

Appendix B -
Parish Children and Youth
Activity Guidance

Holy Cross Bearsted

Safeguarding Children and
Vulnerable Adults from
Harm Policy

July 2021

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1 Bearsted Parish Youth Work

1. This document forms part of the Parish Safeguarding Policy and is issued for the guidance of the Bearsted Children and Youth Leadership Team and activity leaders.
- 1.2 This document will be reviewed annually and presented to the Incumbent and Parochial Church Council (PCC) for adoption, to ensure that information and administrative details are relevant and up-to-date.

2 Appointments of full/part-time paid youth workers, student youth workers and volunteer helpers

- 2.1 The “Safeguarding Policy” of the Church of England, together with Diocesan guidelines will be followed regarding appointments to any role involving “working with children,” to ensure safer recruitment principles.
- 2.2 There should be appropriate interview procedures depending on the level of responsibility and time commitment involved. A paid worker or student worker would therefore be subject to the more formal procedure identified in paragraph 6.1 of the Parish Policy document, in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA).
- 2.3 Volunteer workers can be interviewed within the Parish, without the early consultation with the DSA, as detailed in paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 of the Parish Policy document.
- 2.4 There should be appropriate job descriptions and personal specifications for each role. Appendix A of the Parish Policy details the recruitment guidance and documentation required.
- 2.5 All paid, student and volunteer workers should comply with the appointment procedure of the Parish Policy and Diocesan guidelines. This may include the completion of a Confidential Declaration, the taking up of references for all over 16 years of age and completing the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedures.
- 2.6 All paid, student and volunteer workers should be fully aware of the Parish Safeguarding Policy and the published guidance, both national and within the Diocese, at the time of appointment, seeking any appropriate training relevant to role.

3 A Safe Environment and Activities

3.1 The House of Bishops (HOB) Safeguarding Policy Statement states that *'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) Church-sponsored groups and activities should therefore provide a warm, happy and nurturing environment for children and young people, while avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made. Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is possible that any type of physical contact in the course of children and youth work could be misconstrued as abuse. All volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult.

3.2.1 **Code of safer working practice.** All those working on behalf of the parish with children and young people **must**:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful.
- Ensure that children and young people know who they can talk to about a personal concern.
- Record and report any concerns about a child or young person and/or the behaviour of another worker with their activity leader and/or Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). Sign and date the record.
- Obtain written consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored. (Model consent form available at www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding).
- Administer any first aid with others around.

3.2.2 **In addition, for 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. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children.
- 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 its nature before the activity takes place.

3.3.1 All those working on behalf of the parish with children and young people **must not**:

- Invade an individual's privacy whilst washing and toileting.
- 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 you in excessive attention seeking.
- Allow unknown adults access to children and young people. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person.
- Allow strangers to give children and young people lifts.
- Befriend children and young people on social media.
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

3.3.2 In addition must not:

- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision 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.
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include family members/carers) outside organised group occasions.

(HOB Parish Safeguarding Handbook Promoting a Safer Church 2018-2019)

4 Acceptable touch

4.1 Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- **Always** ask permission.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the workers needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church officer.
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).
- In addition:
 - ✓ You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
 - ✓ You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
 - ✓ You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
 - ✓ You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
 - ✓ You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

4.2 Ensure that church officers at all levels take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be encouraged to challenge one another if necessary. Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported.

(HOB Parish Safeguarding Handbook Promoting a Safer Church 2018-2019)

4.3 Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming her/himself or others. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and the information given to the PSO.

5 Additional guidelines for group leaders

5.1 In addition to sections 3 and 4 above the group leader **should:**

- Ensure any health and safety requirements are adhered to.
- Undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept.
- Keep register and consent forms up to date.
- Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present.
- Create space for children to talk – either formally or informally.
- Liaise with the PSO over good practice for safeguarding.
- Always inform the PSO of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise. (The PSO will liaise with the DSA).
- Liaise with the PCC.

6 Children's activities

6.1 Church groups that involve children need to ensure good practice standards across a wide range of areas including: recruitment of activity leaders; DBS checking; staffing ratios; suitability of premises; health and safety arrangements; and facilities for children with special needs.

6.2 The minimum staffing levels for groups (based on NSPCC guidance) should be:

0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children	1:3
2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children	1:4
4-8 years	1 adult to 6 children	1:6
9-12 years	1 adult to 8 children	1:8
13-18 years	1 adult to 10 children	1:10

6.3 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. For example, 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.

6.4 For all groups and activities:

- Undertake a health and safety risk assessment*.
- A registration form* must be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities which should include up-to-date information on parents' contact numbers, medical information (e.g. allergies) and special needs.
- The registration form* should be reviewed annually or as and when it changes i.e. if a child is diagnosed with a medical condition/allergy etc. It will normally be completed by a parent.
- An attendance register must be kept and be available at all group meetings.
- A First Aid kit must be available on any premises that are used by children.
- An accident and incident logbook must be available, and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place. Any significant incidents must be recorded (e.g. a fight between children).
- There should be access to a telephone, if possible.
- In premises where children's groups meet, the **Childline** and **Family Lives** telephone numbers should be displayed.
- Parents must sign a consent form* before children are transported in a private car, and before any photography or images are taken.
- In addition, when taking children offsite (e.g. an activity that takes place away from church premises) the church leadership must be informed and agree to the activity.
- Details of the activity and any itinerary must be given in advance to parent/s and consent forms* received in advance of the activity taking place.
- Details of the activity and a list of contacts must be left with someone in church.
- Details of the activity and arrangements must be given to the incumbent and/or PSO.
- A risk assessment* must be undertaken, and confirmation obtained that the activity is covered by PCC insurance.
- A leader must be designated to take responsibility for First Aid.

*model forms available at www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding.

(HOB Parish Safeguarding Handbook Promoting a Safer Church 2018-2019)

7 Children with special needs

- 7.1 Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group. Discrimination faced by disabled people is not uncommon. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for children and people with disabilities in order that the church can welcome them. The parent should be asked how best to meet the child's special needs.
- 7.2 Disability legislation requires organisations to take responsible steps to meet the needs of disabled people and this includes children. It is essential therefore that every effort is made to create an environment that is inclusive and accessible.

7.3 **Good practice regarding visual impairment includes:**

- Identify yourself by name;
- Reserve seats near the front so the partially sighted child has the option to sit closer to what is going on. Offer to assist someone who is blind to find their way around. Don't push; always allow them to take your arm and if necessary provide space for a guide dog to lie down;
- Make sure that all corridors, approaches and circulating areas are free from obstructions;
- Ensure large print versions are available for songs/hymns and other written material (e.g. Bible, news sheets etc.). Print for partially sighted individuals should be in a Sans Serif typeface (e.g. Arial).
- Good lighting is required for partially sighted people;
- The international symbol for visual impairment can be shown on literature and notice boards to indicate what facilities are provided for blind and partially sighted people.

7.4 **Good practice regarding hearing impairment includes:**

- Get the attention of a deaf person before speaking to them;
- Address the deaf person directly, not the person who may have accompanied them;
- Be aware that they may not be able to speak if they have been deaf from birth;
- Ensure that your face and mouth can be seen clearly. Look directly at the person and speak at normal speed and volume with clear lip patterns. Avoid exaggerated lip patterns that are harder to read. Keep your hands away from your face and remember eating or chewing gum whilst talking hinders effective lip reading. Don't speak directly into the person's ear;
- A hearing induction loop should be provided whether you are aware of people using hearing aids or not. It is not always obvious someone has a hearing aid and most people do not like to draw attention to the fact;
- Where someone is asked to sign what is said and sung they need to be in a clear visible well lit place;
- Be aware that background noise can make life very difficult for individuals who use a hearing aid because it often distorts sounds they are trying to hear;
- Be prepared to write things down if necessary; the important thing is not to give up if communication is difficult. Change/simplify your language if the deaf person does not understand, avoiding jargon;
- The international symbol can be shown on literature or notice boards to indicate that facilities are available for the deaf or hard of hearing.

