

Diocesan Safeguarding and Inclusion Protocol 2017

Good Practice Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People and Adults at Risk

B. Code of Conduct

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Across Guildford diocese, churches are engaging in excellent children's work and youth activities, as well as running drop-ins, lunch-clubs, food banks and street pastors, reaching out to some of the more vulnerable members of our society. Our aim is to provide a warm, nurturing environment for all and requires all clergy and lay people to maintain the highest professional standards in their work and relationships with them.

We thank you for the many ways in which the churches in Guildford diocese reach out to and work in our communities and for the transformative effect this has in the lives of others. Safeguarding and inclusion underpins our diocesan vision and all twelve transformation goals in Transforming Church Transforming Lives.

This protocol for best practice in propriety and behaviour is to provide guidelines for best practice in all situations. We urge you to review and implement this regularly in line with national and diocesan policy and practice guidance. If you identify a situation not covered by this protocol or you are considering departing from the protocol in any way you must contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

1. Propriety and Behaviour

All those working with children and vulnerable adults have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard their welfare and best interests. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of all those they come into contact with.

There may be times when an adult's behaviour or actions in their personal life come under scrutiny because this may compromise their position within the church or indicate an unsuitability to work with children or vulnerable adults. Examples may include misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence. Adults in contact with children or vulnerable adults should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviour in places other than the church setting.

2. Taking Care of Touch

Physical touch can be important, and beneficial to a person's emotional and spiritual growth. A 'no touch' approach is both inappropriate and impractical, as physical contact is needed as part of expression and understanding of human relationships. However, when physical contact is made with children and/or vulnerable adults, this should never be abusive or intrusive, and the following good practice guidelines should be followed:-

Not all children and young people feel comfortable about physical contact, and adults should therefore never make the assumption that it is acceptable practice to use touch as a means of communication. All physical contact should be related to the child's or vulnerable adult's needs, not the adult worker's.

- Keep everything public.
- Touch should be age appropriate and initiated by the child/vulnerable adult rather than the worker
- Children, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity
- If at any time the child or adult shows any sign or hint of discomfort or embarrassment. STOP.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or child.
- Those in role should be free and encouraged to monitor and challenge any behaviour that could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse including behaviour by those in role must always be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser either direct or via the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent.

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they may need medical attention

When giving first aid (or applying sun cream, etc.), encourage the child and/or vulnerable adult to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's/vulnerable adult's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.

If an activity, for example bell-ringing, requires physical contact make sure that the young person and/or vulnerable adult and their parent/carer are aware of this and its nature.

Some role responsibilities necessitate intimate physical contact with children, for example assisting with toileting. All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required and depending on their abilities, age and maturity should be encouraged to act as independently as possible. When taking young children to the toilet, make sure another adult is informed, and that the same adult is not always undertaking the toilet trips.

Very occasionally it may be necessary to intervene as an emergency response and provide physical support for a child or vulnerable adult who is harming him/herself or others. Such intervention must be reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances. Use the least possible force and inform the parent/carer as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded as soon as possible and the information given to the Parish Safeguarding Representative.

Those working with children and vulnerable adults must always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny. Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

Where a child or vulnerable adult seeks or initiates inappropriate physical contact with an adult, the situation should be handled sensitively and care taken to ensure that contact is not exploited in any way. In these situations, it is the responsibility of the adult to deter the child or vulnerable adult and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

3. Social Media

Rationale

We recognise that social media is an important and valuable part of our every day

For children and young people in particular, it is the norm to communicate electronically through mobile phones, e-mail and social networking sites.

Although these new technologies offer a wealth of new experiences and possibilities, we also need to be aware that they can be used inappropriately by men, women and young people. Adults who work with children and young people need to know how to make the most of these technologies but at the same time ensure they are used appropriately and responsibly, in order that children are protected and the integrity of workers safeguarded.

All communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit boundaries, and only for reasons related to the work of the church, so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.

Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny and maintain a good and open relationship with parents and carers regarding communication with their children.

