



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Contents

Introduction	2
St Swithin's values	2
Key procedures and code of practice	4
Response to abuse	6
Key contacts	10

Introduction

The key Church of England policies and principles that we have adopted, and which must be read together with these procedures are:

- Promoting a Safer Church – safeguarding policy statement
- Parish Safeguarding Handbook
- Code of Safer Working Practice
- Safer Environment and Activities
- Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment.

Links to all the above documents are listed at the end of this policy document. The Church of England website will always have the most up-to-date versions of these documents, and also provides other useful resources.

PCCs and clergy are obliged to follow the Promoting a Safer Church policy (House of Bishops) and the Parish Safeguarding Handbook.

If the information you need is not in the documents above, or in these procedures, please ask one of our Parish Safeguarding Officers or the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

In addition, detailed guidance for all organisations is available from South West Child Protection Procedures: <https://swcpp.trixonline.co.uk/>

For clear explanations and definitions of what constitutes abuse, please read the Church of England fact sheet, 'Types of Abuse': https://f745fa86-51f0-4fd6-a0d2-3b03120ac07c.usrfiles.com/ugd/f745fa_0c8841fed6cf46e9aa11988b8176b092.pdf

St Swithin's values

St Swithin's is committed to, and will promote the safeguarding of, children, young people and vulnerable adults. It fully accepts and endorses the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and 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 or without a voice in our society. St Swithin's Walcot is working towards creating a safe and

non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues that need to be considered include 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
- lead as independent a life as possible
- 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
- 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 Swithin's Walcot will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. We 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 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.

The following statement of principles applies to all children, young people and adults.

We are committed to:

- the care and nurture of children, young people and adults
- respectful pastoral ministry with children, young people and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and adults
- the establishment of a safe, caring community that provides an environment with a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse, and where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and find support
- the promotion of best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, not just that of parents or those who have formal leadership or caring responsibilities.

Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, are not sufficient to protect children and adults. All members of the community need to be aware of the dangers, and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

Key procedures

Please refer to 'Safeguarding policy and practice guidance' (CofE House of Bishops) for full details on our safeguarding procedures and practices:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance>

We also follow the advice from the 'Parish Safeguarding Handbook' (CofE House of Bishops, link at end of this document).

We will create a safe and caring place for all, by:

- having a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures
- safely recruiting, training and supporting all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse. 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 DBS checks, and interview and reference checks. Refer to 'Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment' (link at end of this document) for detailed guidance
- ensuring that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish
- displaying on church premises, and on the parish website, contact details in case of safeguarding concerns or support is needed
- listening to and taking seriously all those who disclose abuse
- taking 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
- offering support to victims/survivors of abuse, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred
- caring for and monitoring 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
- ensuring that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually
- reviewing the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, procedures and practices at least annually.

St Swithin's will also follow the Church of England Code of Safer Working Practice.

Code of practice

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.

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.

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 to access the children, young people and vulnerable adults; visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person
- allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people or vulnerable adults in the group
- befriend children, young people or vulnerable adults 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, those working on behalf of the parish must not:

- give lifts alone to children on their own who they are supervising (unless there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. an emergency for medical reasons, or if parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home). In such situations, the circumstances and the action taken 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

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, adults in positions of responsibility should keep the use of touch to a minimum and it should be initiated by the child/young person/vulnerable adult. In addition to this, always:

- 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
- ensure touch is age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the other person
- ensure touch is in response to the other person's needs rather than the worker/volunteer's needs.

Response to abuse

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.