7.5 **Good practice regarding impaired mobility includes:**

- Internal or external access needs to be level or ramped.
- Don't designate one area for wheelchair users; this unnecessarily draws attention to their disability.

- Think about a seat being reserved alongside a wheelchair user so that a friend can sit next to them.
- When talking to a wheelchair user it is polite to sit down so that you are on the same level, making eye contact easier.
- Remember that a wheelchair is part of the user's personal space – so don't lean on it, hold it or attempt to move it/push it unless asked. However, offers are usually welcome, even if declined.
- The international symbol can be shown on literature, notice boards and facilities such as toilets to indicate that there is access for those with impaired mobility.

7.6 **Good practice regarding learning disability includes:**

- Children with learning disabilities may well have limited or no reading ability so where possible signpost facilities and directions (fire exits, toilets etc.) using images as well as words.
- Offer assistance if people seem to be experiencing difficulties understanding or if they require help with certain instructions.
- Speak in short sentences.
- Check out they have understood. Beware of “vener skills” where someone gives the impression of understanding when they do not.
- Give them time to process questions and answers.
- Avoid completing sentences for them.
- It can sometimes be helpful to check out how best to communicate with the person with someone who knows them well.
- Be patient if individuals are noisy or move about when it seems inappropriate; don't immediately pick up on the norms of how things are usually done within your place of worship.

7.7 Those with a learning disability should be embraced into church life and church activities. However difficulties can emerge when an adult or young person with a learning disability is given responsibilities in a children's group. Thought needs to be given over whose needs this will be serving. Attention needs to be given to: supervision arrangements; the age and vulnerability of the children in the group; how well boundaried the adult is able to be; and whether they have the intellectual ability to pick up on the cues presented by the children. If in any doubt the advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should be sought.

8 Registration

8.1 Bearsted Parish will use a standard register that is easy to use, read, and pass on when internal/external leadership changes, and annually reviewed to make sure all information held is renewed or updated as applicable. At the end of each year registers will be forwarded to the Vicar's secretary for secure storage, except where required to be retained on school premises. In particular for all groups:

- A register should be kept and be available at all group meetings.

- A registration form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities.
 - A first aid kit should be available on any premises that are used by children.
- An accident and incident logbook should be available and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place.
 - Any significant incidents should be recorded (e.g. a fight between children).
 - There should be access to a telephone. In premises where children's groups are held the **Childline** and **Family Lives** telephone numbers should be displayed.
 - Parents must sign a consent form before children are taken off site for activities. A suggested consent form is available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website.
 - When taking children off site a detailed programme and list of contacts should be left with someone in the parish.
 - Activities planned to take place away from church premises should have PCC agreement in order to be covered by insurance.
- 8.2 Consent needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. It can be from the child or young person if he or she has sufficient age and understanding in relation to the specific issue. So, for example, while parental consent is always required for a group residential holiday a teenager would usually be able to consent to the photos from the holiday being displayed in church. You should record who has given consent for any specific activity.
- 8.3 Those who privately foster children, who can include friends of the child's family, often do not know that they have to notify Children's Social Services of the arrangements. The definitions of private fostering and procedures involved are explained on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website. Advice on the issue and/or specific cases can be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers.
- 8.4 The registration form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. The form should be updated annually and include the following:
- Name and address.
 - Date of birth.
 - Up to date information on parents' contact numbers and emergency contact details.
 - Medical information (e.g. allergies).
 - Any special needs including activities that the child is unable to take part in.
 - Consent for emergency medical treatment.
 - Consent for photographs and videos if relevant.
 - Separate consent should be obtained for one-off events and activities, for example swimming, and also for outings and weekends away.
 - All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely.
- (Registration form available on the Safeguarding Website)
- 8.5 Holy Cross, Bearsted Safeguarding Policy, section 7, acknowledges that any group which includes children who are under six years old, that meets regularly for more than two hours in any one day, or for more than fourteen days a year, must, unless the parents of the under six year old are present, register that group with OFSTED. Information on Ofsted registration can be obtained from Kent County Council Child and Families Information Services: 03000 412323

9 Additional safeguarding guidance for off-site, overnight or other one-off activities

- 9.1 **Holidays and Residential trips – Permission for the holiday or trip and insurance.** A detailed description of the holiday or trip must be presented to the PCC so that permission may be given by the PCC and the holiday covered by the parish insurance. If there are to be any potentially hazardous activities undertaken this description must include an assessment of the risks involved, with adequate insurance or alternatively, a written assurance from the activity centre that it has carried out its own risk assessment and has adequate insurance.
- 9.2 **Recruitment of leaders to take children and young people away.** Any trip must have a group leader. The group leader will have overall responsibility for supervision of the visit whilst also playing great attention to health and safety guidelines. All leaders/helpers must be recruited according to the safer recruitment procedure. Occasional ‘assistants’ who have not been safely recruited can be used on day trips but must work under the direct supervision of a named leader/helper. Occasional ‘assistants’ cannot work on trips involving overnight stays. All leaders/helpers must be clear about their specific responsibilities. The group leader should hold a face to face briefing session before the trip begins. It may also be appropriate to hold such a session for parents. All leaders/helpers must know who to go to if they have a concern about a child or have any other worries.
- 9.3 **Staffing ratios for off-site activities.** See section 6 above and section 36 below.
- 9.4 **Communication.** All leaders must carry a mobile phone and have the numbers of other leaders saved in their contact details. All leaders must carry, at all times, details of all children, including emergency contact details for parents/guardian. A copy of this list must be held by a designated person at home, who will act as the intermediary in the event of an emergency between the group and the church and with parents/guardian. Leaders must report all serious incidents to the designated person at home, who will in turn pass on the appropriate information. Written records must be made as soon as possible after the incident and submitted.
- 9.5 **Premises.** Insurance, Food and Hygiene, First Aid kit and Fire precautions must be checked in advance of the event; written confirmation must be obtained, before the trip, of Employers and Public Liability insurances held by the operators of the premises. There must be a qualified first-aider on site.
- 9.6 **Risk assessment.**

If the residential trip is to a recognised, established venue, leaders must check in advance that the organisation has carried out a risk assessment for the premises and the activities which will be undertaken, and is itself carrying the risk. (Check the risk assessment documentation).

A risk assessment* identifying risks in relation to specific needs of service users and actual risks for the holiday must be carried out by the church and evaluated, in advance of the holiday, and action taken to minimize these risks.

On arrival, leaders must carry out a further risk assessment* of the accommodation to ensure the environment is safe for all parties present. If on arrival it is found that the situation is not as expected the leaders should not let the activities take place.

Staff must familiarize themselves with the Fire Exits and appliances where they are staying and ensure that they are working. Any health and safety hazards should be reported and dealt with immediately.

(*risk assessment form obtainable from www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding).

9.7 Transport for holidays and trips. See general guidance on Transport at section 14 below.

9.8 Parental consents for holidays and residential trips. No child under the age of 8 can be taken away on residential activities without his/her parent/guardian. Each child or young person under the age of 18 (unless they are over 16 and living away from home or married) must have the written consent of parent or guardian, which gives authority to the person named as responsible for the activity to take the child/young person away and to act 'as a careful parent would'. The model *parental consent* form (see diocesan website) can be customized to suit local needs. It should include, as necessary:

- Details of any child/young person's special needs or medical requirements.
- Explicit consent to taking photographs or making videos.
- Consent to the child/young person smoking, if they are known to smoke, on holidays & residential trips.

