

sunnysidechurch

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults

Updated 25 September 2023

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Sunnyside Church Child Protection Policy

Parish of St Michael and All Angels (Sunnyside), Berkhamsted, Diocese of St Albans

This Policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council Meeting held on: *see front page*.

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is 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.

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

This church appoints **Jenny Hyatt** as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Incumbent Revd Rebecca Fardell

Churchwardens Andrew Fairburn / Kathy O’Dair

Best Practice for Working with Children & Young People

The following concerns best practice for working with children and young people at Sunnyside. It is expected that all volunteers will adhere to these guidelines throughout the running of all groups.

General good practice

- Where possible, ensure that you are never alone with a child. If you need to speak to a child on a one-to-one basis, ensure others know where you are and leave a door open or ensure the door has a window.
- No person under the age of 18 may be left in sole charge of children of any age. Children and young people must not be left alone at any time.
- With regard to toilet visits, the level of personal care must be appropriate to the age of the child.
- Physical contact between adults and children should be kept to a minimum, i.e. sitting on laps, holding hands – keep everything public (a public hug is very different from a private one).
- Treat all children with dignity and respect. Respect their privacy.
- Ensure only the workers assigned to the group and the parents are given access to a children's activity.
- Use common sense and if you are not sure please ask. We would rather have false alarms than things go unchecked.

Practical Arrangements for Supervision of Children's Activities

- Premises should be warm, adequately lit, well ventilated and safe. Leaders should be aware of what could be dangerous for children (e.g. stacks of chairs) and ensure that hazards are removed.
- A register should be taken and kept for each group/activity.
- Plan all activities with due regard to compliance with health and safety issues.
- In the case of an accident, details must be recorded in the Accident Book which is kept in the church kitchen.
- The First Aid Kit is kept in the kitchen on the wall beside the fridge.
- Any unusual events, fights etc. must be recorded in the Log Book which is kept by the Safeguarding Officer for confidentiality.
- Discourage children from playing in the graveyard to the side and back of the church due to issues of safety and sensitivity to the relatives of those buried there. However, the children may play with parent's permission on the front grass area around the monument.
- No person other than the supervising adult helpers may go up onto the balcony in the main hall during an event.
- Team members should be aware of the siting of fire exits and fire extinguishers in the building used for Youth and Children's meetings. They should also be briefed on the content of relevant risk assessments.

Staffing

Appropriate staffing and adult to child ratios are necessary for every group that runs. All adults who are eligible will be subject to DBS clearance prior to volunteering.

Guidance recommends the following ratio of leaders to children according to their age:

For 0 to 2 years - 1 leader to every 3 children (1:3)
For 2 to 3 years - 1 leader to every 4 children (1:4)
For 4 to 8 years - 1 leader to every 6 children (1:6)
For 9 to 12 years – 1 leader to every 8 children (1:8)
For 13 to 18 years - 1 leader for 10 children (1:10)

Ideally, there should be more than one leader for any group. If possible have at least one male and one female leader if the group is mixed. You will need to assess how many extra leaders will be needed for outdoor activities and trips after completing a risk assessment for the activity.

A leader should generally not be alone with a child. Mentoring situations are the exception to this rule and where confidentiality is important (e.g. mentoring a young person) ensure that others know that the interview is taking place, that someone else is in the building and that parents have agreed to the mentoring relationship.

Leaders should be aware of where children are at all times. Children under the age of 11 should not be out of sight without the leader's knowledge. Under no circumstances should volunteers invite a child or young person to their home alone.

Guidelines for discipline

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouraging. It brings about security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart. (Hebrews 12:5-12 and Proverbs 22:6)

- Pray before you meet, and talk over the session before you leave.
- Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding, and pray for (and if appropriate with) the child.
- Work on each individual child's positives. Do not compare them with each other but encourage and build them up, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.
- Build healthy relationships with the children and be a good role model, setting a good example. You can't expect children to observe ground rules if you break them yourself.
- Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention and don't allow some children to take all your time and energy.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said – this avoids manipulation.
- Look honestly at your programme – if children are bored they will misbehave. Is the programme at fault?
- NEVER smack or hit a child. Don't shout – change voice tone if necessary.
- Discipline out of love NEVER anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with the situation unwisely in your anger.)
- Lay down ground rules (no swearing, racism or calling each other names, a respect for property). Make sure the children understand what action will be taken if not kept.
- Each child is unique, special and individual and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We need to ask why the child is behaving that way.
- With children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together, give them a chance, warn them and if they are disruptive separate them as a last resort.
- Have the child sit right in front of you or have a helper sit next to the child.

