

***St Andrews
and
All Saints***

Parochial Church Council

**Child Protection Policy and
Procedural Guidance**

***For those working with
children and young people***

Preface

This document has been prepared by a number of professionals within St Andrew's and All Saints in consultation with parents and Youth Leaders and has the approval of the PCC.

All Youth and Children's Leaders and Cell Leaders will have a copy of this document and will work within its guidelines. Parents of children in all groups will be made aware of it and can request a copy.

Interpretation

Throughout this document any reference to children is consistent with current legislation, and means any child under 18 years old who is not married.

References to 'Co-ordinator' means the Youth and Children's Co-ordinator, and the word 'Leader' refers to those appointed to work with any age group of children or young people. The Youth and Children's Co-ordinator is James Simister. The Child Protection Officer is Derrick Atlay and Deputy Child Protection Officer, Ian Richardson.

'Nominated Clergy' refers to the clerical staff member who has responsibility for pastoral matters in relation to abuse, and other concerns affecting children and young people. The Nominated Clergy is Ian Birkinshaw.

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Emergency Duty Team	01904 762314
Child Protection Team	01904 613161 ext 5618
Police	0845 6060247
CCPAS Helpline	0845 120 45 51
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Part 1 Child Protection Policy and Principles

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy document sets out the commitment of the whole church to the care and protection of children and young people involved in St Andrews' and All Saint's Youth and Children's activities. In addition to children of church families this includes those who attend casually or as visitors, as well as regular attenders at youth and children's activities. The policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the PCC.

1.2 The document has two parts. Following this introduction, Part 2 sets out how allegations of abuse are to be handled. But we begin by stating our key principles in working with children and young people in the church.

2. Statement of Principles

*** Principle 1 - Parental Responsibility**

All parents have responsibility for the welfare of their children, including spiritual and pastoral care. A Youth and Children's Co-ordinator is appointed by the PCC to assist in this task. The Co-ordinator, together with any appointed leaders plays an important part alongside parents.

*** Principle 2 - Minimal Risk**

No child should be placed at risk through involvement in any activities organised by St Andrews' and All Saints'.

*** Principle 3 - The Child's Best Interests**

The best interests of the children will especially predominate in situations where there are allegations of abuse.

*** Principle 4 - Listening and Relating to Children**

As a mark of the value placed on children, every effort will be made to listen carefully to their concerns and to act appropriately.

*** Principle 5 - Selection, Training, Support and Review of Youth and Children's Leaders**

Staff and leaders who work with children and young people will be subject to a careful selection process to ensure their suitability including a Criminal Records check from the CRB. They will be given training, including Child Protection, and will be supervised and reviewed on a regular basis. Other associated national organisational groups, such as Guides, Scouts, Brownies, Cubs, Rainbows and Church Lads and Church Girls Brigade, who work under their own policy guidelines should be aware of the parish policy and comply wherever necessary and should have valid CRBs for all their leaders.

3. Preventing Abuse - A Whole Church Strategy

3.1 Prevention is certainly better than cure in the matter of child abuse. The PCC urges every member of St Andrew's and All Saints' to take seriously their responsibility in this matter. This means that the protection of children and young people should constantly be a matter for both vigilance and prayer. The Co-ordinator, and leaders commissioned to work amongst children, need and deserve our support.

3.2 We ask every church member to ensure that concerns about individual children, or leaders, are taken to the Co-ordinator. Anyone observing questionable behaviour towards children should raise their concern with the Co-ordinator or the nominated Clergy. These will be treated confidentially, and carefully considered within these guidelines to decide what action is needed.

3.3 We ask parents to help children to develop common sense rules about personal safety; encourage them to talk about situations where they feel uncomfortable; help them understand about physical contact which is good, and any which is unwelcome or wrong.

3.4 For those commissioned as leaders we urge the utmost care to ensure protection of children, and the safeguarding of themselves from any misunderstanding. We commend to all the leaders the guidelines set out by the CCPAS concerning arrangements for supervising groups of children; the boundaries relating to contact with individual children; the caution necessary when talking with a child or young person alone.