9.9 Information to parents/guardians. It is important that parents/guardians have full information before giving consent. This must include as a minimum:

- Aims and objectives of the trip and activities;
- Date of the trip and its duration;
- Details of venue including arrangements for accommodation and supervision;
- Travel arrangements;
- Name of group leader and contact numbers;
- Information about financial, medical and insurance arrangements.

9.10 Accommodation. For all residential or overnight trips & events:

- Boys and girls must have separate sleeping and washing facilities which are private to them;
- Mixed groups of young people must have adults of both genders involved;
- Adults should have separate accommodation but in close proximity to the young people;

- Young people under the age of 18 must not be left alone overnight;
- There should be a rota of adults awake during the night at least until all the young people have settled down.

Any other arrangements e.g. Sleepovers, Lock-ins, All-night events must be carefully explained to parents beforehand and their consent sought to the arrangements.

9.11 **Supervision.**

- Ratios of leaders/helpers to children/young people should be strictly followed;
- Every group must be led by at least two adults, however small the group;
- When physical activities are planned, staffing levels should be increased accordingly;
- Individual adults must never be alone with children or young people;
- Children will be told to act responsibly whilst not taking any unnecessary risks and must also follow the instructions of any adults in a supervisory position;
- An agreement should be reached between the organiser and parents/guardians as to how much independence is appropriate for older children and teenagers, but the leadership should be clear that they will make decisions on site in any given situation;
- If a child is seen to cause any potential risk to themselves or others they must be withdrawn from the trip;
- For trips to established premises, clarification of responsibility for leadership and supervision of children between the organisation and the church leaders should be clearly established. Normally the organization's staff lead the activity but the church leaders remain responsible for the welfare of the children/young people.
- Leaders must not consume alcohol on the trip, even when off duty.
- Parents must be informed beforehand if it is intended to allow groups of young people to go off unsupervised, e.g. for shopping.

9.12 **Sleepovers on church premises.** Churches sometimes arrange sleepovers for children, or church premises may be used, for example, during pilgrimages or missions. The guidance for holidays and residential trips should be followed as far as possible:

- When part of the activity is for young people to remain together as a group, separate sleeping areas must be organized for girls and boys;
- If possible separate washing and toileting should be provided, or different times for washing arranged, to ensure privacy;
- The required ratio of adult leaders should be followed, including a gender balance;
- Young people under the age of 18 must not be left alone overnight;
- Ensure a rota of awake adults during the night or at least until all the youngsters have settled down.

9.13 **Risks of fire when on church premises.** Great care must be taken to ensure the safety of the young people from the risk of fire:

- There must be two separate routes out from the sleeping accommodation;
- It must be possible to open all external doors. They should not be locked.
- All exit routes should be clearly marked.
- All internal doors should be kept closed at night to prevent the spread of smoke or fire;
- Portable fires should be placed in safe positions and turned off at night;
- All adults should have access to a torch and a telephone;
- There should be no smoking anywhere on the premises;
- A list of those present should be hung up near the main exit door. Everyone should know where outside to assemble and a roll call completed;
- Anyone discovering a fire should raise the alarm by shouting **FIRE**;
- The fire service should be called to all fires. Use the **999** facility;
- Make sure that vehicles do not block the exits or access for emergency vehicles;
- Adults should know where to locate fire-fighting equipment and how it is operated;
- Fire-fighting equipment should only be used if safe to do so.

9.14 **Safeguarding children and young people** is everyone's responsibility and basic common sense has a significant part to play. The safety, welfare and meaningful experience of the participants must always be at the forefront in any decision taken beyond the scope of these guidelines. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team is always available to discuss any particular concerns about running a trip, event or activity.

10 Messy Church Safeguarding

10.1 We all have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people; even if we don't have a specific safeguarding role. It can be an easy mistake to think that because parents/guardians/carers are present when Messy Church is held that safeguarding isn't really necessary. To some degree the church and officers will be viewed as being in a 'position of trust'.

10.2 Messy Church operates under the authority of the church and therefore is covered by the Parish Safeguarding Policy. The leaders of Messy Church should therefore be aware of the appointed Children's Advocate, Deputy Children's Advocate and Parish Safeguarding Officer and their contact details.

10.3 Messy Church needs to comply with legislation and government expectations with regards to safeguarding. Where abuse is disclosed, witnessed or suspected, it needs to be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer/Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. In particular:

- Be prepared to challenge unsafe practice or inappropriate behaviour by adults;
- Record your concerns and share them with relevant people as soon as you can;
- You may need to act/respond within a short timescale – think about whether a child may be at risk of immediate harm;
- Have a list of contact names and numbers for people to report any concerns to;
- Trust your judgement, if something doesn't seem right then act appropriately.

11 Messy Church and Unaccompanied Children

11.1 The Diocesan Safeguarding Team, in respect of unaccompanied children and Messy Church or other Church Services, advise as follows:

- Have a policy in place about unaccompanied children at Messy Church;
- If the policy is to have **no** unaccompanied children, then make it clear when advertising Messy Church who it is for, i.e. Families to come together.
- Should a parent bring other children from their own, make it clear that they remain the responsible adult;
- Those on duty at the door should challenge any unaccompanied child with a view to them returning home (if safe to do so) and/or their parents being contacted to attend;
- If the policy is for unaccompanied children to attend, then signed permission should be gained from a parent before the child is allowed to stay;
- If unaccompanied children turn up at a Church service, have people available (suitably checked) to look after them and arrange contact with parents to gain the necessary signed permission;
- Use common sense in maintaining Safeguarding for Children;
- Whilst 16 and 17 year olds remain children by law they do have rights in decision making and this needs to be borne in mind.

12 Guidelines for Messy Church session

12.1 The following guidelines are issued by the Canterbury Diocese, for use as a checklist when conducting a Messy Church:

- Children **must** be accompanied by parent (guardian/carer) – **no unaccompanied children admitted.**
- One leader to have overall responsibility for monitoring the workshop therefore they should not undertake any specific responsibility for activities.
- External doors to be monitored to prevent any child leaving unaccompanied.
- A register of **all** who attend must be kept to include names, DOB (child), relationship to child, any special needs, plus contact details for parent/guardian/carer.
- Health and medical equipment requirement e.g. does a child have any specific needs or requirements relating to illness, impairment, behaviour, allergies or other? Parent/guardian/carer needs to specify and discuss.
- Leaders/helpers in the initial set up of the Messy Church to be distinguishable i.e. by wearing a Messy Church badge, t-shirt or apron.
- Parent/guardian/carer must **sign in and out** of the session.
- Parent/guardian/carer has responsibility for their child.
- Each activity table is allocated at least one adult helper.
- No children allowed in the kitchen and only adults to move hot food to tables.
- Child-friendly equipment used (e.g. round-ended scissors).

13 General Considerations - Safe environment

- 13.1 Display both the **Childline** telephone number in a prominent place where children and young people can see it and the **Family Lives** number for parents.
- 13.2 Undertake a risk assessment for each activity and in greater detail for an unusual activity or when away from the usual location.
- 13.3 Insurance, First Aid kit and fire precautions should be checked and a Health and Safety check should be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards:
- Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated.
 - They should be kept clean and free from clutter.
 - Electric sockets should be covered.
 - Toilets and hand basins should be easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
 - Appropriate space and equipment should be available for any intended activity.
 - If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired.
 - Children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Drinks should always be available.

