCERN about a child, young person or vulnerable adult and an immediate response is required

Refer directly to the **Emergency services (999) or CASS (0121 303 1888) (Birmingham Children s Advice and Support Service) or Adult Social Care (0121 303 1234) AND** inform and speak directly to the **Diocesan Safeguarding Officer on 07342 993844**

A CONCERN about someone in need or at risk of harm

Speak directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer **07342 993844** OR inform and discuss your concerns with the Parish Safeguarding Administrator (unless subject to concern) or Vicar (unless subject to concern). They can be contacted at safeguarding.stgabrielsb29@gmail.com

CONCERNS ABOUT ANYONE OR ANYTHING that may put someone else or you at risk of harm

Inform and discuss your concerns with the Parish Safeguarding Administrator (unless subject to concern) or Vicar (unless subject to concern) at safeguarding.stgabrielsb29@gmail.com or speak directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer **07342 993844**.

These contact details can also be found on the blue/yellow Promoting a Safer Church safeguarding poster displayed in the church building.

We take all allegations of abuse seriously and will investigate all reported incidents promptly, fairly, and thoroughly. All accusations will be dealt with confidentially, and any individual found to have acted inappropriately may face disciplinary action, including removal from their role.

4. Safeguarding by St. Gabriel s Church Centre Hirers

The use of the church building or facilities by outside groups (referred to as **Hirers**) is subject to the church's safeguarding policy. Hirers must ensure that their activities align with the safeguarding values of the church.

4.1 Hirer s Safeguarding Responsibilities

Hirers are required to:

- **Have their own safeguarding policy** in place, particularly if their activities involve children, young people, or vulnerable adults.
- **Ensure all their staff and volunteers** working with children or vulnerable adults are safely recruited including DBS checked, adequately trained, and follow good safeguarding practice.
- **Report any safeguarding concerns to the relevant authorities** and/or to their safeguarding body or trustees in line with their policies.
- **Cooperate with church staff/ Parish Safeguarding Administrator** in safeguarding matters, including allowing access to records or information where necessary.

4.2 St. Gabriel s Church Safeguarding Oversight

If a Hirer does not have a sufficient safeguarding policy or is not following their policy adequately, the church will intervene. The church reserves the right to require Hirers to:

- Follow the church's safeguarding policy if their own policy is deemed insufficient or is not being adhered to.
- Provide evidence of suitable safeguarding procedures and training before being allowed to use the church facilities.
- Cease using the church facilities if safeguarding concerns are raised and not adequately addressed in the opinion of the PCC.

In cases where a Hirer fails to meet safeguarding requirements, the church may suspend or terminate their agreement to use church facilities. This action will be taken to ensure the safety of all individuals, especially vulnerable persons, and is consistent with St. Gabriel s safeguarding principles.

5. Review of the Policy

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed **annually by the PCC** or sooner if required by changes in legislation or church procedures. Any significant changes will be communicated to church members and any Hirers who use the church centre facilities.