Emails, Texts, and Mobile phones

Emails are a useful tool to convey information but are not for use as a relationship tool. If a young person discloses anything which is a potential safeguarding concern via email or other social media ensure the immediate safety of the child (using the Diocesan Disclosure Flowchart)

- It is generally not appropriate to have non-work related email/text contact between the worker and children and young people with whom you work.
- Make sure the child's parents/carers know and have specifically agreed to this method of communication, specifying what social media will be used, when and by whom. There is a template Consent Form on the Resources section of the website.
- Use clear, appropriate language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation
- It is best practice to have a separate e-mail account/mobile phone for church activity communications, which can be accessed by other adults in the group as required.
- Never use terms such as 'love' or 'xxx' to end the message
- Do not forward chain e-mails to young people
- Make sure images and any hyperlinks if sent, are appropriate
- Always copy an agreed person, usually your line manager or safeguarding officer into the e-mails, and save copies sent.
- Always send emails at a time which is age appropriate and never after 9pm unless in response to an emergency.
- Only give out to young people contact details that the church has placed within the public domain

Chat facilities and Skype

Do not use live chat facilities or skype as a means of communication between workers and children. Live chat services, chat facilities and skype conversations cannot be kept on record and are therefore unsuitable as a form of communication between workers and children and young people.

Skype may be appropriate for e.g. a project or if the group uses webcam/skype in a supervised group environment for project purposes with clear objectives and aims for its use. Always inform the overall Group Leader or line manager when this taking place and keep a record of it.

What if a Child contacts me?

If a child does text or contact you via social media you must ensure that you

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child.
- Respond in normal working hours unless an emergency response is required.
- Try to move the conversation at the earliest appropriate opportunity to a public domain where the conversation can be recorded e.g., work email
- Inform your Group Leader or Line manager as soon as possible.

4. Working with Challenging Behaviour

Although everyone has different thresholds of what counts as unacceptable behaviour, the following behaviours are never acceptable and should always be challenged and addressed, whatever a person's age, ability or mental health:

- abusive or threatening behaviour
- misuse of drugs or alcohol on church premises
- harassment and/or bullying.

Leaders should set boundaries for participating in activities, but avoid imposing too many rules.

Before making a rule consider whether it is necessary, i.e. does it protect a child or vulnerable adult's health and safety? Too many rules may be difficult to enforce.

Leaders should involve children and young people in devising a written code of conduct for their behaviour. This will make the boundaries clear and easily understood and children are less likely to break rules that they have helped to establish.

Respond quickly when a child or vulnerable adult presents challenging behaviour. Do not let a problem build up over time. Physical intervention is ONLY appropriate as an emergency response and only such as is reasonable and proportionate to prevent immediate harm to the individual or another person. Never use physical intervention out of frustration, anger or by way of discipline. Team members should monitor one another and challenge any discipline which they believe to be excessive or inappropriate. Such incidents should always be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent or direct to the DSA.

If a person is being disruptive there are a number of options to de-escalate the situation.

- Ask them to stop. Be polite but clear about your request.
- Speak to the child or adult and try to establish what they are communicating by the behaviour.
- Explain what behaviour is unacceptable and why. Be specific. Inform them that if they continue to be disruptive the responsible adult will be contacted and they be asked to leave the activity.
- Make a record of the behaviour and the action taken and inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Review with the team what action and support is needed to reduce the risk of that happening again, e.g. more helpers, training, advice.

Please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice and support on any aspect of inclusion and addressing challenging behaviour.

5. Prayer Ministry

Prayer is essential to who we are and what we do as a church. Prayer Ministry includes intercessions, individual prayer during or after a church service or in small groups or prayer chains. It is important to think carefully about best practice having due regard to the following:

- Those praying should always be authorised and trained for prayer ministry, including safeguarding training.
- Be mindful about touch. Only lay hands on a person if you have consent and then only if and in such a way as is appropriate.
- Recognise and respect your own and the other person's vulnerabilities.
- We cannot always guarantee confidentiality. If a person discloses something which is a potential safeguarding concern this must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser .
- Prayer ministry is to support and pray for people's individual prayer needs and situations.
- Avoid naming people in open prayer unless you have their consent.
- Ensure that language used is always appropriate to the individual taking in to consideration their age, spiritual development and vulnerability
- It is important to remember that Prayer Ministry is not counselling. In praying for others we are simply inviting God to meet the person(s) at their point of need. We are seeking God's blessing upon them and his equipping and resources for the needs they face.
- When praying with a child or adult at risk never use language which suggests or may be thought to suggest that the child has an evil spirit. Do not use dramatic language or make 'promises' in prayer on God's behalf, beyond the assurance of his love and presence.

