

Policy –  
Safeguarding Procedures

# Holy Cross Bearsted

Safeguarding Children and  
Vulnerable Adults from  
Harm Policy

July 2021

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## **Holy Cross, Bearsted**

### **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults from Harm Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The incumbent and the Parochial Church Council of Holy Cross, Bearsted, acknowledge their responsibility to establish a policy for safeguarding children, who are part of the Children and Youth Group activities run or sponsored by the parish and vulnerable adults within our church community.
- 1.2. This policy has been prepared to comply with guidance issued by the Church of England House of Bishops (HOB) and Canterbury Diocese.
- 1.3. This document and appendices outline the policy, procedures, organisation and responsibilities of the parish as a whole and individuals in particular involved directly with the supervision and delivery of the many and varied activities sponsored by the Parish, in order to maintain a culture of informed vigilance on safeguarding issues.
- 1.4. This policy will be subject to on-going review, in the light of anticipated changes to statutory requirements and published guidelines, being presented annually to the incumbent and PCC for approval and adoption.

#### **2. Parish Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults from Harm Policy Statement**

##### 2.1. The Parochial Church Council (PCC):

- Will comply with the safeguarding policy of the Church of England;

- Accepts the responsibilities of the Parish for all work with children/young people and vulnerable adults carried out in the name of the church as set out in the HOB's '*Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance*' 2017, HOB's '*Parish Safeguarding Handbook Promoting a Safer Church*' 2018 as amended 2019, Diocesan '*Supplementary Safeguarding Booklet*' 2019 and the HOB's '*Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance*' 2016 as amended.
- Will appoint a Parish Safeguarding Officer, a Children's Advocate and a Deputy Children's Advocate.

### **3. Principles of Safeguarding Policy**

- 3.1. "The Church of England is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has." (Promoting a Safer Church – Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2018/2019).

In supporting safeguarding standards within this Parish, the principles of The Church of England's Safeguarding Policy Statement shown above are hereby adopted.

- 3.2. The Parish is therefore committed to:
- The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and all adults.
  - The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
  - The establishing of safe, caring communities, within a culture of "informed vigilance" as to the dangers of abuse, which provide a loving environment where victims of

abuse can report or disclose abuse and where they can find support and best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

- 3.3. We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with the principles of Safer Recruitment, including the use of criminal record disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.  
(Recruitment and selection guidance is reproduced under Appendix A to this policy).
- 3.4. We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that any adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- 3.5. We will seek to offer informal 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.
- 3.6. We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.
- 3.7. We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of respect and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.
- 3.8. 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.
- 3.9. In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

#### **4. Definitions applicable to this Policy**

4.1. For the purposes of this policy the following definitions will apply:

- A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. (Children Act 1989). 'Children' therefore includes 'children and young people' throughout this document.

- It is acknowledged that in direct work it will usually be more appropriate to use the term 'young people' for those over the age of 11.
- An adult is an individual who has attained their 18th birthday.
- A vulnerable adult is an individual aged 18 or over whose ability to protect themselves 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.
- 'Safeguarding' means 1) Taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children and adults' welfare are minimised, and 2) Where there are concerns about a child or adult's welfare, to take the appropriate action to address those concerns,
- 'Child protection' is used for responding to concerns where it appears that a child or young person may have been harmed.
- 'Church Officer' is anyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.
- 'Appointed' is used for anyone, whether ordained or lay, paid or unpaid, appointed as a member of staff, by or on behalf of Holy Cross, to a post or role having responsibility for children or vulnerable adults.
- 'Group leader' – an individual who has been safely recruited and appointed with overall responsibility for a group or activity. As such is considered a member of staff, answerable to the PCC.

