

**St Andrew’s Backwell Safeguarding Policy - Promoting a Safer Church**

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will promote the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It fully accepts and endorses the Children Act 1989 & 2004 & The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The Church is particularly called by God to support those less powerful and those without a voice in our society. St Andrew’s is working towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers and volunteers.

A person (adult or child) who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

* Be treated with respect and dignity.
* Have their privacy respected.
* Be able to lead as independent a life as possible.
* Be able to choose how to lead their life.
* Have the protection of the law.
* Have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.
* Be able to use their chosen language or method of communication.
* Be heard.

In any situations where there may be a difference of opinion about priorities, the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult should be the paramount concern.

St Andrew’s will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding team, statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child, young person or vulnerable adult or about the behaviour of an adult in a position of trust, and will work with the Diocesan safeguarding Team, and the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation is necessary. We are also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the church learn lessons from the past.

This statement of principles applies to children, young people and adults.

We are 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.
* Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
* Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
* Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
* Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
* Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
* Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
* Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
* Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
* Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
* Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone’s responsibility, not just parents or those who have formal leadership or caring responsibilities. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church in line with safer recruitment principles, including taking up references and the use of criminal records checks.

The suitability of an applicant or nominated volunteer for work with children, young people or vulnerable adult should not be solely dependent upon Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosures and vetting checks. Someone whose DBS disclosure is clear may still be unsuitable. Hence the need for an interview and references to assure ourselves, as far as we can, that someone is suitable.

As part of the Safer Recruitment process, it is the policy of St Andrew’s that:

* All those who regularly work with children, young people and vulnerable adults including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced DBS checks if they reach the criteria;
* Those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for a DBS check if they reach the criteria;
* Those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will be required to be DBS plus Barred List checked if they reach the criteria.

St Andrew’s accepts that, through its workers and volunteers, it is responsible for children, young people and vulnerable adults when in a church building, on church property and other premises being used by the church and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organized by the church. However, a church is not responsible for private arrangements.

**Hire of the church premises for non-church events**

Any hire agreement with any person/body wishing to hire church premises will contain a provision whereby the person/body hiring the premises agrees to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops, the diocese and St Andrew’s policy.

The hire agreement should also contain a provision whereby all those hiring church premises are required to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, relevant staff have had appropriate DBS checks and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

Ensure that all those hiring church premises carry full public liability insurance.

The term ‘complaint’ can cover an allegation, disclosure or statement, something seen or something heard. The complaint need not be made in writing but once received it must be recorded and acted upon. Complaints can be taken from alleged victims and third parties.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church officers will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and appropriate authorities to ensure that the matter is on record. Support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse, who will also be encouraged to make a statement to the Police if they have not done so before.

We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and / or isolation. We recognise that anyone can be a victim of abuse in any setting, including in their own home, and in a church environment, and will work hard to make our church a safe place for people to disclose any concerns they have and receive appropriate support. We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or adult who is vulnerable. We will support them in continuing to attend church services whilst supervising their attendance to reduce the risk of further harm.

St Andrew’s agrees to follow the Practice Guidance from the House of Bishops on all safeguarding matters including promoting a safer church, and to adopt the Diocese of Bath and Wells Safeguarding Policies.

We also use the following local policies in addition to those identified in Diocesan guidelines:

**Children and Young People**

Workers requiring DBS clearance: ALL who work with children – even if just on ‘Church Days’ and even if just helpers. Categories of clearance needed as follows:

 Enhanced – leaders/helpers

Enhanced with Barred list checks– Managers (i.e. those organising the work of individual helpers)

Workers not requiring DBS clearance: Those who do not have direct contact, e.g. those serving drinks, furniture shifters, reception desk, welcomers to services.

Process for Leaders/ Helpers

Job description => application and confidentiality form with refs taken up => Interview (with Leader of activity/Incumbent/Safeguarding Officer) and DBS application with Safeguarding brief

Process for Young Helpers

Job description => parental permission

‘Church Days’

Regular discussions will take place throughout the year between Church Day organiser and Safeguarding Officer at Children & Young people committee, in order to check DBS status of leaders, helpers and assistants.

On the day distinctions for clear identification of categories held will be made using coloured name badges:

**White**: Young Person under 18yrs working with DBS checked leader/helper, with signed parental permission. No sole charge of children.

**White**: Adult assistant without DBS helping on a casual basis, working alongside a DBS checked leader/helper at all times and in a supporting role e.g., distributing materials for activities, clearing away etc. No sole charge of children.

 **Green**: Regular Leader or Helper with DBS clearance.

Photography on the day: School camera can be used by teachers. Church (volunteer) camera may be used with designated church SD card. The Children’s Worker’s ‘work phone’ also may be used to take photographs. Photos are published with children’s faces covered out, unless specific permission is granted by the parents in line with the school’s safeguarding policy.

Junior Church

DBS clearances required:

Coordinators: Enhanced with Barred list checks

Leaders: Enhanced

Helpers: Parental Permission for all helpers aged under 18

To note:

A Safeguarding Photo sheet will be displayed in the choir vestry and in Church House alongside a Childline poster (latter also in porch), to include Childline number for accelerated process if those identified unavailable or inappropriate. The names, photographs and contact numbers of the Safeguarding Officer and two safeguarding advocates will be included in the poster.

Parental permission must be obtained if photographs of children are to be taken for the purposes of church work eg. Photos of church activities to go on display board in children’s corner etc. These must be taken using the church camera and SD card, and no transfer to outside computers or social media will be permitted unless specific written parental permission is granted.

**Vulnerable Adults**

A vulnerable adult is a person aged over 18 who by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness may be unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

We therefore do not see church transport falling into this category with current users.

New users will be assessed by the organiser and appropriate action taken. The organiser acts as a portal to put those people requiring lifts in contact with those offering to drive, who then make their own private arrangements with each other.

Home Communions

We see it as good practice to ensure that those visiting vulnerable adults at home and administering communion there should have Enhanced clearance.

Pastoral Visitors

Under the above definition we do not feel that all pastoral visits – church friends – require clearance but coordinators will review to assess appropriate protection for all parties.

All individuals will be assessed by the co-ordinators team and clearance obtained where the individual is deemed to fall into the definition.

Each person who works within this church community will be made aware and asked to agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints Beth Ansel as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

This policy will be reviewed annually or in the event of any changes to the law.

Signed (PCC Chair)...................................................................................................................

Date...........................................................................................................................................

**Hire out your church premises?**

* Any hire agreement with any person/body wishing to hire church premises must contain a provision whereby the person/body hiring the premises agrees to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops and the diocese (see separate Model Safeguarding Provision that can be attached to any Hire of Church Premises Agreement).
* The hire agreement should also contain a provision whereby all those hiring church premises are required to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, relevant staff have had appropriate DBS checks and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.
* Ensure that all those hiring church premises carry full public liability insurance for this or are covered through the church insurance (for example hire for a children’s party).