6. Infatuations

Occasionally, a child or young person may develop an infatuation with an adult who works with them. These adults should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned.

They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.

An adult who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with their Incumbent or Parish Safeguarding Representative so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

7. Tobacco, Alcohol, Solvents and Illegal substances.

We encourage a no-smoking and no-alcohol policy in children's and young people's groups. That means that those in role with children and young people must not consume or be under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, solvents or illegal substances at any children or youth activities. The possession or use of illegal/unauthorised drugs during church activities is unacceptable, and should be dealt with firmly, promptly and fairly. Also, the use of legal drugs such as medicines needs to be managed appropriately.

Information about acceptable behaviour with regards to drugs and alcohol should be provided to children and young people when behavioural guidelines are being drawn up for the church event and/or activity. This should include possible responses to drug/alcohol related incidents and that parents and carers will be informed of any such incident/s. In certain circumstances the police may also be informed.

An incident is likely to involve suspicions, observations, disclosures or discoveries of situations involving unauthorised drugs and/or alcohol. This may include:

- Drugs/Alcohol found on church premises/during church activities
- A child or young person is found in possession of drugs or alcohol
- A child or young person is found to be a recognised source of supply of drugs on church premises/during church activities
- A child or young person is thought to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- A child or young person discloses that they are misusing drugs/alcohol.

For adults in need of protection it remains good practice not to encourage the consumption of tobacco alcohol solvents or illegal substances. There may be occasions where it is necessary to inform carers that an adult has been drinking especially if they are under the influence at the activity sessions or there are concerns for their health and safety.

Note: It is a criminal offence for any person to produce, possess, use or supply illegal drugs and all cases should be referred to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

In any incident involving drugs and/or alcohol, the church must place the utmost priority on safety, meeting any medical emergencies with first aid and summoning medical help before addressing further issues. If the Group Leader is in doubt they should seek medical assistance immediately. Unless they are unconscious, a child or young person may be intoxicated but no medical emergency may exist, and it is recommended that arrangements are made with a parent/carer for the child or young person to be collected or escorted home.

8. Confiscation and Disposal of Illegal Drugs

The Group Leader should take temporary possession of any substance suspected of being an illegal drug for the purposes of protecting the child or young person from harm, and to prevent an offence being committed in relation to that drug. The substances should be stored securely. An adult witness should be present when confiscations occur and a record should be kept of their details. Inform your Parish Safeguarding representative immediately or Ian Berry Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The Police may also need to be informed.

The Group Leader should not attempt to analyse or taste unknown or confiscated substances. If requested, the police can advise on analysis, formal identification and disposal of illegal drugs.

9. Confiscation of Other Unauthorised Drugs

Parents and carers should always be informed of any incident where unauthorised drugs such as alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances (such as lighter fuel, glue or aerosols), and medicines have been confiscated, and given the opportunity to collect anything that has been confiscated.

Assessment and Evaluation

The Group Leader should judge the nature and seriousness of each incident, and this may involve informing and consulting others as necessary e.g. the Police. In all cases where the police are informed, the parish safeguarding officer and diocesan safeguarding adviser must also be informed.

Factors that should be taken in consideration include:

- Is the drug legal or illegal?
- Is this a first or subsequent incident?
- What quantity of the drug was involved?
- Does the child or young person admit or deny allegations?

Options available to the Group Leader when responding to the needs of those involved in a drugs related incident may include:

- Re-emphasis on behavioural guidelines
- Drug education
- Closer supervision
- Referral to an external agency (in liaison with parent/carer)
- Removal from the event/activity
- Permanent exclusion

Confidentiality

The Group Leader and other leaders/helpers cannot and should not promise total confidentiality to a child or young person who is involved in a drug-related incident or discloses drug use. Advice should be sought from the Parish Safeguarding Representative and/or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in such cases.