Additionally:

- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises.
- A fire drill should be carried out regularly.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should be encouraged not to walk to or from premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A First Aid kit and Accident Book should be available on the premise. The contents of the First Aid kit should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents at prescribed intervals.
- Staff and volunteer workers should be encouraged to have some First Aid knowledge and the parish should encourage access to First Aid training. A list of first aiders in the parish should be compiled and kept available.
- All accidents must be recorded in the accident book.

14 Transporting children on behalf of the church

14.1 Drivers:

- All those who drive children on church-organised activities should have held a full and clean driving licence for over 2 years;
- Drivers who are not children's workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process;
- Any driver who has an unspent conviction for any serious road traffic offence should not transport children for the church;
- Drivers must always be in a fit state i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.

14.2 Private Car:

- Children and young people should not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents or carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from a church activity;
- All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities;
- All cars that carry children should be in a roadworthy condition;
- All children must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats. If there are insufficient seat-belts, additional children should not be carried;
- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number;
- There should be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his/her own, the child must sit in the back of the car.

14.3 Minibus or Coach:

- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored;
- Workers and helpers should sit among the group and not together;
- Before using a minibus, ensure you know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive.

15 Recording, data protection and information sharing

- 15.1 **Opening a church safeguarding case file.** Good record keeping is an important part of the safeguarding task. A record, (called a case file) should be opened whenever a safeguarding concern or allegation occurs in a church. The record should include key contact details, dates of when the information became known and the nature of the concerns. The record should include ongoing actions with dates, other key documents (e.g. observation notes, reports, consent forms etc.) and the case closure date. Records should use straightforward language and be concise and accurate so that they can be understood by anyone not familiar with the case. (A model parish recording template is available at www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding).
- 15.2 **Record retention and security.** The safeguarding case files, whether electronic or paper, must be stored securely by the incumbent and the PSO. This should include identifying who should have access to them. Records in relation to safeguarding issues, even if they have not been proven, should be maintained in accordance with the Church's retention guidance. If the incumbent moves from the church, the records should be passed to the new incumbent.
- 15.3 **Data protection and information sharing.** In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 replaced the Data Protection

Act 1998. The GDPR contains the principles governing the use of personal data. It should be noted that the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 place greater significance on organisations being accountable and transparent in relation to their use of personal data. Parishes handling personal data need to have the proper arrangements for secure storage, handling, use and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information as detailed in Appendix A Part 13 (Diocesan GDPR Policy Statement). See also information for parishes on data protection regime at www.parishresources.org.uk/gdpr.

Personal information in relation to safeguarding will often be sensitive and is likely to be classed as 'special categories of personal data' under the GDPR, which means extra care will need to be taken when handling such data. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes specific reference to processing data in relation to the 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' and allows individuals to share, in certain situations, personal data without consent. (There are also provisions that allow the sharing of personal data without consent for the prevention or detection of unlawful acts or to protect members of the public from dishonesty, malpractice or seriously improper conduct. However, legal advice should be sought before relying on these provisions).

The HOB *'Parish Safeguarding Handbook- Promoting a Safer Church'* 2018-2019 advises – *'The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe'* and this can equally be said to apply to vulnerable adults.

- 15.4 **Sharing without consent.** Information can be shared legally without consent, if a person is unable to or cannot reasonably be expected to gain consent from the individual concerned, or if to gain consent could place somebody at risk. Relevant personal data can be shared lawfully without consent if it is to keep a child or vulnerable adult safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental or emotional well-being.

Never make these decisions on your own. If you are going to share personal data, this should always be discussed with the DSA. Of course, you may be able to share data, at least initially, without identifying the individual concerned both within the church and with the statutory services.

Ultimately, the most important consideration is whether the sharing of information is likely to support the safeguarding of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

(HOB Parish Safeguarding Handbook – Promoting a Safer Church 2018-2019)

See also 'Confidentiality' at section 34 below.

- 15.5 **The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy reminds parishes that there is nothing in data protection legislation which limits appropriate disclosure in order to protect a child or adult who might be at risk. What matters is that the information sharing should be reasonable and proportionate. Safeguarding issues will always take precedence over data protection.**

16 Issues around child abuse

- 16.1 The abuse of children can take many forms. They have the same right to protection regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities (physical, sensory and/or learning difficulties) are especially vulnerable and need special care and protection.
- 16.2 Crucial to any assessment is knowledge and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious patterns. Whilst differences must be taken into account, all children have a right to protection. Differences in child rearing do not justify child abuse; no racial group advocates the abuse of children.
- 16.3 **Statutory** definitions – The UK central government document “Working Together to Safeguard Children,” (Department for Education 2013) categorises and defines abuse in terms of:
- *Physical abuse* – including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.
 - *Sexual abuse* – including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. It may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. It can be perpetrated by adults or children of either gender.
 - *Neglect* – including failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, to provide adequate supervision and/or access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.
 - *Emotional abuse* – including conveying to a child that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying).

(Diocesan Guidance and HOB Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2018-2019).

17 Domestic abuse

- 17.1 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. 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. In all circumstances, contact the DSA who will help clarify the issues and steps needed, which may involve contacting Children's Social Care. There may be a need for a risk assessment and for a Safeguarding Agreement to be put in place. The DSA will undertake this work in conjunction with the parish church and any statutory agencies.

17.2 Holy Cross, Bearsted, acknowledges that domestic abuse situations receive the same attention as safeguarding issues and have included the subject within the parish safeguarding policy (paragraph 9 of the Safeguarding Policy document).

17.3 The HOB 'Parish Safeguarding Handbook' 2018-2019 recommends as good practice to:

- Encourage leaders and those who preach to speak against domestic abuse in teaching, sermons, prayers and parish magazines – remember that many of the congregation may have personal experience of domestic abuse.
- Offer some awareness-raising activities e.g. invite speakers from local domestic abuse agencies.
- Consider including activities around healthy relationships within activities for children and young people.
- Develop links with local domestic abuse organisations.
- Organise courses in parenting and confidence-building.

18 Human Trafficking

18.1 The number of people trafficked for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, 'sweat-shop labour,' or other exploitation has risen sharply in the UK. Violence, intimidation and restriction of liberty often go hand in hand. Detailed guidelines on the recognition of human trafficking are available on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website

19 Domestic Servitude

19.1 Domestic Servitude is a form of modern day slavery, it usually involves someone from another country. They are normally employed under the guise of 'live in' help, however the person is not able to leave and is being controlled and exploited. It is a form of forced labour that often goes unnoticed. If you suspect someone you know or have contact with is in this form of modern day slavery please contact the DSA immediately.

(Diocesan Supplementary Safeguarding Booklet 2019)

20 Forced Marriages and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- 20.1 The term ‘forced marriage’ is used to describe a marriage in which one or more of the parties is married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties presumably consent to the assistance of their parents or a third party such as a matchmaker, in choosing a spouse. Forced marriages are illegal in the UK and seen as a breach of Human Rights Law. If someone tells you that they are being forced into a marriage against their will contact the DSA immediately.
- 20.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the practice of ‘cutting’ or ‘female circumcision’ whereby girl’s external genital organs are partially or totally removed for cultural or non-medical reasons. This procedure is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences. It is illegal to practice FGM in the UK, or assist someone to do this to themselves, either in the UK or abroad, or to take British Nationals or permanent UK residents abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in that country. Signs of FGM can include visiting a country where FGM is practiced and school age girls talking about attending a ‘special ceremony’ or event, also being absent for a long time and a change in their behaviour on their return. If you think someone is either going to be subjected to FGM or participating in FGM, contact the DSA immediately.