- Be pro-active; similarly encourage helpers to be pro-active and not wait to be told to deal with a situation.
- Take the child aside and talk to them. Challenge them to change whilst encouraging their strengths.
- Warn a child you will speak to their parents and do so if necessary. Warn them, send them outside the room (with adequate supervision). If during a Sunday service, fetch the adult who brought the child to sit with them for the rest of the session, explaining to the adult what has happened. In a mid-week or evening group setting, ban them from the following meeting, advising whoever collects them, making sure the parents are told. (Never make this a total ban without reference to the Youth Committee.)
- If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive, seek advice and guidance from the Youth Team Leader, Children's & Families Team Leader or the Chair of Youth Mission Group.

Guidelines for Trips

Day trips or weekends away can constitute an important part of work with children and young people. They also need careful preparation and organisation. A meeting should always take place with all leaders/helpers involved in the weekend or day trip to discuss the difficulties and decide a common approach. For example, particular rules will need to be set and observed regarding male/female sleeping arrangements.

The planning documents for any trip or events outside normal activities must be put before the Youth Mission Group and be covered by the appropriate insurance policies.

There should always be written communication with parents about day trips or weekends away indicating time of departure and return as well as the nature of the activities to be undertaken. A contact number should be made available so parents are able to contact leaders during the trip.

A consent form signed by parents/guardians is necessary for ongoing attendance at youth and children's clubs. It should also contain details of relevant medical information, food allergies etc. Separate consent is required for anything outside of the usual activities of the groups.

Best Practice for Working with Vulnerable Adults

The following concerns best practice for working with vulnerable adults at Sunnyside. It is expected that all volunteers will adhere to these guidelines throughout the running of all groups.

Definitions

For the purpose of this guidance a Vulnerable Adult is a person over 18 years of age whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.¹

General Good Practice

We recognise that at Sunnyside we will be working with a variety of differing needs of vulnerable adults and we will therefore:

- Treat all vulnerable adults with dignity, love and respect at all times.
- Develop a culture where vulnerable adults and their carers feel able to raise concerns knowing they will be taken seriously and treated with the appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Work to minimise risk through the appropriate planning of events and through the necessary staffing of such events.
- Communicate clearly, in whatever way best suits the individual, and check their understanding and expectations.
- Always try to work in an open environment in view of others.
- Avoid spending any significant time working with vulnerable adults in isolation.
- Avoid taking a vulnerable person alone in a car, however short the journey, unless we are certain that the individual has the capacity to decide to accept a lift. Where this is unavoidable, we will ensure that it only occurs with the full knowledge and consent of the person's relatives or carers.
- Avoid any handling of money on behalf of a vulnerable person, or acceptance of gifts other than token items. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, it should be placed in an envelope, marked on the outside as a donation and a receipt obtained from the Church Treasurer.

We will work to never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games or activities.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Use inappropriate language.

¹ Section 6 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

- Make sexually suggestive comments, even in fun.
- Fail to respond to an allegation made by a vulnerable person.
- Do personal care tasks that the person can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature to help someone with a physical or learning disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of both the individual (where possible) and their carers. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, if the individual lacks the capacity to give consent, carers should be fully informed as soon as possible. In such situations it is important to ensure that anyone present is sensitive to the individual and undertakes personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Spotting Signs of Abuse in Children

The following signs may or may not be indicators of abuse, but the possibility should be considered. Please note that a child may be suffering from more than one category of abuse. The below definitions are based on the criteria of Child Abuse throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, DfEE and the Home Office in their joint document, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015).

Indicators of possible physical abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks on the body
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Disclosure of apparently excessive punishment.
- Shrinking from or fearful of physical contact.
- Aggression or bullying.
- Significant unexplained changes in behaviour.

Indicators of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegation made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders – anorexia or bulimia.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.

