

PARISH OF ST. HILDA, WARLEY WOODS, DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF  
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS  
AT ST. HILDA'S CHURCH.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy covers all activities organised by, or under the control of, St. Hilda's Parochial Church Council [PCC].

We, the members of St. Hilda's PCC, commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of the young and vulnerable people in our care. To this end, we are committed to following the Diocese of Birmingham Policy for Child Protection ["God's Children - Our Diocese"], full copies of which are held by the Vicar and the Child Protection Coordinator.

- The church and its appointed leaders and helpers are committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and to report any abuse, alleged or suspected.
- We are committed to the support of adult survivors of childhood abuse and acknowledge the needs of the child within the body of an adult survivor.
- We will respond without delay to any complaints made that a child, young person or vulnerable adult for whom we are responsible may have been harmed.
- We will work to create a culture of "informed vigilance" which all children and adults in the church take seriously.
- We are committed to supporting, resourcing and training all those who work with children and vulnerable adults.
- We will remind all groups that are outside our control but who use our premises regularly that they need to have in place an up-to-date policy to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults and that this policy should be reviewed annually.
- We will ensure that all those who have any responsibility for children, young people under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults obtain an 'enhanced disclosure' from the Criminal records Bureau.
- We accept responsibility for the appointment of leaders and to ensure that each person who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults receives a copy of this parish policy and is familiar with the policy, procedure and guidelines.
- We accept the intention of The Children's Act 1989 and its subsequent amendments that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- We have a Health and Safety Policy in place.
- The Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Protection Referral Group will work together with the PCC to implement and monitor policy and procedures.
- We undertake to display a copy of this policy statement in a prominent place on church premises and in the Church Hall so that all may be aware of its existence.
- We will review the policy annually at our first meeting of a new calendar year.

Current members of our Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Protection Referral Group are Wendy Dyke, Paul Hinton and Derek Latham.

This statement was agreed by the PCC on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ [incumbent] \_\_\_\_\_ [church warden]

## PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PARISH POLICY

- A copy of the policy and procedures will be given to all youth workers and volunteers with responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults. They should sign a declaration saying that they have read and understood it.
- Contact details will be kept for the main leader of each group.
- The Referral Group will be responsible for the monitoring of the policy to see that it being put into practice and will report annually to the PCC on matters relating to the policy.

## PROCEDURES FOR ACCEPTING VOLUNTEERS AND APPOINTING PAID WORKERS

- We will ensure that each paid post or volunteer position is assessed for the appropriateness of a CRB Disclosure and any advertisement for such a post will make it clear whether a Disclosure is required or not.
- We will respect each person's abilities, skills, experience and qualifications and will take every step to ensure that these are given appropriate consideration in the appointment or recruiting process.
- We will request candidates for a paid post or volunteer position to put in writing any convictions or other behaviour which might prejudice their appointment. This information will be submitted privately to the incumbent or his/her representative and only taken into account when relevant to the post in question.
- We will assist the potential appointee to apply for a CRB Disclosure; the completed application will be verified by the incumbent or his/her representative and returned to the Archdeacon.
- We will only confirm an appointment when notified in writing by the CRB Administrator that the Disclosure is clear.
- We will make every effort to ensure that all recruitment decisions involving Disclosure information are made sensitively and fairly but if an applicant feels that this has not happened, the matter can be referred to the Archdeacon for an independent assessment.

## PROCEDURES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

### GUIDELINES FOR THE CHURCH

- Ensure that, as far as possible, a worker is not alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult where their activity cannot be seen. In a counselling situation with such persons, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to ensure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible, another adult should be in the building and the young person/vulnerable adult should know they are there.
- Ensure that access to the building is safe and well lit.
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for all activities.

### GUIDELINES FOR LEADERS AND HELPERS

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Provide a Christian example you wish others to follow.
- Plan activities which involve more than one person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others.
- Respect a young person/vulnerable adult's right to personal privacy.
- Provide opportunities for young people/vulnerable adults to talk to others about any concerns they may have.
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- Remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned these actions may be.
- Remember that caution is required, even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when

- dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- Make a written record of any accidents that occur and any first-aid treatment administered.
- Have separate sleeping accommodation for leaders, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Be sensitive to others.
- Be sensitive to a person's wish to opt out of an activity.
- Avoid physical contact games with young people/vulnerable adults.
- Avoid inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions about other people or events before checking the facts.
- Avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour [e.g. tantrums].
- Avoid trivialising or exaggerating child abuse issues.
- Avoid showing favouritism to an individual.
- Avoid making suggestive remarks or gestures.
- Do not rely on your good name to protect you.
- Do not believe "it could never happen to me".
- If you see another leader or helper acting in a way that might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or your group leader about your concerns.

### PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IN CASE OF SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

If you suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being abused:

- Immediately voice your suspicions to a member of the Referral Group and/or seek the advice of the Bishop's Advisor.
- Record the facts as you know them and give a copy to a member of the Referral Group.
- Ensure the child, young person or vulnerable adult has access to an independent adult.
- Ensure that no situation arises in your group that could give rise to further concern.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Look at the child, young person or vulnerable adult directly.
- Allow the person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- Tell the person that he/she is not to blame.
- Do not press for further information.
- Reassure the person that he/she was right to tell.
- Let the person know what you are going to do next and that you must pass on the information.
- Finish on a positive note.
- As soon as possible afterwards, make notes of exactly what the child, young person or vulnerable adult said to you, together with the date and time.

If you receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself:

- Immediately inform a member of the Referral Group.
- Record the relevant facts as you know them and give a copy to a member of the Referral Group.
- Try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.

### PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

- We are committed to supporting previous perpetrators of abuse without losing sight of the fact that the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance.
- If a perpetrator becomes known to the church a 'Risk Management Plan' should be drawn up and action taken in accordance with "God's Children - Our Diocese" Section 5.
- The incumbent or his/her nominated representative will supervise the individual and offer pastoral care and support where appropriate.

These Procedures and Guidelines were last reviewed and agreed by the PCC on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ [Incumbent]

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ [Churchwarden]

The PCC will review this Policy and how it is to be implemented by:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy is to be kept for Parish records and a copy given to each of the youth workers/volunteers.