(Diocesan Supplementary Safeguarding Booklet 2019)

21 Abuse by children and young people

- 21.1 Abuse by children and young people is more common than is generally realised. Whilst it is not unusual for children and young people to be curious about the opposite sex and for them to experiment sexually, where a child or young person is in a position of power and responsibility over another and abuse that trust through some sexual activity, then this is abuse. Where one child forces themselves on another child of any age, this also is abuse. Such situations should be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved and would be investigated in the same way by the child protection agencies. This is important as the effect on the child victim may be as great, and the perpetrator could himself/herself be a victim of abuse and in need of help. Approximately 30% of the sexual abuse of children is perpetrated by children and young people under 18.

(Diocesan Supplementary Safeguarding Booklet 2019)

22 Bullying and cyberbullying

- 19.1 Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called

cyberbullying. A child can feel like there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time day or night.

23 Gangs and County Lines

23.1 Kent Police describe gangs as those *'considered to be a group of people who spend time in public places that:*

- *See themselves (and are seen by others) as a noticeable group; and*
- *Engage in criminal activity and violence.*

The majority of young people are not involved in gangs, but the behaviour associated with them can have a significant impact on individuals, their families, friends and communities.'

23.2 County Lines is a phrase to describe where gangs based primarily in large cities such as London, use young people to bring illegal drugs or substances into more rural areas or smaller towns and areas. This can often involve young people from any background who have been groomed or coerced into being part of the gang. Kent Police advise that the following can be signs of young people's involvement in gangs:

- Talking and dressing differently
- Not going to school
- Staying out unusually late
- Poor behaviour
- Unexplained sums of money and possessions
- Unexplained injuries
- Graffiti-style tags on possessions
- Carrying weapons
- Interest in music which glorifies weapons and gang culture
- Getting involved in fights
- Committing crimes such as shoplifting

23.3 If a young person you know or a parent advises you that they suspect that their young person is involved in county lines or gangs contact the DSA immediately.
(Diocesan Supplementary Safeguarding Booklet 2019)

24 Use of Social Media

24.1 Social media sites enable users to create and share content and keep in touch with other users. They include maintaining a profile on a networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat; writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own or the blog of another person; and taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards. For many, especially young people, using social media is an extension of physical face-to-face relationships. It is therefore important that churches also engage with their community and worshippers through these platforms. However, this must be done safely to avoid the risk of:

- Forming inappropriate relationships.
- Saying things you should not, such as offensive, sexual or suggestive comments.
- Blurring the boundaries between public work/ministry and your private life.
- Grooming and impersonation.
- Bullying and harassment.

24.2 **The role of the PCC.** The PCC must approve the use of social media and mobile phones by the church. Where there are Facebook or similar online groups set up on the church's behalf, the PCC must ensure there is a named person to whom all workers are accountable.

The named person must be a church officer, and should be aware of the account name and password so that they can at any time log on to the account to monitor the communications. The named person should be proactive in fulfilling this role.

Communications must be shared with the named person. Church officers remain bound by professional rules of confidentiality. Where there is concern that a young person or adult is at risk of abuse, or they themselves pose a risk of abuse to others, safeguarding procedures must always be followed.

24.3 **Guidance for church officers. Do:**

- Have your eyes open and be vigilant.
- Maintain the utmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key. Treat online communication with children, young people and adults as you would communication that is face-to-face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.
- Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the PSO and the DSA.
- Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post.
- Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church account/s and profiles separate from your personal social media account/s e.g. only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, while keeping a separate Facebook profile for private life.
- Always ask parents/carers for written consent to:
 - Use and store photographs of children/young people from activities or events in official church publications, or on the church's social media, website and displays.
 - Use telephone, text message, email and other messaging services to communicate with young people.
 - Allow young people to connect to the church's social media pages.
- Only use an approved church/ministry account to communicate with children. Young people and/or vulnerable adults. The named person should be able to access this and review conversations, and the account should be visible to young people and

their parents. Young people must be made aware that any communication will be viewed by all users. Save any messages and threads through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence to the named person of your exchange when required.

- Avoid one-to-one communication with a child or young person.
- Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
- Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the named person, PSO, incumbent or, if appropriate, DSA.
- Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

24.4 Guidance for church officers. Do not:

- Use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Add children, young people or vulnerable adults as friends on your personal accounts.
- Facebook stalk (i.e. dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them).
- Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper or on headed notepaper.
- Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your church role.
- Use visual media (e.g. Skype, Facetime) for one-to-one conversations with young people – us only in group settings.

24.5 In particular, do not allow:

- Content to contain or share links to other sites that contain:
 - Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements.
 - Breaches of copyright and data protection.
 - Material of an illegal nature.
 - Offensive sexual or abusive references.
 - Inappropriate language.
 - Anything which may be harmful to a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or which may bring the church into disrepute or compromise its reputation.

24.6 Mobile phones.

Wherever possible, church officers should be supplied with a mobile phone dedicated to work purposes. This allows for the phone to be switched off outside working hours, and for usages to be accountable. This means that the work phone number is the only number that young people and adults are given, and the church officer's personal number can remain private. Texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to the named person or the PSO/incumbent (or if unavailable the DSA).

(HOB Parish Safeguarding Handbook - Promoting a Safer Church 2018-2019)

25 Radicalisation

25.1 Sometimes the signs of radicalisation are difficult to notice as they can also form part of normal teenage behaviour. The risk of being radicalised can also apply to adults as well as young people. Some of the signs of a person who has been radicalised can include:

- Isolating themselves from friends and family.
 - Talking as if from a scripted speech.
 - Unwillingness or inability to discuss their views.
 - A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.
 - Increased levels of anger.
- Increased secretiveness especially around internet use.

(Diocesan Supplementary Safeguarding Booklet 2019)

26 Spiritual abuse

26.1 The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy (para 3.35) comments: *“Within faith communities harm can also be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can also include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries”*. The enquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié found that she had been severely traumatised by “deliverance prayer” at her church which led her to believe that she was possessed by demons and was evil and wicked. A child should never be told this or encouraged to believe it. Sensitivity and discretion is required in prayer for children and vulnerable adults.

27 Ministry of deliverance

27.1 Concerns may be expressed that a child, young person or adult is troubled by or possessed by evil spirits or demons and that this may account for behavioural issues in the individual or be considered to justify harsh treatment by the family, guardians, friends or carers. If a church officer, including a member of clergy, becomes aware of the above situation and/or a request is made for deliverance ministry, the parish must contact the DSA who will contact the appropriate person.

(HOB Parish Safeguarding Handbook - Promoting a Safer Church 2018-2019)

28 Sexual Exploitation

28.1 Recent court cases have highlighted the serious problem in some cities of vulnerable adolescents, particularly children in care, being targeted by criminal gangs for sexual exploitation. Guidelines and advice on recognising the plight of such children are on the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Website listed under Human Trafficking and Exploitation.

29 General information on some special topics

- 29.1 *Stranger abuse* - the majority of abuse is carried out by people known to the child, but abuse can also be carried out by strangers.
- 29.2 *Children affected by gang activity* – are at risk of violent crime and are therefore considered vulnerable. Risks include access to weapons (including firearms), retaliatory violence and territorial violence with other gangs. Other risks include increased likelihood of involvement in knife crime, dangerous dogs, sexual violence and substance abuse.
- 29.3 *Fabricated or induced illness* – in a child by parents or carers which lead to unnecessary investigations or treatment.
- 29.4 *Abuse of disabled children* – research indicates more likely to be subjected to abuse than able-bodied children. Disability covers not only physical disabilities of various kinds but also mental illness and learning difficulties.
- 29.5 *Deliberate self-harm* – overdoses, cutting, misuse of drugs or alcohol. It will always be appropriate to discuss such a case with the local authority children’s social care, following contact with the diocesan safeguarding children adviser.
- 29.6 *Parents who are themselves vulnerable adults* – not uncommon for parents of children who are abused to be themselves vulnerable adults. Particularly common are problems of mental health, domestic abuse and substance abuse (i.e. drugs or alcohol), often in combination. Where someone with such a difficulty is known to be a parent with a child living with them, a referral to the local authority children’s social care services may be required.
(Other matters where diocesan advice would be required include child trafficking, sexual exploitation and involvement in prostitution, forced marriage and honour based violence, female genital mutilation and complex (organized or multiple) abuse).