Incident Recording

The Group Leader should make a full record of every drugs related incident in a specific incident book. This should be stored securely.

In any incident involving drugs, the Group Leader must inform the child or young person's parent/carer and explain how the incident was managed and agree a way forward.

10. Digital Images and Photographs

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people. Implicit in this, is the commitment to ensure that all published images represent participants appropriately, and with due respect, and are taken and displayed in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The key concerns regarding the use of images of children and young people relate to:

- The possible identification of a child when a photograph is accompanied by personal information
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use in child pornography websites
- The taking of inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children and young people

We therefore need to be vigilant when using videos, images or videos of identifiable people. Since the Data Protection Act 1998 we are required to consider the following issues:

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- If a parent/carer has stated that they do not wish the child's/adult's picture taken or used or limited the use of the image this must be respected.
- Children (those under 18) must not be identified by their surname or other personal details including address or contact numbers.
- If you are alerting a parent/carer to return to the child/adult activity session do not use the name of the child or adult at risk.
- Those in role must not take images of children and young people.
- It is good practice in any event to use group pictures when taking photographs of children and young people, there is often no need to show children's faces
- Pictures of children or vulnerable adults should not be taken without another adult present.
- The photograph/video should focus on the activity rather than a particular child, avoiding full face and body shots and taking into consideration the age of the children involved. All children and young people featured in photos or recordings must be appropriately dressed.
- Photographs submitted for publication where young people and/or vulnerable adults are recognisable and there is insufficient evidence that their consent has been obtained should not be published. Permission should not be assumed, even if images have been submitted by parishes for publication.
- If at a church-related event, children or vulnerable adults may use cameras to take photos of each other, or if parents or carers take photos of children other than their own, they should be advised that these can be used for personal use only, and should not be displayed in any publicly accessible space, including on internet or web-based communication channels.

Consent

When planning community celebrations or public events, e.g. the crib service, a church fete, at which parents may wish to take photographs and/or professional photographers may be present, those attending should be advised of this in advance. If they decide to participate in the event, their consent to photographs being taken will be assumed. In all other circumstances, the consent of parents and carers must be obtained before taking and using images of children and young people, and a chance to opt out must be given. Consent need not be in writing if it is not proposed to publish the pictures in any way, but if they are going to be displayed on a notice board, used in a parish magazine or put on the internet, then specific consent should be obtained using the Photo Consent Form on the Resources section of the website.

Those taking photographs need to bear in mind that parents and carers may have good reasons for refusing consent, e.g. some children may have been involved in legal disputes, local authority care, or adoption, and their whereabouts may not be widely known. Parents and carers of the affected children will know this and will appropriately withhold consent without giving the reason.

Vulnerable Adults

For vulnerable adults, images should only be used for a purpose which is explained to them, and to which they give their recorded and preferably signed consent, i.e. they understand and agree. They should see the photograph before being asked to give consent. All images must respect the dignity of the person being photographed. If the vulnerable adult cannot give informed consent, the images should not be used, unless the individual cannot be identified from the photograph.

Storage of Images

Be clear about whether the image is to be retained for further use. Whilst all reasonable care can be taken to protect the use of images and video – digital media used and/or shared online it is almost impossible nowadays wholly to enforce or restrict usage. This is clearly stated in the template Photo Consent Form.

It is nevertheless best practice to ensure so far as possible that you store the image securely, and ideally store consent forms with the image/s for future reference.

11. Use of Alcohol at Church Events

If alcohol is to be sold, it is a legal requirement to obtain a licence. For the majority of events in churches and church halls, a temporary event notice may be appropriate and these are available from licensing authorities such as district councils.

Where a licence is granted, alcohol must not be sold to a person who is or appears to be under the age of 18 years. The exception to this is where the young person is aged 16 or 17, and is accompanied by an adult and is having a table meal. The only alcohol they are allowed to consume is wine, beer or cider. A person under the age of 18 can work as a waiter/waitress and deliver drinks to the table.

If alcohol is provided but not sold, no licence is needed. However, it is good practice to follow the same restrictions as in the guidance for licences above.

Don't be afraid to ask for proof of identity if a person appears to be under 18.

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