Indicators of possible emotional abuse

- Changes or regressions in mood.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or strange phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away, stealing and/or lying.
- Continual self-deprecation.
- Signs of self-harm or mutilation, references to suicidal thoughts.
- Social withdrawal or isolation

Indicators of possible neglect

- Constant hunger or inappropriate relationship to food.

- Poor personal hygiene or inappropriate clothing.
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Low self-esteem or self-worth.
- Poor social relationships or interaction.
- Compulsive stealing or scrounging.

Remember that many of these symptoms will also be manifested by vulnerable adults suffering abuse. Whatever the age of the person involved, keep alert to any signs of abuse and, if you spot something that concerns you, report it to the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Responding to a Potential Disclosure or Suspicion

The following headings provide guidelines for how to respond. It is essential that all volunteers at Sunnyside familiarise themselves with the details below.

We recognise that disclosures (i.e. when a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual) and suspicion (i.e. when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place or be in prospect) should always be investigated and acted upon swiftly, making the welfare of children or vulnerable adults the paramount consideration.

Receive

- Listen to the child/adult and accept what he or she says.
- Be very careful not to show shock or distaste.
- Stay calm and take what is said seriously.

Reassure

- Tell the child/adult that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Be honest and don't make promises that you can't keep.
- Don't say "Everything will be ok" or "I won't tell anyone." Tell them they are not to blame and acknowledge how hard it must have been for them to tell you.
- Empathise but don't tell them what they should be feeling.

Respond

- Accept the details as they are given and do not interrogate the child/adult for full details.
- Ask open questions like "Anything else to tell me?" "Yes?" or "And?"
- Avoid leading questions like "What did she do next?" or "Did he touch your private parts?" as these sorts of questions may invalidate the evidence in any prosecution.
- Do not criticise the accused because the child/adult may love them and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the child/adult to repeat everything to another member of the team; explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.

Record

- Make notes at the time and write them up as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes as they may be required in court. Record the date, time and place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the actual words used by the child or vulnerable adult.
- Be objective in your recording and include statements and observable things. Omit your interpretations and assumptions.

Support

- Provide the level of support requested by the child/adult – this may mean letting go and accepting that your responsibility has ended once the appropriate people have been informed, or it may mean giving support throughout the process of investigation and afterwards.