30 Signs and symptoms of abuse

- 30.1 The following behavioural signs may or may not be indications that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered:

Physical signs of abuse –

- Any injuries, including bruises, cuts, bites, fractures, 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.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.

- Bruises; burns; bites; fractures, etc. which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Female circumcision (illegal in the United Kingdom).

Emotional signs of abuse –

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, “frozen watchfulness”.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under achievement or extreme lack of concentration.
- Over-readiness to relate to strangers.
- Excessive attention seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Low self-esteem.
- Unduly aggressive behaviour.

Signs of possible sexual abuse –

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Sexualised play with other children.
- Recurrent urinary tract infections.
- Self-harm or mutilation.

(Source – Guidance from Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service and Safeguarding section of Diocesan Website)

31 Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse

- 31.1 When a child discloses or alleges abuse it is important to “actively and empathically listen” to what the child is saying but not to start asking questions since this might put ideas into the young person’s mind that were not there before and might prejudice a formal investigation should that be necessary. Never attempt to undertake an investigation yourself or speak directly to the person against whom allegations have been made. (See Do’s and Don’ts at 31.4.1 & 31.4.2 below).
- 31.2 It is important to tell the child that you will need to pass on the information to someone else. Never promise confidentiality. Let the child know what you are going

to do next, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and tell them they were not to blame for what happened and that what they are saying will be taken seriously.

31.3 It is critical to make a written note of the conversation including:

- What the child said, if possible including their exact words over critical points. Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or the statutory authorities.
- Record the date, time, place length of interview and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record the facts and observable things, i.e. the physical and emotional appearance of the child, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.
- Sign the note.

31.4 Diocesan Safeguarding advice confirms that when a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure or allegation of abuse to a person they trust within the church or elsewhere, it is important not to discourage them from doing so.

31.4.1 **Do:**

- Actively listen.
- Take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding.

- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your activity leader/PSO/DSA and statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- Check what the person hopes to happen as a result of the disclosure.
- Tell the child what you are going to do next.

2. Do not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information).
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Investigate.
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made
- Do a physical or medical examination.

31.5 Report:

- If you have information about a safeguarding situation where a child or adult is in immediate danger or requires immediate medical attention call the emergency services on 999. Do not delay. Report your actions to your activity leader/PSO/incumbent.
- Other non-emergency situations report to your activity leader/PSO/incumbent immediately.
- Within 24 hours the PSO/incumbent reports the concerns to the DSA.
- The DSA will advise regarding reporting to statutory agencies within 24 hours.
- If there is any doubt seek advice from Children's/Adult's Social Care or the police.

31.6 Non-recent abuse.

Safeguarding concerns or allegations may be about something that is going on now and/or something that may happen in the future (recent) or something that happened in the past (non-recent). Non-recent allegations of abuse must be treated as seriously as recent allegations. Research evidences that it may take up to 25 years or longer for an adult to disclose sexual behaviour that happened to him/her either as a child or younger adult. A victim/survivor needs to be aware that if a respondent is known to be currently working with children/vulnerable adults in either a paid or voluntary capacity a referral to the statutory services will be made. The DSA will make this referral.

32 What to do if you have concerns about a child or church officer

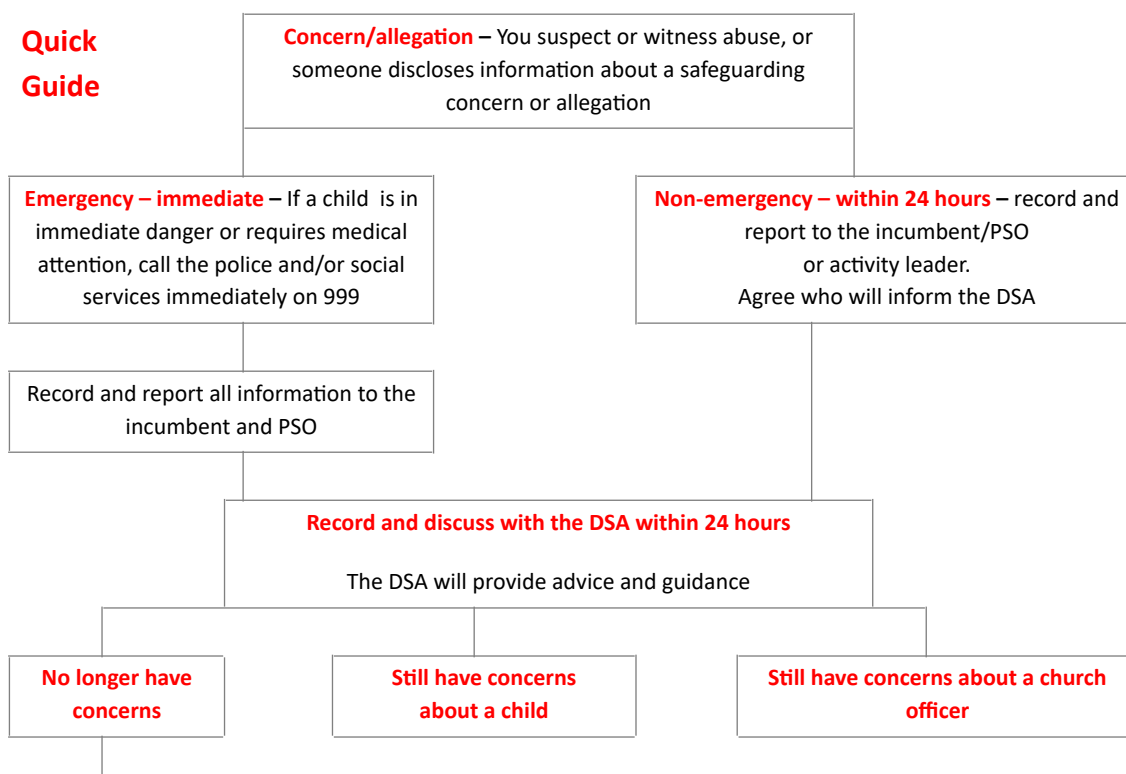
32.1 If you have a concern that a child is or may be being abused, or that a church officer (i.e. anyone appointed/elected by/on behalf of the Church to a post/role, whether ordained/lay, paid/unpaid, e.g. priest, churchwarden, bell-ringer, organist or youth activity leader) is or may be abusing a child through behaviour that is not in line with safer working practices, respond well to the victim/survivor, if it is a direct disclosure, to ensure they feel listened to and taken seriously. Explain what will happen next and check out support requirements. They should be informed that their identity and the identity of the person about whom a safeguarding concern/allegation has been made will be shared with key church officers (e.g. normally the PSO, incumbent, archdeacon and DSA. It may also be an activity leader if the concern arose within an activity) and may be shared with the statutory agencies. The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know.

