

St Germain's Church

Safeguarding of Children and Young People Policy

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I. Introduction

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that St. Germain's commitment to the care and nurture of children and young people is in line with present insights and safeguards as embodied in professional good practice, legal requirements and statutory guidelines for the protection of young people. The policy takes into account Diocesan and House of Bishops recommendations and the recommendations of the Home Office report "Safe From Harm" as well as other documents¹.

All those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, PCC members and others with responsibility in the church are expected to be familiar with the contents of this Policy and to follow the child protection procedures in it.

B. Church Statement

The church has an integral children's and young people's ministry; children and young people are the church of today, not tomorrow. We recognise the need to create a safe environment in which children and young people are valued and feel confident to ask for support and help. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care. If at all possible it is the responsibility of each one of us to safeguard children and young people against abuse of any kind and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

C. The Church and Children & Young People

St. Germain's PCC is committed to:

- listening to children and young people
- relating effectively to them
- valuing children and young people
- ensuring their health, safety and protection within church activities
- encouraging and supporting parents/carers
- ensuring that children's/youth leaders are given support and training

The Mission Statement of CYPECS is:

We serve...

- To present all children and young people with God through the person of Jesus and the fullness of the Gospel.
- To enthuse, educate and pastor through to:
 - salvation
 - discipleship
 - fellowship within a local church

'Committed to children and young people becoming like Jesus Christ'

¹ see Acknowledgements

D. Areas of Policy

The PCC recognises that many children and young people are the victims of neglect, physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual² abuse. Accordingly, the PCC has adopted the policy contained in this document, entitled 'Safeguarding of Children and Young People Policy' (hereafter 'the policy'). This policy covers St. Germain's church activities when children and young people are present, as listed on the Church of England Parish Dashboard so as to form a consistent and comprehensive policy.

The Policy covers the following areas:

- responding to allegations of abuse or neglect, including those made against leaders or members of the church
- support for survivors of abuse and responding to abusers
- appointing & training children's/youth leaders and helpers
- supervision of activities

Practice Issues and Health and Safety appear in the separate Guidance Notes to the policy.

Outside of groups times, any child on church premises needs to be in the care of their parent, carer or a named adult specifically nominated by the parent. If no parent or carer is on site, arrangements for the child's supervision should be made known to the Event organiser, Warden or Parish Safeguarding Children Coordinator (hereafter PSCC) and a working mobile number retained. "Child" will generally refer to Primary School age or younger. The expectation is that the child will be already known to the named adult.

E. Agency & Community Links

The PCC recognises the need to build constructive links with wider child care agencies, and encourages partnership, consultative and other arrangements. Where Social Services sets out guidelines, these *must* be followed.

Any external group using the church facilities for children's and youth work is required to provide a copy of their Child Protection Policy to the Church Administrator. The Church Administrator passes the policy to the Incumbent or PSCC for approval before any hiring is confirmed.

F. Parish Safeguarding Handbook: Promoting a Safer Church With Supplement for Parishes in Church of England –Birmingham

This document now forms the basis for guidance on key safeguarding responsibilities for parishes. The Birmingham supplement outlines how these work in more detail in Birmingham with contact information. The website remains the best source of up to date information.

² 'Spiritual abuse happens when a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower...' Ken Blue 1993 Healing Spiritual Abuse IVP

Appointments

A. Appointing

Within the overall supremacy of the Gospel, the PCC of St. Germain's Church gives paramount importance to the welfare of children and young people. We recognise our responsibility to guard against the possibility of physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people by persons who may be acting in the name of our parish.

We therefore require:

- Churchwardens and Readers
- all new volunteers or workers who come into contact with children and who are acting in the name of our church; and
- any other person acting in the name of the church as required by the Incumbent, which for the purpose of this document means: Incumbent or such other person who has delegated authority and Church Wardens,

to:

1. meet with the incumbent and to discuss this policy
2. to sign the Confidential Declaration form provided by the House of Bishops
3. where legally necessary, to agree to a Police Check with the Disclosure and Barring Service

The Incumbent will take up at least one reference (normally two) on each of *the above persons* from those with a satisfactory knowledge of the person concerned and his or her previous work with children and young persons (*if applicable*). The incumbent will store declarations and number and date of DBS checks indefinitely in a secure and confidential place (in the event of future allegations coming to light).

In appointing workers, the Church will be responsible for the following:

- Prospective workers will be asked to complete a simple application form
- All potential workers will normally only be appointed after being interviewed by the Incumbent and a relevant Coordinator/Church Warden
- A Volunteer Agreement will be drawn up - the worker's progress will be reviewed at six months with written confirmation of the outcome for any paid workers

If an individual makes a relevant declaration on their form we may ask the Bishop's advisor for help/advice as appropriate. If an individual makes a declaration which suggests they are unsuitable to work with children, or if the DBS check discloses such information, we will follow the procedures for known abusers in the church and will inform the Bishop. In an interregnum new volunteers will be appointed in co-operation with the Area Dean.

B. The spiritual welfare of children and young people

In order to help safeguard and promote the spiritual welfare of children and young people, all Workers are expected to agree with the Mission Statement and to sign the 'Declaration of Faith'

C. Issues for Consideration

When considering appointing children and youth leaders/helpers, the following points, as recommended by the Children Act, will be considered:

- Leaders/helpers with some previous experience of children's and youth work may be valuable. If they have no experience or training, a willingness to undertake some sort of skills development is desirable.
- Leaders/helpers should be able to provide " warm and consistent care " and have a willingness to " respect the background, and culture of the children and young people in their care."
- Leaders/helpers should be able to respect children and young people who have different religious beliefs.
- Leaders/helpers should be committed to treating all children and young people as individuals with equal concern.
- Leaders/helpers should have adequate physical health and have mental stability, integrity and flexibility. Disability should be viewed positively.