- ‘Leader’ – an individual who has been safely recruited to work unsupervised leading a group or activity within the criteria set out in the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012, having overall responsibility for those under their care.
- ‘Helper’ – an individual who has been safely recruited for a role where there is significant supervised contact with children or vulnerable adults. As such the helper is not regarded as a member of staff and does not have overall responsibility for those individuals.
- ‘Assistant’ – an individual, usually a volunteer, who has been safely recruited to assist with a group or activity in a very limited, supervised capacity.
- Child or Young Person’s ‘Regulated Activity’ requires criteria relating to *Supervision and Frequency* to be met. The *Supervision* definition adopted by the church is that if a level of monitoring cannot be continuously maintained then the role of the worker is not a supervised position and therefore becomes the first element of *Regulated Activity*. If the activity (not the individual worker) fits the *Frequency* definition (i.e. at least once a week; 4 days in a 30 day period; or between the hours of 2.00 am and 6.00 am) the second element is complete for the group or activity to be considered *Regulated Activity*. This then identifies the level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) vetting required.
- Adult ‘Regulated Activity’ defines specific activities, whether frequent or one-off, which require the highest level of DBS vetting. ‘Non-Regulated Activity’ of vulnerable adult care requires a frequency test and a lower level of enhanced DBS check. (See Appendix A for full information).
- ‘Working with children or vulnerable adults’ includes, but is not restricted to, those involved in teaching, training or instruction, care or supervision, and transport. It also includes those who work regularly but infrequently with that group or activity, for example a few days every summer.

## 5. Application of Policy

5.1. We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility for children or vulnerable adults within the Holy Cross Parish, in line with safer recruitment principles published in Diocesan guidelines, including checks with the DBS, whether an Enhanced or Enhanced Plus Barred List check. These checks are renewable every five years.

5.2. In keeping with Diocesan guidelines, this Parish will therefore ensure that:

- Regulated Activity (Children) – where an appointed person works with a group or activity unsupervised and the frequency of that group or activity meeting is at least once a week, or of an intensity of at least 4 days in a 30 day period, or overnight between the hours of 2.00 am and 6.00 am, the appointed person will then be subject of an Enhanced plus Barred List check through the DBS.
- Where an appointed person has significant contact with children and young people through their role, but the role does not conform to the definitions required for ‘Regulated Activity’ then an Enhanced without Barred List check with the DBS will suffice. This will apply to any ‘helper’ shown on a rota published in connection with the group or activity.
- Regulated Activity (Adults) – where an appointed person engages with a vulnerable adult unsupervised as part of regulated activity, that individual will be subject of an Enhanced plus Barred List check through the DBS.
- Where an appointed person has a significant level of involvement with vulnerable adults, meeting the frequency test, and the role is outside of the ‘Regulated Activity’ definition, then an Enhanced without Barred List check with the DBS will suffice.
- Those who manage or supervise appointed individuals who work with vulnerable groups, will also be required to complete an Enhanced plus Barred List check.
- Volunteers who have a *very limited* role as an assistant, (where they are not left alone in charge of vulnerable groups/individuals and are supervised by an individual who has completed the DBS procedure), will not be required to undertake a DBS check. However, assistants should not be listed on a published rota, otherwise their role is



considered greater than *'very limited'* and the individual will be required to complete the appropriate level of DBS check. The Diocese regards a role that is rostered to be at least that of a 'helper.'