3.5 The PCC support the Co-ordinator's intentions of having two leaders with a group of children. In exceptional circumstances when this cannot be achieved, it is especially important for the lone leader to follow advice given by the Co-ordinator, and set out by the PCC.

3.6 In addition to remaining alert, and taking note of these guidelines, we also invite members to make suggestions of ways in which it may be possible to further safeguard the welfare of children. The Co-ordinator initiates risk assessments in relation to new circumstances or those causing concern.

Part 2 Child Protection Procedures

1. Responding to Abuse

1.1 Any form of abuse is serious and should be treated as that by adults to whom it is disclosed. Child abuse may be neglect, physical, sexual or emotional. Current definitions of these categories are:

Neglect: The persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Injury: Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Sexual Abuse: Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally delayed.

Emotional Abuse: Actual or likely severe or adverse effect of the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

1.2 What to do if you suspect abuse.

1.2.1 In any situation where abuse is suspected concerning a child or young person involved in St Andrew's and All Saints' youth or children's activities, it must be reported to the Youth & Children's Co-ordinator who is the PCC's nominated person to act in referring any allegation, or suspicion of neglect or abuse, to the statutory authorities. Such action is required whether the child is a member of a church family, or simply a casual visitor or contact. In the absence of the Co-ordinator referrals should be made to the Nominated Clergy. The phone number of the Youth and Children's Co-ordinator is available from the church office.

1.2.2 If the suspicions involve the Youth and Children's Coordinator in any way, referral should be to the Nominated Clergy. While allegations are being investigated it is important that arrangements are made by the Rector to ensure the Coordinator has appropriate personal support.

1.2.3 If both the Coordinator and the Nominated Clergy are involved, contact Venerable Paul Feguson, The Archbishop's Appointed Representative.

1.2.4 It is, of course, the right of any individual to make direct referrals to child protection agencies. However, we hope all church members will use these PCC guidelines. If, however, it is felt that a proper response has not been made to anyone's concerns, then it is open to them to contact Social Services.

2. Allegations of Sexual, Physical or Emotional Abuse, or Neglect

2.1 On receiving allegations of abuse the Co-ordinator will contact the Rector initially. Record the facts as they are known. The Co-ordinator will not speak to the parent. A line of action should be agreed in consultation with Archbishop's Appointed Representative.

2.2 If for any reason the Co-ordinator is unsure whether or not to follow the above procedure, advice should be sought from the Nominated Clergy, or if unavailable, the CCPAS helpline or another professionally regarded organisation.

2.3 Under no circumstances will the Co-ordinator attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. S/he will collect the precise details of the allegation or suspicions and provide this information to the Social Services who have responsibility to investigate under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

2.4 The absence of either the Co-ordinator or Nominated Clergy should not delay referral to the Social Services Department. As with situations where an individual is not satisfied, or disagrees with the action taken by the Co-ordinator, that person retains the responsibility to report serious matters to the Social Services Department.

2.5 In situations where allegations or suspicions involve Clergy, or other Church Leaders, the same procedures will be followed.

2.6 The PCC will support the Co-ordinator or Nominated Clergy in the roles set out in this document. It is important that information held by either must be treated confidentially and shared in a strictly limited way, on a need to know basis, so as to protect other church children and/or family members.

3. Responding to a Child at Disclosure

3.1 All youth and children's workers are given written guidelines on 'Helpful things to say when a child discloses'. The procedure is to follow the guidelines in this document of making notes immediately and informing the Co-ordinator. If the Co-ordinator is unavailable workers should contact the Nominated Clergy or Social Services directly.

3.2 When immediate action is needed Social Services or the police will be contacted to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the children so that they do not return home. When a child discloses abuse, professionals involved will consider whether or not it is safe for the child to return home to a potentially abusive situation.

4. Allegations of Abuse on Adults.

4.1 If an adult discloses abuse and there are under 18s, who may be at risk from the abuser, living in the family home, the actions set out above should be implemented so as to safeguard those who may be at risk. The adult should be encouraged to participate in making the referral to the statutory agencies.