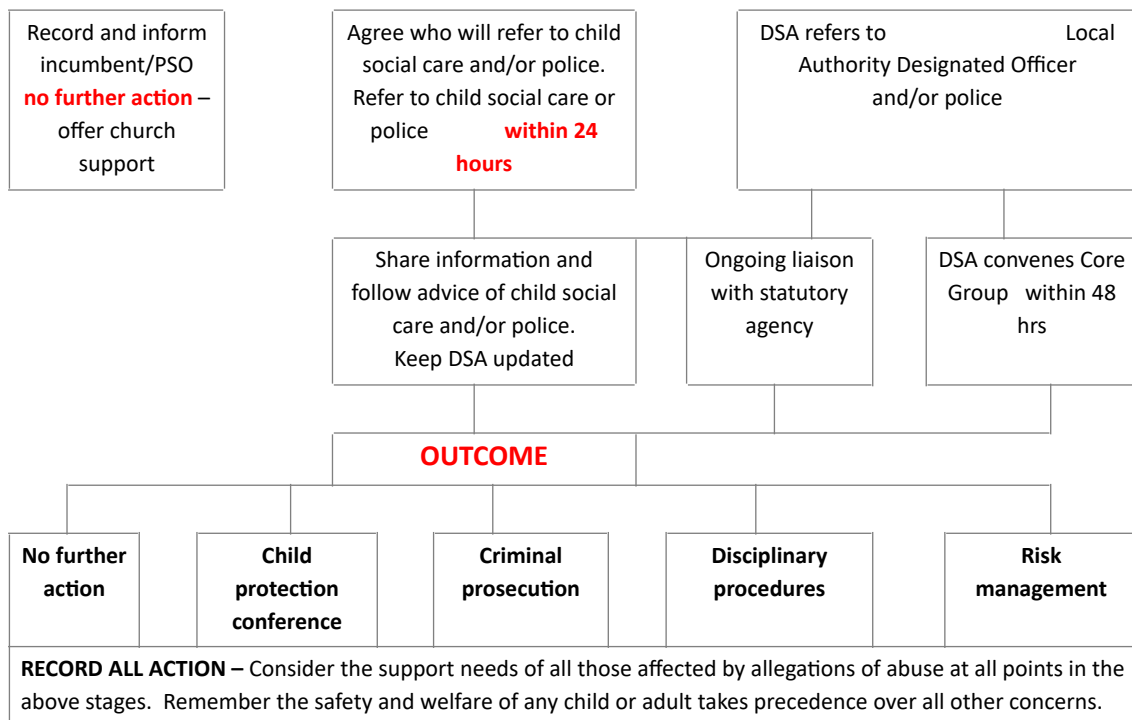
32.2 As detailed in the HOB *'Parish Safeguarding Handbook – Promoting a Safer Church'* 2018-2019, referral action to take should be as follows:

- If a child needs urgent medical attention the appropriate emergency services should be called (999) or the person taken to the nearest Accident and Emergency department. The hospital staff should be told of any suspicions and the parish priest and/or Parish Safeguarding Officer informed. They **must** then inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- If the child is not in immediate danger then contact the PSO or incumbent, in the first instance. They **must** then contact the DSA. If neither are available, contact the DSA directly (if outside normal office hours via diocesan out-of-hours service). If the concern arises in an activity, discuss with the group/activity leader, who will contact the PSO or incumbent. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSA **within 24 hours**. If the PSO/incumbent or the DSA are not available within 24 hours, contact appropriate Children's Social Care and/or the police directly, if the concern is that a child is being abused. Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer and/or police if the concern is that a church officer may be abusing a child. Advise the PSO or incumbent as soon as possible that you have made a referral; they will advise the DSA. **If in doubt don't delay – seek advice from the statutory agencies.**
- Do not contact the person about whom a safeguarding concern or allegation has been made or anyone who may be implicated in the allegation or disclosure, even if they would normally be contacted as part of the procedure, until advice has been sought from the DSA or statutory agencies.
- Record the details of the concern or allegation. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time (usually it will not be), make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the concern or allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter, etc. The record should include details of information provided to that person as well as the information received. Always sign and date the record. Keep it factual. Pass on a copy to the DSA (and/or the PSO/incumbent). The records should be kept secure and confidential.

- **If the concern is about a child** the DSA will act in line with the HOBs' guidance. They will offer advice, support and guidance and help to make the required referrals. If there is a risk of harm, the concerns must be reported to the statutory agencies within 24 hours of the DSA receiving the concerns. There should be close communication between the DSA and PSO/incumbent until the situation is resolved. The archdeacon should also be informed.
- **If the concern also involves a church officer** the DSA will act in line with the HOBs' guidance. They will offer advice, support and guidance and refer the concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer and/or police within 24 hours. The DSA will now take over the management of the safeguarding concern in conjunction with the core group (which will be convened within 48 hours) and statutory agencies. There may be a requirement for parish representatives to attend a subsequent core group/s. If there are doubts about whether or not to make a referral and under what route, the DSA will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer.
- The procedure is the same for abuse disclosed by an adult which happened to them in the past, either as a child or as a younger adult; and abuse disclosed by a child which happened to them in the past as a younger child. Great sensitivity is required in dealing with this as it is likely to have been a major step for the individual to trust someone enough to tell them and the advice of the DSA should be sought.
- It can be problematic when someone in the congregation is under investigation for a sexual offence but not convicted. A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and adults, and respecting the rights of the person against whom an allegation is made. In such circumstances the welfare of the child, young person or adult must come first. The rights of the person against whom the allegation is made are important and must be given due weight, once the immediate safety and protection of the child, young person or vulnerable adult have been assured.

33 Responding Promptly to Every Safeguarding Concern or Allegation





34 Confidentiality

34.1 The HOB Safeguarding Children Policy states:

“Where a child or an adult is judged to be at risk of significant harm and in need of protection, it will normally be necessary to share all relevant information with the statutory agencies.”

34.2 As far as children are concerned, both law and sound morals impose a general duty not to pass on information that has been received in the clear expectation that it will be treated in confidence. That duty is not absolute, however, and the courts will not intervene to restrain disclosure where (a) the information relates to a crime or other serious misconduct and (b) disclosure is in the public interest. Thus where a child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, it will be legally possible, appropriate and highly desirable to disclose relevant information to the public authorities for the sake of protecting children.

34.3 The key factor in deciding whether or not to disclose confidential information is proportionality: is the proposed disclosure a proportionate response to the need to protect the welfare of the child? The amount of confidential information disclosed, and the number of people to whom it is disclosed, should be no more than is strictly necessary to meet the public interest in protecting the health and wellbeing of a child. The more sensitive the information is, the greater the child focussed need must be to justify disclosure and the greater the need to ensure that only those professionals who have to be informed receive the material. This test applies equally to vulnerable adults.

- 34.4 It is important to discuss with children and young people and their families the issue of confidentiality and with whom information will be shared. If in any doubt consult the DSA (see also 'sharing without consent' at paragraph 15.4 above).

35 Whistle blowing

- 35.1 The diocese is available for advice and support on whistleblowing. This is when a paid church officer decides to pass on information concerning a wrong doing, that they consider is in the public interest. This means it must affect others, e.g. the general public. This includes failure to adhere to health and safety requirements that place others in danger, a 'cover up' by someone and/or a criminal offence. It does not cover personal grievance or complaints. For further information see the safeguarding section on the diocesan website.

36 Best practice guidelines specific to Bearsted Parish Children and Youth Work

36.1 *Registration/data storing –*

- At the end of each year registers will be forwarded to the Vicar's secretary for secure storage, except where required to be retained on school premises.

36.2 *Structured group work –*

- Appropriate risk assessment procedures should be carried out in the facilities used for these groups. Premises used regularly should be checked at least annually in the autumn term by the Parish Health and Safety Co-ordinator. Premises used occasionally or for one occasion should be checked before the start of the activity. Risk management is also achieved through the safer recruitment process as described in the Parish policy.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that children and young people remain for the duration of the activity. However, should an individual decide to leave an activity early it is the Youth Worker's responsibility to contact and advise the appropriate parent/guardian.
- For all sponsored trips, residentials, sleep-overs and outings approval should be gained from the PCC at least three months in advance for insurance purposes.