## **6. Paid staff, volunteers, helpers and assistants.**

- 6.1 Paid staff appointed to work with children and vulnerable adults will be recruited according to the principles set out in HOB 'Parish Safeguarding Handbook' 2018 and Diocesan 'Supplementary Safeguarding Booklet' 2019, in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, before embarking on the recruitment process.
- 6.2 Volunteers, appointed as leaders, helpers or assistants, to work with children or vulnerable adults, will also be recruited in accordance with the guidelines. However, it will not be necessary to consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser before recruitment.
- 6.3 All recruitment procedures made following the adoption of this policy will comply with Diocesan guidelines, following which only paid staff and those volunteers who have been formally appointed to an appropriate role may take responsibility for those individuals they engage with.
- 6.4 Other adults may assist with groups or activities on an occasional basis, but must be supervised by an appointed worker. Those individuals are not counted as part of staffing or to have any overall responsibility. If they are to join the team on a regular basis they will be recruited in accordance with the principles of paragraph 6.2 above, be required to complete a confidential declaration and complete the appropriate level of DBS check.
- 6.5 Young people aged 16 or 17 may also assist with children's groups or activities, but must be supervised by an appointed adult worker and cannot be counted as part of the staffing. However, where those individuals have been developed to work as a leader or helper, they will be subject of the DBS procedure, albeit that by reason of age they remain under the supervision of an appointed adult, are not considered as part of staffing or to have overall responsibility for children.
- 6.6 Young people under 16 may assist but will not have responsibility for children and must be supervised by an appointed adult. If on work experience, a reference will be obtained from the school, with a specific question as to whether there have been any safeguarding issues.
- 6.7 Young people who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping should always be overseen by an appointed worker who will be responsible for

ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding.

- 6.8 Volunteers who go into a church school on behalf of the Parish will be recruited and checked via the DBS arrangements in the Diocese. The school should confirm with the Parish that those processes have been completed.

## **7. Safe Environment for Children**

- 7.1 Church groups involving children under 6 without their parents that meet regularly for more than two hours in any one day or for more than fourteen days a year must be Ofsted registered.
- 7.2 Registration involves ensuring good practice standards across a wide range of issues including group leaders, staffing ratios, suitability of premises, health and safety and facilities for children with special needs.
- 7.3 Although exempt registration this Parish, in line with Church guidance, will adhere to the principles of the OFSTED standards, wherever possible, to ensure that good practice is achieved.
- 7.4 As set out in HOB Parish Safeguarding Handout 2018, the NSPCC guidance for minimum prescribed staff-child ratios should be as follows:
- |               |                        |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 0 – 2 years   | 1 adult to 3 children  |
| 2 - 3 years   | 1 adult to 4 children  |
| 4 - 8 years   | 1 adult to 6 children  |
| 9 – 12 years  | 1 adult to 8 children  |
| 13 – 18 years | 1 adult to 10 children |
- 7.5 Each group should have at least two workers, even for smaller groups, and if possible one male and one female. Staff ratios for all groups should always be based on a risk assessment. (If small groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one appointed adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity).
- 7.6 Staffing numbers would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk, potentially dangerous or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved. (See also Appendix B parts 6 and 7).
- 7.7 If a person who has been assigned to help staff a group is prevented from attending at short notice, there is no automatic obligation to cancel the group activity. It will be

acceptable to secure the services of another suitable person or make other appropriate temporary arrangements so that the activity can run as scheduled.

- 7.8 If it is proposed that a student in an appropriate discipline be included on a rota, the diocesan safeguarding adviser will be consulted.
- 7.9 Care should be taken to ensure that children and vulnerable adults in mixed-age activities such as choirs, bell ringing and serving teams are appropriately supervised. The expectation is that the leader and those responsible for supervision and/or teaching children/vulnerable adults are recruited safely and subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. It may be more convenient to have a team of such people taking responsibility on a rota, with details of those appointed being displayed where the activity takes place.
- 7.10 Transport, travel or escort arrangements to or from church activities are the responsibility of parents, friends or family members, if they make informal arrangements among themselves. They become the responsibility of the PCC if the PCC organizes or facilitates them. It should be clearly understood by all concerned at which point responsibility for the child or vulnerable adult is passed from friend or family member to church officer and at which point it is returned.
- 7.11 Authorised drivers engaged in Parish activities need to have appropriate insurance and to comply with the law in relation to seat belts, child seats and booster cushions. Children should travel on the back seat of cars. Appropriate arrangements, for example regarding insurance and driving qualifications, should be made by those driving minibuses on behalf of the church. Transporting children on behalf of a church requires the appropriate level of DBS check to be carried out on the driver and any appointed escorting adults. (See also Appendix B part 14).