5. Protecting Children from known Abusers in the Church

5.1 The PCC recognises that churches are likely to contain persons convicted of abusive offences against children. In accepting that these people have spiritual needs to which we should minister, we must also accept a prime responsibility to protect children from harm. We also need to recognise that research has shown child sex offenders have major problems in breaking their patterns of sexual behaviour.

5.2 We also note the research which shows that people who sexually abuse children go to great length to get themselves into positions of trust where they can have easy access to children. Regrettably, churches have a sad history of involvement in child abuse and we must be diligent in resisting such assaults. While our diligence must include prayer and spiritual warfare, it is irresponsible if we do not act to minimise risk to children and young people.

5.3 There are two areas in which we see ourselves as combating assaults on our children. One is the pastoral oversight of any known abusers; the second is by the careful selection, supervision, training and review of those commissioned to serve and minister to children and young people.

6. The Pastoral Oversight of Abusers

6.1 If there are allegations against a church member, or they have convictions for offences against children, it is important for the person, and his/her family, that the minimum number of people are aware of such a record. However, such confidentiality must be consistent with ensuring children are protected. To this end it seems necessary that the following are included within the confidential briefing and anyone else who the PCC deems to be at risk:

The Clergy
Church Wardens
Youth and Children's Co-ordinator
Relevant team leaders
Where abusers are placed within cells:
Cell Group Leader
Members of cell groups who have children

6.2 It is important that Clergy take the primary role in informing the above, in the most sensitive and caring way, to ensure the person is able to maintain a place within the fellowship and be supported in full knowledge of past failures. It seems proper for the person to be fully aware of the actions being taken and the reasons for them. We recognise the power of the Holy Spirit to renew and change lives and thus emphasise the church's desire to help him/her avoid future failures of this nature, while protecting children with whom contact may be made. It is also necessary to make clear that whatever declaration of remorse or repentance may be forthcoming, the former offender cannot be considered as a Youth Leader or have any contact with children, e.g. they should decline offers of hospitality where children are in the house, not go into areas where children are in the church, to sit where directed etc. although other tasks will be found within the fellowship.

6.3 Where someone attending church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the PCC in its commitment to the protection of all children will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person may be expected to keep.

7. Selection, Supervision, Training and Review of Youth and Children's Leaders

7.1 The PCC confirms current selection practice should continue. This requires all those interested in working with children to complete application forms, providing proof of identity and two referees with a detailed knowledge of their suitability. Enhanced Disclosure checks from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) will also be carried out as part of the recruitment process. *(Irrelevant offences will be ignored.)*

7.2 Training is to be carried out by James Simister as the Youth and childrens leader. Training should include a full introduction to the policies set out in this document, as part of the initial induction training programme. Failure to complete this training satisfactorily should be sufficient reason to ask people to withdraw from work with children and young people. All groups have a register which records both the names of children and leaders who were present at any given meeting. This ensures protection and safeguards from false allegations. In the back of the register is an incident book where any significant events are recorded and which is signed by all workers who witnessed the incident.

7.3 Within the process of normal group activities each leader should expect to be observed and be subject to questions and advice from an appointed group leader who will act as mentor.

7.4 Each leader should undertake a review of their role on an annual basis, with the opportunity to talk through issues arising with the Co-ordinator and to discuss training opportunities or other factors affecting their performance. Leaders will also be given an opportunity to confirm the continuing calling by God and the church to work in the field of children and youth and include a consideration of how they have dealt with any matters of Child Protection, and how effectively they care to safeguard themselves and children from harm or allegations.

8. Helping victims of abuse

8.1 As a church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse and encouraging them in their faith through pastoral care and ministry.

9. Conclusion

9.1 The PCC takes seriously the issues raised in each part of this paper and asks all members to accept their part in ensuring no harm comes to the children and young people who are a part of the life of St Andrews' and All Saints'.

In compiling this document note has been taken of current best practice, and the following sources have assisted our thinking. 'Working Together Under The Children Act 1989', HMSO; 'Taking Care: A Church Response to Children, Adults and Abuse', National Children's Bureau; 'Allegations of Abuse: The Church's Responsibilities', Evangelical Alliance; 'Diocese of York Parish Child Protection Policy 2003'.