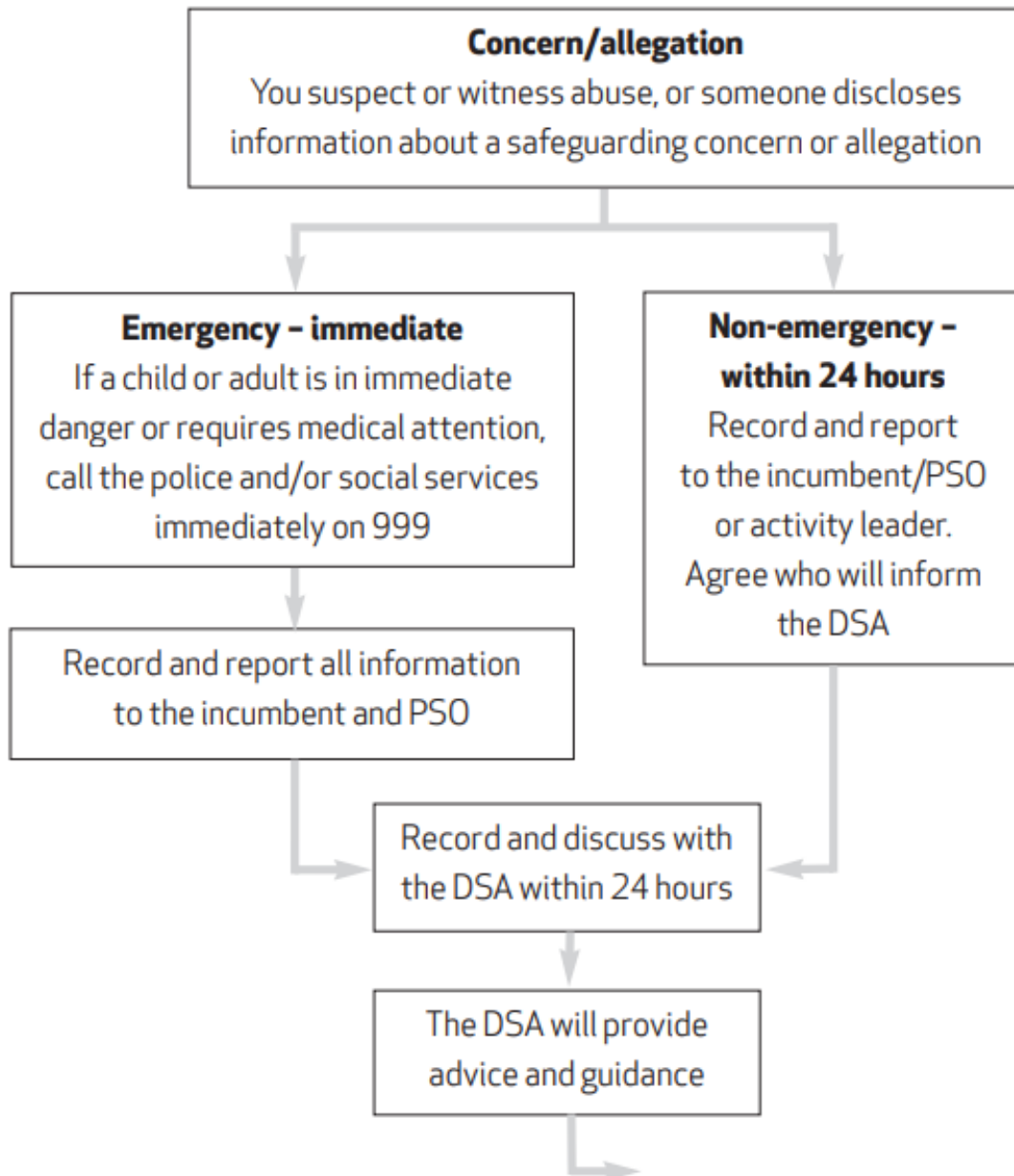
We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of