## **8 Standards for youth/vulnerable adult work within the Parish**

- 8.1 This policy document has identified the safer recruitment requirements for appointed individuals as well as the circumstances for DBS checks. Guidance relating to Safer Recruitment is included within Appendix A to this document. Procedural and administrative considerations in respect of children and young person's for Leaders and Helpers are set out in Appendix B. Information and guidance in respect of vulnerable adults is set out in Appendix C.
- 8.2 Whilst statutory duties and codes of practice now in place for paid youth workers do not technically apply to the voluntary sector, it is expected that appointed volunteers will mirror the good practice required in the statutory sector.
- 8.3 All work with those under 16 must be adequately supervised according to the minimum standards noted at paragraph 7.4 above.
- 8.4 Whilst the age of 18 marks adulthood, it is the policy of this Parish to require a minimum three-year age difference between the young adult youth worker and the young people they supervise, as far as is reasonably practicable.

## **9 Domestic abuse**

- 9.1 The HOB policy states that *'The church is committed to those who have been victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse in all its forms is contrary to the will of God and an affront to human dignity. All need to play their part in preventing or halting it.'*
- 9.2 The welfare of the adult victim of domestic abuse is important, but where there are children in the family it must be understood that they too are victims of domestic abuse. Consideration of the child's welfare always comes first.
- 9.3 The incumbent and the PCC will agree a parish domestic abuse statement including who to contact if there are concerns. They will also:
- Appoint a named individual who is a point of contact for any advice and support.
  - Follow the process on how to respond to safeguarding concerns or allegations.
  - Support those in leadership positions, pastoral and safeguarding roles to engage in diocesan domestic abuse training.
  - Consider the best place to display the domestic abuse statement including information about helplines and local services.
  - Discuss domestic abuse in appropriate contexts such as marriage preparation.
  - Challenge inappropriate comments and behaviour by church members.

## **10 Procedural matters**

- 10.1 The Parish acknowledges that the HOB safeguarding policy documents require parishes to have appropriate insurance cover. Insurers require the parish to adopt best practice regarding safeguarding, based on available guidance. Therefore a parish runs the risk of invalidating its insurance cover relating to safeguarding issues if it fails to follow basic guidance provided by the HOB safeguarding policies. The parish insurers should be notified of any serious safeguarding allegations/actions involving paid or voluntary parish workers. Similarly consideration should be given in such circumstances, in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers (DSA), as to whether the Charity Commission should be informed.
- 10.2 The Parish Policy Statement Notice, Guidance for Safer Recruitment, overall responsibilities in respect of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and roles considered appropriate for the DBS procedures, are set out in Appendix A to this document.
- 10.3 Appendix B sets out guidance and information for group leaders engaged in Holy Cross Children and Youth Activities.
- 10.4 Appendix C sets out guidance and information for those engaged in Holy Cross Vulnerable Adults support and activities.

- 10.5 Further appendices may be added to this policy as information and guidance is issued by the Diocesan Advisers.

## **11 Acknowledgments**

11.1 This policy has been produced in conjunction with:

- HOB *'Key roles and Responsibilities etc. Practice Guidance'* 2017, HOB *'Parish Safeguarding Handbook'* 2018;
- Diocesan of Canterbury *'Supplementary Safeguarding Booklet: The Parish Safeguarding Handbook'* 2019; and
- Church of England's guidance *'Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance,'* 2016.

## **12 Retention and Disposal of Records**

12.1 This policy and associated appendices will be retained for a period of not less than six years from implementation. Disposal of safer recruitment documentation is set out in Appendix A part 12 paragraph 20. Secure storage, handling, use and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information is subject to the Diocesan Safeguarding GDPR Policy Statement, as detailed in Appendix A part 13. Disposal should only occur with the consent of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.