Report

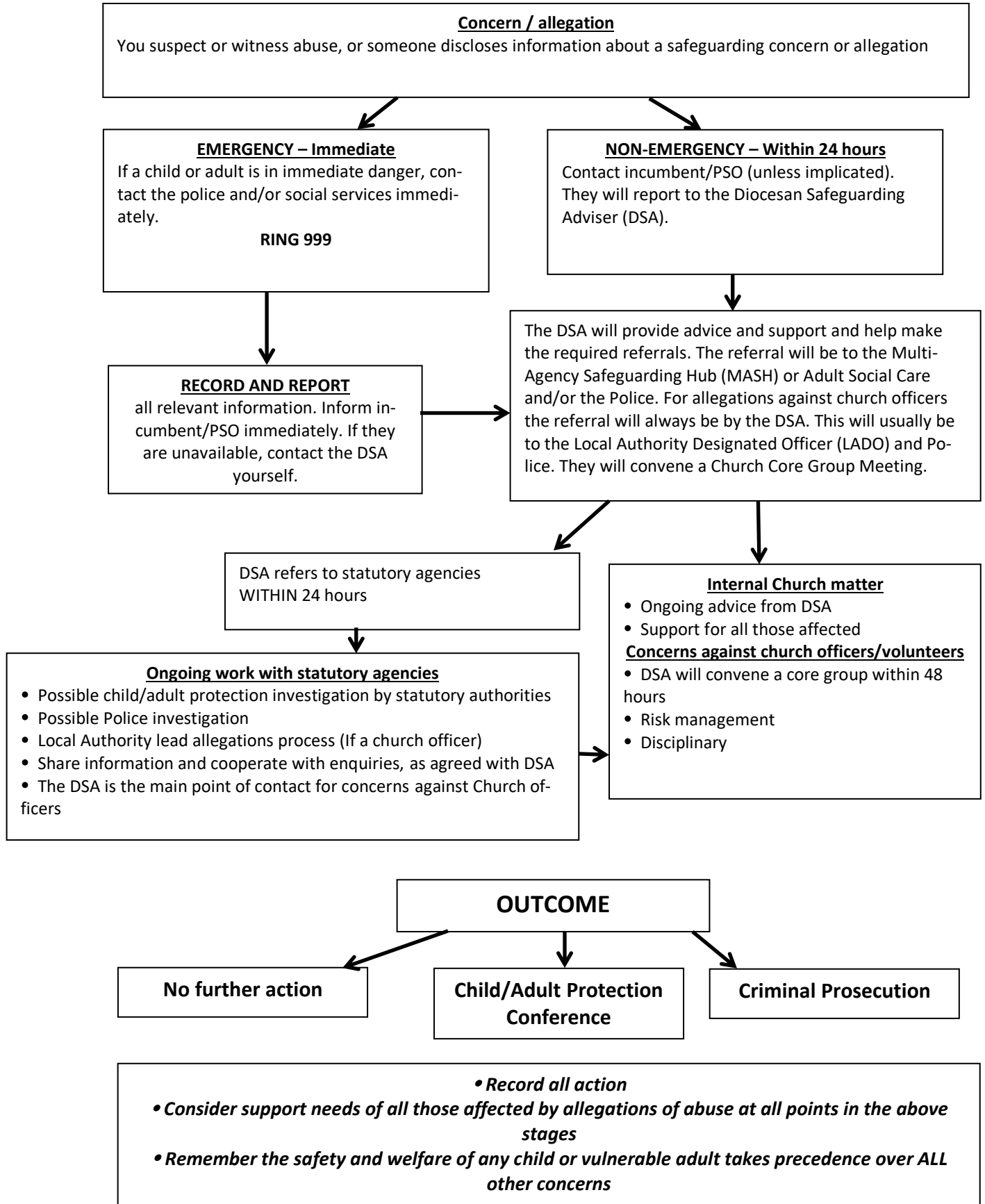
- You may need to take immediate action.
- You must report concerns as soon as possible to the group leader, who will then refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Procedure Flowchart on page 14 should be followed; note the importance of timing in regards to the level of concern.
- If suspicions in any way involve one or more of the leaders or named Sunnyside people you should report the matter to one of the other named people. Failing that, you should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (see contact details at end of this document), or to the police/social services/child protection agencies if out of hours. It is also your right as a citizen to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies, social services or police if you feel that the leaders have not responded appropriately to your concerns.

Safeguarding Procedure Flowchart – Adults and Children

Named people: Jenny Hyatt (Parish Safeguarding Officer: 07836 555654)

Rebecca Fardell (incumbent: 01442 865100)

Jeremy Hirst (Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser: 01727 818107)



Working with Those Who May Pose a Risk to Children

Research indicates that a higher proportion of convicted offenders against children may be found in church congregations than in the population generally. It is probable that many congregations will have among their number people who have abused children, only some of whom will be known. This is a powerful reason for implementing safer working practices, which apply to everyone. Not all of those presenting a risk will have been sexual abusers: some will have committed physical or emotional abuse, or neglect. The church is a unique institution in that it has a duty to administer to all: this poses a particular responsibility with regard to offenders and ex-offenders. However, this duty must not compromise the safety of children or vulnerable adults: **the protection of children and vulnerable adults is the paramount duty.**

In addition to those with convictions for offences against children, there are other groups of people who may also pose a risk. These may, for example, be those with convictions for violence or sexual offences against adults, adults who perpetrate domestic violence, those involved in drug or alcohol addiction, or those whose behaviour in a professional setting has caused them to be placed on the list barring them from working with children.

The following advice is designed to protect both the adult involved, and children in the parish. Evidence shows that when an offender is known, befriended and supported by a group of volunteers to lead a fulfilled life without children, the risk of reoffending is reduced (though never eradicated). The church has an important role to play in helping the individual in these circumstances.

- When it is known that a member of the congregation has sexually abused a child or young person the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser **must** be consulted, so that a safe course of action can be agreed in conjunction with any relevant statutory authorities. There are protocols in place with the statutory authorities to enable risk to be assessed and the parish advised as to how to manage the risk appropriately. Informing the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be done at the earliest indication of such a situation, including at the arrest of an individual: i.e. before conviction. It is expected that an agreement will be entered into with the offender. Parishes must not attempt to manage this process without appropriate professional advice from the Diocesan Adviser.
- If the offender's victim is a member of the same congregation the offender should be introduced to another congregation. Consideration must also be given to those who have been abused in the past.
- The person should not be given any role or office in the church which gives them status or authority, as a child or young person may deem that person to be trustworthy.
- A frank discussion will be held with the offender, explaining that a small group of the congregation will need to know the facts in order to create a safe environment for him or her. If possible the membership of the group should be agreed. Those needing to know are likely to include the clergy, church wardens, Children's and Youth Team Leaders and any befriending volunteers as well as the Safeguarding Officer.