D. The criteria for NOT appointing childrens'/youth leaders or helpers are:

- where the potential leader/helper has previously abused or harmed a child or young person
- where it is known that the potential leader/helper has a record of violent/inappropriate sexual behaviour

In both these situations, the potential leader/helper is excluded from being appointed. If there are some concerns or reservations about appointing an individual, then perhaps alternatives might be found where the individual can still feel that s/he is serving God.

E. Childrens' and youth leaders/helpers will be given opportunities to meet together with a leader to discuss work programmes and areas of concern including issues relating to discipline and promoting positive behaviour.

F. The appointment of leaders/helpers will be reviewed on a yearly basis. Any conduct giving cause for concern should be referred to the DBS.

III Responding to Allegations of Abuse, Supporting Survivors of Abuse and Responding to Abusers

A. Suspecting Abuse and Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Workers suspecting abuse or receiving allegations of abuse should take responsibility to ensure no delay in reporting the matter to the nominated persons - Vicar or PSCC, and may go directly to Social Services or the Police if appropriate or unhappy with the action that has been taken. Confidentiality should be kept. If neither of the nominated persons are available you may want to contact the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser, Steph Haynes 07342993844 (or if unavailable thirtyone:eight Tel. 0303 003 11 11 or NSPCC 0808 800 5000) to guide you, but you should avoid unnecessary delay. Recording should be kept indefinitely in a confidential Child Protection file kept by the incumbent (or if directed by the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser by the rural Dean).

B. Supporting Survivors of Abuse

As a church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse, and encouraging them in their faith. Pastoral support will be offered by the Incumbent or other appropriate person. Assistance with accessing other sources of support may also be offered. Church insurance should cover the costs of treatment for someone abused through St Germain's. It is not appropriate for all support to all parties to be offered by the same person.

C. Responding to abusers who want to stop abusing and their place in the church

The safety of children will be the primary consideration. Where someone joining the church has a previous record of crimes against children/young people, then it will be necessary to establish clear boundaries by means of a written agreement drawn up in partnership with the statutory agencies for both the protection of young people and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly suspected of abuse (see PCCA Guidance to Churches).

D. Confidentiality and the Clergy

The Diocese of Birmingham policy includes the following guidance:

"Many people, both clergy and lay, are concerned about the reporting of alleged abuse. This is especially the case where someone has received information that amounts to an allegation of abuse, but has not been given permission to pass that information on to anybody else. This appendix outlines the issues, but it should not be forgotten that those facing this difficult situation can and should seek advice from the Diocesan Child Protection Officer and/or the Diocesan Registrar in the course of action to be taken.

"Both law and sound morals impose a general duty not to pass on information which has been received in the clear expectation that it will be treated in confidence. That duty is not absolute, however and the courts will not intervene to restrain disclosure where (a) the information relates to a crime or serious misconduct and (b) disclosure is in the public interest. Thus, where a child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, usually it will be legally possible, appropriate and highly desirable to disclose relevant information to the public authorities for the sake of protecting children. "

IV Safeguarding Training

All workers acting in the name of the church should have access to a copy of this Policy. In addition they should receive written information and training about:

1. This Policy: Its purpose, application, operation and review.
2. Basic and Foundation Courses available online, via <https://www.cofebirmingham.com/safeguarding-training> or via Zoom or occasionally in-person to include :
 - I. Issues around child abuse, protection and good practice.
 - II. Signs which constitute abuse and how to assess them.
 - III. What the process is likely to be when abuse is reported.
 - IV. Diversity of opinion and the need for common practice.
 - V. How to respond if a child/young person wants to talk about abuse.
 - VI. What to do if you suspect abuse or an allegation or report concerning abuse is made both within and outside the church setting. (It is not sufficient just to pass on written information to others).
 - VII. How to minimise risks in work with children and young people.

V. Policy Implementation and Review

1. It is the responsibility of the Incumbent and Churchwardens to ensure that this Policy is observed.
2. A copy of this Policy should be made available to all workers by the Coordinator responsible.
3. It is the responsibility of the Incumbent and Churchwardens to initiate the update of St. Germain's Policy on Child Protection/Safeguarding.
4. The Incumbent and Churchwardens will make a copy of the Policy available on display, for parents, young people, church members, and others to read in the church and a notice to that effect in all church locations.

Anyone with concerns about a child should contact: Multi-Agency Safeguarding HUB (MASH) on [0121 303 1888](tel:01213031888) or e-mail cass@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Signed:..... Approval Date:8th March 2023
Chair of PCC Next Review Date: March 2024

Acknowledgements:

1. St. Germain's Oct. 1996 *Health & Safety Policy for CYPECS Groups*
2. St. Germain's Church 1998 *Health & Safety Policy for Playgroup and Stay and Play*
3. Churches Child Protection Advisory Service - a project of PCCA *Guidance to Churches: Protecting Children and Appointing Children's Workers*
4. Miles & Mitchell Training 1997 *Writing Child Protection Policies and Procedures*
5. Diocese of Birmingham Board for Ministries: *Children and Young People Their nurture and protection - a responsible way forward*
6. Diocese of Birmingham *God's Children: Our Diocese November 2005*
7. *Policy on Child Protection - a policy document by the House of Bishops 1999*

St Germain's Church
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People Policy

Weekly Groups Covered:

Sunday morning groups

Friday morning: Family Food Distribution

Special Events:

Children and family Outreach Events

Annual Holiday Club

Messy Church

Also using St Germain's Church Hall with own Safeguarding Policy:

Monday and Friday: Real Junk Food Project
Central