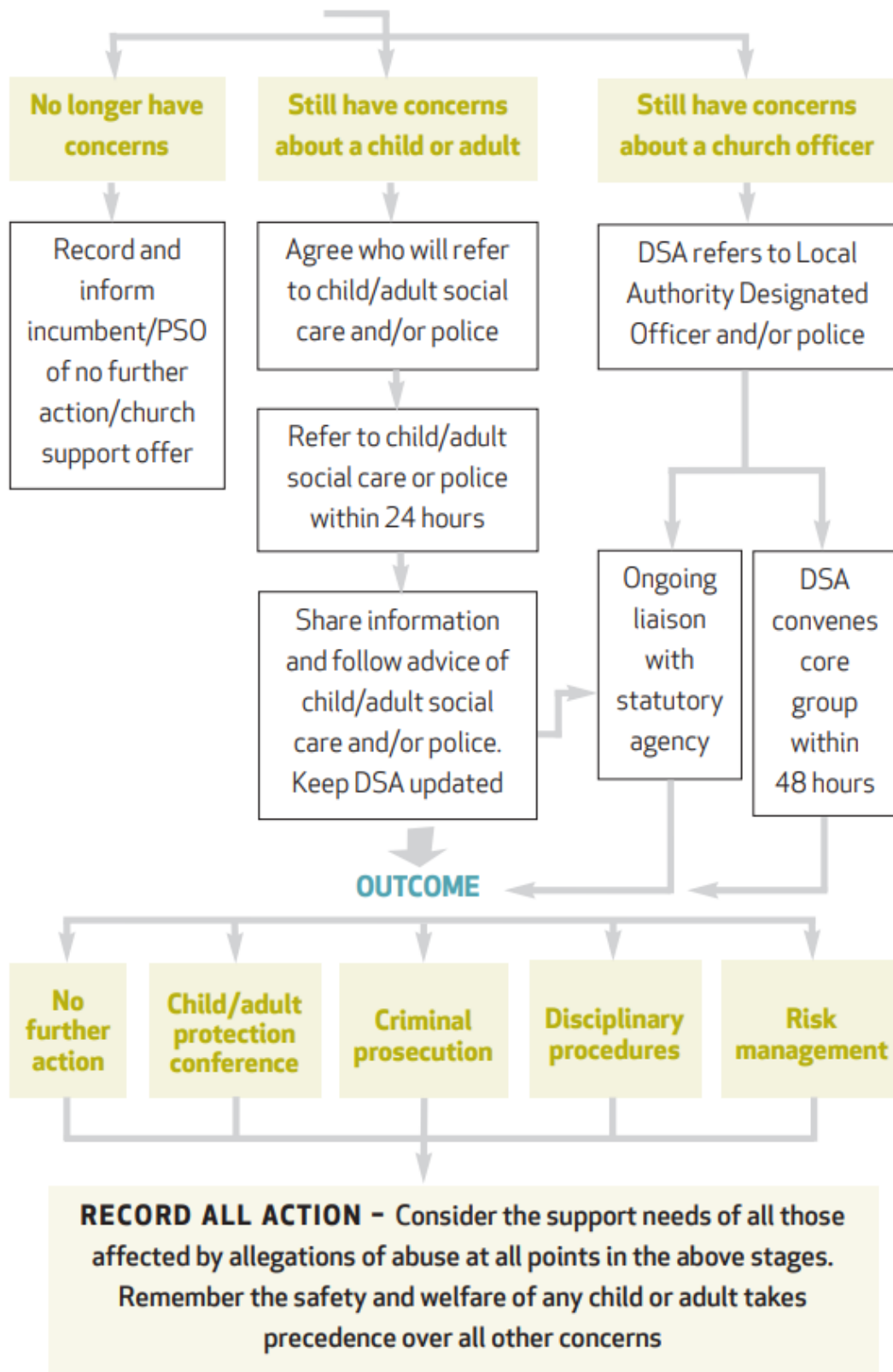
alienation and/or isolation. We recognise that anyone can be a victim of abuse in any setting, including their own home or in a church environment; we will work hard to make our church a safe place for people to disclose any concerns they have and receive appropriate support. We will seek to protect 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 which engenders trust 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 vulnerable adult. We will support them in continuing to attend church services, whilst supervising their attendance to reduce the risk of further harm.

St Swithin's Walcot agrees to follow the Practice Guidance from the House of Bishops on safeguarding matters, and to adopt the Diocese of Bath and Wells Safeguarding Policies in responding to allegations of abuse.





Key contacts

The following people at St Swithin's Church take responsibility for keeping our congregation safe:

Title	Name	email
Churchwarden	Alastair Gibson	
Churchwarden	Rebecca Armstrong	
Acting parish Safeguarding Officer	Suzi Darwin	suzi@stswithinswalcot.org.uk
Youth and Children worker	Suzi Darwin	suzi@stswithinswalcot.org.uk
Pastoral care leader	Jo Gleghorn	
Vicar	Tim Gleghorn	

For more information on the guidance and policies adopted by St Swithin's Walcot, please use the following links:

'Promoting a safer church – safeguarding policy statement' (The House of Bishops)

https://f745fa86-51f0-4fd6-a0d2-3b03120ac07c.usrfiles.com/ugd/f745fa_753d1571a9a54fef8c854c3e19232209.pdf

'Parish Safeguarding Handbook' (The Church of England)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

'Code of Safer Working Practice' (The Church of England)

https://f745fa86-51f0-4fd6-a0d2-3b03120ac07c.usrfiles.com/ugd/f745fa_46baafe733bf42eba87d90e360db2bc9.pdf

'Safer Environment and Activities' (The Church of England)

https://f745fa86-51f0-4fd6-a0d2-3b03120ac07c.usrfiles.com/ugd/f745fa_186838c32363403f88d58bd69c22c16d.pdf

Guidelines for the professional conduct of the clergy (The Church of England)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/guidelines-professional-conduct-clergy/guidelines>

'Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment' (The Church of England)

https://f745fa86-51f0-4fd6-a0d2-3b03120ac07c.usrfiles.com/ugd/f745fa_f8884aee1a934cbdb3fd65ef71ceae67.pdf

For more specific policies and procedures please see:

St Swithin's Health and safety policy

St Swithin's Social media policy

St Swithin's Complaints policy