36.3 *Policy of Insurance cover for youth work activities –*

- The PCC will ensure insurance cover endorsements for:
 - Regular on-going activities;
 - Trips and frequent activities
 - Impromptu activities will need specific approval and authorisation on behalf of the PCC, by the incumbent, churchwardens or the activity leader.
- The Youth Worker and team will present a list of proposed activities on a term basis, for approval by the PCC. This will usually be at the end of the term preceding that where the insurance cover is required.

36.4 *Work in School –*

- When carrying out youth work in a school setting all paid workers, student workers and volunteers will be subject to the school safeguarding children policy.
- The school signing in and out procedure must be followed.
- It is important to keep good channels of communication with the school. When participating in or running more formal structured groups in the school make sure relevant staff members are aware of the times and places of the meeting. It is also imperative that parental/guardian permission procedures have been followed.
- If a worker suspects child abuse or if the child or young person discloses abuse, the worker must report this to the member of school staff responsible for child safety or to the member of staff who is the main contact in the school for the relevant activity.

- During lunchtime relational work, all workers should maintain high levels of visibility to both pupils and staff and stay in areas where there are other people.
- Ideally “one to one” work should be carried out by a worker of the same gender as the child or young person. Special care needs should be taken when this is not possible, e.g. workers should use rooms where people are likely to pass by and can see in – lots of windows and doors. Workers should avoid a situation where they are alone in a closed room with a child or young person, particularly if that individual is of the opposite gender.

36.5 *Work carried out at home*

- This relates to work carried out in the worker’s home, including structured events as well as informal invitations for friendship groups or individuals for a meal, discussion, etc.
- Where possible there should be two workers or volunteers present, one of each gender. If this is not possible, detailed information regarding date, time, and location of event, along with names and emergency contact details for each young person should be left with an appropriate person in the Parish Management or Youth Leadership team.

36.6 *Work carried out elsewhere -*

- This refers to all outings, trips, residentials and informal meetings with young people outside of the normal work areas or structured trips.
- Where possible there should be two or more workers, ideally incorporating a gender balance, depending in the number of young people. If this is not possible detailed information, as shown in paragraph 32.5 above will be provided.
- Ideally staff ratios will be 1 adult for the first 10 young people and then 1 adult for every extra 10 young people.
- “One to one” work should be carried out in a public place and where possible with the same gender.
- Where possible, appropriate parental/guardian permission should be gained. One of the exceptions to this, because of the nature of the meeting, may be coffee with young people. These are often spontaneous meetings when a young person needs to talk about something. They are an integral part of Youth Work. In these instances the meeting should be held in a public coffee shop.

36.7 *Transport –*

- In compliance with the requirements of paragraph 7.11 of the Parish Policy, safety checks should be carried out on all vehicles before travel.
- Seatbelts must be worn.
- If a private car is used the worker, student worker or volunteer should make sure they have appropriate insurance cover for transporting young people in their car.
- If a mini bus is used, it must have the correct insurance cover.
- On long journeys, there should be an extra driver and all drivers take regular breaks – every two hours is recommended.
- Ideally when giving young people lifts to and from home and the group activity, workers should avoid carrying one young person alone in their vehicle. If this is not possible it is advisable that other workers are made aware. (See also section 14 above).

36.8 *Communication between appointed workers and children or young people -*

- This may be by electronic technology, text or facebook (internet). This is probably the most used way of communication with young people and needs to be monitored (see section 20 above).
- EVOLVE MINISTRIES WEBSITE is maintained by the Youth Worker for use by young people. The Vicar will appoint at least one person to have full administrative access to this site in order to supervise and ensure appropriate use.

36.9 *Child Protection roles –*

- The Parish Children’s Advocates and Parish Safeguarding Officer (being persons not immediately involved in children and youth work within the Parish) are appointed by the incumbent and PCC and may be consulted, in confidence, by anyone with regard to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, or about staff members and volunteers working with the youth groups.
- The Diocese has also appointed Safeguarding Advisers to provide expert advice on matters to do with child safety and wellbeing.
- The Parish Disclosure Officer is responsible for the administration of DBS applications, where appropriate, in respect of safeguarding children and protecting vulnerable adults.

37 Useful telephone numbers

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

Fiona Coombs mob: 07548 232395
(lead for Ashford Archdeaconry; Thanet
Deanery; East and West Bridge Deanerys)

fcoombs@diocant.org

Paul Brightwell mob: 07398 009951
(lead for Maidstone Archdeaconry; Canterbury
Deanery; Reculver Deanery)

pbrightwell@diocant.org

Katy Harper (Trainer)
07732681789

kharp@diocant.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Website

www.canterburydiocese.org/safeguarding

Diocesan House Safeguarding Office/DBS Helpdesk

Karen Carolan-Evans

01227

459401

Diocesan House
Lady Wootton's Green, Canterbury,
Kent, CT1 1NQ

safeguarding@diocant.org

Childline Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Family Lives

0808 800 2222

www.familylives.org.uk

e-mail:

parentssupport@familylives.org.uk

KCC Social Services Main Contact

03000 41 41 41

KCC Adult Social Services

03000 41 61 61

KCC Children Social Services

03000 41 11 11

KCC Child & Families Information Services

03000 41 23 23

KCC Social Services Out of Hours

03000 41 91 91

Holy Cross Children's Advocate Beth Lloyd

01622 737902

Holy Cross PSO Malcolm Underdown

01622

739365

Holy Cross PDO Christine Underdown

01622

739365

Emergency Services

999

<i>Police non-emergency</i>		101 (24 hrs)
<i>NSPCC (for adults concerned about a child)</i>	0808 800 5000	
<i>Action on Elder Abuse helpline</i>	www.nspcc.org.uk	
<i>24-hour National Domestic Violence helpline</i>	0808 808 8141	
<i>NAPAC (for survivors of childhood abuse)</i>	www.elderabuse.org.uk	
<i>Stop It Now (to prevent child sexual abuse)</i>	0808 2000 247	
<i>Cruse bereavement helpline</i>	0808 801 0331	
<i>MACSAS (for people abused by church officers)</i>	0808 1000 900	
<i>Samaritans (for people struggling to cope)</i>	www.stopitnow.org.uk	
	0808 808 1677	
<i>Sources of support for victims/families of abuse:</i>	0808 801 0340	
	116 123	
<i>The Survivors Trust</i>		
<i>Safeline</i>		http://thesurvivorstrust.org
<i>SupportLine</i>		www.safeline.org.uk/what-can-friends-and-family-members-do-to-support-survivors-of-sexual-abuse
<i>Victim Support</i>		www.supportline.org.uk/problems/rape_sexual-assault.php
<i>Other Websites:</i>		www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/childhood-abuse
	www.womensaid.org.uk	
	www.restoredrelationships.org	
	www.scie.org.uk	
	www.ceop.police.uk	
	www.modernslavery.co.uk	
		www.ageuk.org.uk
		www.barnardos.org.uk
		www.spiritualabuse.com
		https://carers.org

38 Children and youth sponsored activities within Holy Cross Parish

(subject to ongoing review and adjustment)

	Activity	Comment
I)	Children and Youth Committee	Appointed members
II)	Lighthouse Club (Thurnham)	Appointed leader and Curate

III)	Seekers	Appointed leaders
IV)	Toddlers - Tuesday	Appointed leaders and parents
V)	Toddlers - Thursday	Appointed leaders and parents
VI)	Messy Church	Curate and appointed helpers
VII)	Puppet Group	Appointed leaders
VIII)	Holy Cross Choir (mixed age activity)	Appointed leader and named individuals
IX)	Holy Cross Bellringers (mixed age activity)	Appointed leader and named individuals