- It must be made clear that no one else will be informed without the offender's knowledge. The highest levels of confidentiality should be maintained.
- The group should offer pastoral care, support and friendship as well as supervision. They should endeavour to keep channels of communication open.
- Alongside the setting up of the small support group, if appropriate, consideration should be given as to whether the congregation should be told. This should be with the offender's agreement, and should only be undertaken after careful consideration of all the advantages and disadvantages of this course of action. Advice from the offender's supervising Probation or Police Officer, if applicable, will be sought before any such disclosure takes place. It will be necessary to establish clear boundaries, both for the protection of children and young people and to reduce the possibility of the adult being wrongly accused of abuse.

An agreement will be prepared with the offender, which will include the following elements:

- attend designated services only
- sit apart from children
- stay away from areas of the church where children meet
- attend a house group where there are no children
- decline hospitality where there are children
- never be alone with children
- never work, or be part of a mixed age group, with children.

Further clauses will be added to reflect individual circumstances and the offender will be asked to sign the agreement which shall be enforced. This agreement should be reviewed regularly and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser consulted, particularly if there is a need for a variation of the agreement.

- An agreement must remain in place for as long as the person is a member of the congregation, whether or not their name appears on the Sex Offenders Register.
- If the Agreement is broken, as a final resort the offender will be asked not to attend the church, and other statutory agencies involved will be informed. If the person cannot be prevented from attending the church because it is their parish church, the Diocesan Registrar will be consulted. A high level of supervision should be maintained.
- In some cases offenders only reveal their offending history after many years. In such situations great sensitivity will be required. It must, however, be remembered that there may still be a substantial risk to children. The offender will be expected to comply with an appropriate agreement, as above.
- Anyone who seeks a position in the church whose DBS check discloses that they are barred from working with children will be reported to the police by the DBS, as it is an offence for such a person to seek such work, or for an employer to knowingly offer the work. This applies to both voluntary and paid positions.

(Safeguarding Children Complete document 3rd Edition, March 2011 Page 23)

Anti-bullying Policy

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all young people so they can meet in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in youth and children's work. If bullying does occur, all young people should be able to report this to leaders, knowing that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding things, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Via electronic social media: threats, insults or mocking via social networking sites, text messaging, emails and other forms of electronic communication.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. People who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All paid staff, volunteers, young people and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All paid staff and volunteers should know what the policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All young people and parents should know to contact the relevant staff member if bullying arises.
- As a youth group we take bullying seriously. Young people and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

Bullying may take place in school, in the family home, or in the youth group. A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from the group
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus/group minibus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)

- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually “lost”
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what’s wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile
- is nervous and jumpy when a message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

- Report bullying incidents to the person in overall charge of the session.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff.
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

Outcomes

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion from the group will be considered.
- If possible, the young people will be reconciled.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

These may include: signing a behaviour contract; writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying; making up role-plays; having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

Internet Safety Policy

We recognise that many children and the majority of young people use the internet as part of their everyday lives and that as a result this can pose significant problems to the safeguarding of children and young adults. It is important that staff, leaders and all volunteers are responsible in the way they communicate with young people through social media.

It may be that intentions and communications with young people are perfectly in order. However, the way relationships are perceived by other people and parents is a situation that has to be managed transparently. Being careful in how staff and volunteers use electronic communication is about protecting both the young people and the responsible adult. It is expected that all staff volunteers and those working with children and young people adhere to the following limitations and boundaries of social media.

Mobile Phones

Contact should be kept to a minimum due to the 'one-to-one' nature of text messaging. Text messages should predominantly be used for organisational purposes only. Phone conversations are only appropriate for the purpose of organisation and communication relating to youth activities. Volunteers should not give their phone number to any children or young people without the express permission of the Youth or Children's Team Leader. Contact via video messaging is not appropriate.

Social Media

Do not ask young people to be 'friends' on social media. Communication should only be done via public areas and not in private messaging as this could be seen as secretive. If privately messaged by a young person or vulnerable adult, inform and disclose this message to the Youth Team Leader or Safeguarding Officer for accountability purposes.

Public Social Media networks (such as Facebook or Instagram) are acceptable methods of communication with young people. Platforms with limited accountability or not public setting (such as Snapchat or Whatsapp) are not acceptable.

In order to promote events certain public profile pages have been established. These are listed below and login details stored in the Church Office. Login details are accessed by a variety of different people and will be checked occasionally by the Safeguarding Officer.

Public Social Media Accounts belonging to Sunnyside Church

Facebook: *Sunnyside Church Berkhamsted, The Edge, Refract.*

Twitter: *SunnysideYouth*

Instagram: *Sunnyside Youth, RefractYouth*

For more details of guidance on social media usage, please see our Social Media Policy.

Email

Considering the other forms of communication preferred by young people email is not deemed an appropriate form of communication for use with youth. However, it may be that email is used more widely by vulnerable adults, therefore caution must be exercised. If any emails are ex-

changed a record of these emails should be kept and those emails should also be disclosed to the group leader or Safeguarding Officer.

Appropriate Usage

All electronic communication should be done no earlier than 8am and no later than 9pm. The best time to contact young people is between 4-7pm. Staff and volunteers should keep a record of as much communication as possible.

It is important that all staff, volunteers and those working with young people ensure that they do not initiate contact/conversation via private social media accounts. This is to ensure that appropriate boundaries are kept.

Wifi at Sunnyside Church

The provision of free wifi in the church and hall buildings is aimed at continuing to make the church a technologically accessible place. This is subject to a fair usage policy and any inappropriate material accessed whilst using the wifi on the premises will be recorded and reported. If children or young people are found to have been accessing inappropriate material it will be reported and usage of the wifi will be prohibited.

Use of Photographs & Websites

We acknowledge that photos will be taken in order to promote and publicise events. These may, at times, include images of children or young people. Images may not be taken or displayed without consent of the individual or without parental consent. Children or young people should not be identified by surname or other personal details such as email, postal address, telephone etc.

When using photographs of children and young people it is preferable to use group pictures. If a photograph of an individual child or young person is used, avoid giving personal details. Any such images are the personal data of the individual and subject to data protection legislation.

Images should not be stored on volunteers' personal phones or cameras; they may be forwarded to the group leader who may store them on church 'cloud' software or the Church Office computer.

Video Conferencing Policy

Parental Consent

An email must be sent to parents explaining what we are doing for each group and what their involvement and availability needs to be.

- **for 'sunday's cool' under 7's Group:** children need to be accompanied by a parent /carer throughout the session
- **for 'sunday's cool' over 7's Group:** the parent or carer needs to be seen by the leader at the beginning of the session. They can then go into the background but need to be aware of what is going on in the call. 2 DBS-checked leaders will always be present during the running of the session.
- **for Youth Group:** 2 DBS-checked leaders will be running this group. Parental consent needs to be obtained before any young person can join but they can be unaccompanied during the call with parental agreement.
- **for Messy Church:** children need to be accompanied by a parent or carer throughout the session.

Code of Conduct for Leaders

All 'normal' children's group rules will apply during this time. This will include Sunnyside recruitment and safeguarding process.

Photographs and Recording

NO photographs, screen shots or audio recording will take place whilst using video conferencing for Sunnyside Children's and Youth Groups during this time.

It is recommended that a waiting room is enabled, and also a passcode to access the session; this is to ensure control over attendance. All attendees should be visible to the leaders.

Additional Needs Policy

Wherever practically possible, the groups at Sunnyside are inclusive, and children or vulnerable adults with additional needs are welcomed. Wherever possible all children (including those with additional needs) will be given the opportunity to participate in the same activities, having an equal part in the groups. Group leaders have the responsibility to ensure activities are inclusive and encourage anti-discriminatory practice, through adapting the setting, activities and opportunities to suit those in their care. To encourage anti-discriminatory attitudes, differences need to be recognised and accommodated.

What is required of parents/carers:

- Full details of the additional needs as well as any dietary requirements should be given to the group leaders to ensure adequate staffing/activities/snacks are available.
- Liaison between parents/carers with group leaders or a key worker should regularly take place.
- Where appropriate, the leader and parents/carer should write a care plan and keep accurate reports of a child's progress.
- Whilst the group would like to accept all children with special needs, in line with Equal Opportunities concerning a child with additional needs or disabilities, a timed, planned entry may be required in order to accommodate their needs. This would of course be subject to appropriate staffing, premises, equipment and insurance being available.

We are aware that some children and young people with varying additional needs and disabilities sometimes require additional support. The group leaders will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing of all policies and procedures. Group leaders should allocate a Key Worker when necessary, who will work with the leader to ensure that a child's individual needs are met. Staff training will be provided as appropriate. Group leaders should take into account each child's age and stage of development, gender, ethnicity, home language and any disability. If specific needs are mentioned, further advice will be sought from parents/carers/other professionals. A list will be kept in an accessible place regarding children's food allergies and hypersensitivities.

Flexibility is needed in adapting activities to meet the needs of those with disabilities.

Sunnyside is committed to creating unrestricted and easy access to premises through appropriate building construction. Parents, children, staff and visitors to Sunnyside and affiliated groups should be able to access the premises with the minimum of difficulty – through attention to signage and decoration, the width and positioning of entry, exit points and pathways.

Safer Recruiting of Volunteers

Much of the work that happens at Sunnyside is dependent on a dedicated team of volunteers who freely give their time to serve and help for no monetary profit. The capacity of this role could be from assisting a weekly project to running and leading a residential trip. Sunnyside Church is committed to recruiting volunteer church members following the *Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance (2021)*, published by the Church of England.

The procedure for appointments is:

- An informal chat with the relevant group leader to initiate process.
- The leader must then inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer of this applicant.
- Completion of an application form and informal interview, which will include discussing previous experience of working with children or vulnerable adults, motivation for volunteering, and approach to safeguarding.
- References should be taken up for the applicant, either by email or by a documented phone call. Referees must be over 18 years old and must not be family members or relatives.
- The Parish Safeguarding Officer will initiate DBS checks and advise the volunteer of the required safeguarding training for the role.
- Once all checks and training are completed, the volunteer may start on an initial 3-6 month probationary period and will be pastorally line managed by the group leader.
- DBS checks will be renewed every three years in line with best practice.

Volunteers and staff members are to be issued with a copy of the Sunnyside Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy document. **It is essential that this is read.** They will also be given a Role Description appropriate to their particular group.

Pastoral Support

Volunteers will be prayed for and pastorally supported by their line manager, most likely the group leader. This may include specific thank you social events, regular meetings and occasional contact via email or phone. Sunnyside is hugely grateful for the countless hours freely given by volunteers and recognises its pastoral duty to care for all staff and volunteers.

Policies adopted by Sunnyside PCC

- **Promoting a Safer Church (2017)** (*approved 18 March 2019; triennially thereafter*)
- **Reporting of Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission** (*approved 15 March 2021*)
- **Safe Use of Images** (*approved 17 June 2019*)
- **Responding to Domestic Abuse** (*approved 17 June 2019*)
- **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders** (*approved 23 September 2019; triennially thereafter*)
- **Video Conferencing Policy** (*approved 1 June 2020*)
- **Social Media Policy** (*approved 23 November 2020; annually thereafter*)
- **Live Streaming Policy** (*approved 15 March 2021*)

Key Contact Details

Safeguarding Officer

Jenny Hyatt

07836 555654

safeguarding@sunnysidechurch.org.uk

Vicar of Sunnyside & Bourne End

Rev. Rebecca Fardell

01442 865100

vicar@sunnysidechurch.org.uk

Families and Young People Team Leader

Sarah Tizzard

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Youth Mission Group Chair

Esther Stewart

chrisandesther21@gmail.com

Pastoral Care Mission Group Chair

Rachel Heath

rheath250@gmail.com

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

Jeremy Hirst

01727 818107

safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org

Useful Websites / Phone Numbers

NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk

Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS)

www.ccpas.org.uk

St Albans Diocese Safeguarding Team

www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding

Herts Children's Social Care

0300 123 4043 (including out of hours)

Herts Adults Social Care

0300 123 4042 (including out of hours)