



## BENEFICE OF HOLY CROSS SARRATT AND ST PAUL'S CHIPPERFIELD

### SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

#### INTRODUCTION

These safeguarding procedures set out how the benefice of Sarratt and Chipperfield's safeguarding policy is implemented in all the activities connected to both churches within the benefice; namely, Holy Cross in Sarratt and St Paul's in Chipperfield.

Each member of the PCC, clergy, lay ministers and volunteers need to be familiar with these procedures.

All those associated with the leadership of said churches within the benefice need to attend appropriate training to ensure that they have the knowledge and confidence needed to deal with safeguarding issues as they arise.

The benefice administrator and the designated safeguarding officer will hold records of the training undertaken by those connected with the work of our churches, and direct them to appropriate training, which will typically be, that which is offered by the diocese of St Albans.

Over the following pages you will find clear, specific information on how to recognise and report abuse and how to respond to concerns raised. It is vitally important that these procedures are well known and that all those working with children and/or adults either in representation of Holy Cross (Sarratt) or St Paul's (Chipperfield) have the information and training needed to work with these procedures.

#### 1. DEFINITIONS

**In all Safeguarding work connected to the benefice of Sarratt and Chipperfield we use the following definitions:**

The term 'adult' means 'Any person aged 18 or over'.

The term 'child' refers to 'Anyone under the age of 18 years'.

The benefice is committed to a Safeguarding environment designed to protect and support adults and children and we seek to ensure that all those connected with leadership in any form, and any of its activities, are safeguarded.

Version 1. Adopted .....

Reviewed.....

REVD SARAH COLLINS

23 JANUARY 2024

HOLY CROSS

## 2.1 PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING ABUSE

### 2.1.1 What to do if Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of an adult or child. Somebody may abuse or neglect an adult or child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Adults and children may be abused in a range of settings, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. There are many ways in which people suffer abuse.

Everyone has his or her part to play in helping to safeguard adults and children within the work of the church:

- If the behaviour of an adult or child gives any cause for concern
- If an allegation is made in any context about an adult at risk or child being harmed
- If the behaviour of any individual towards adults or children causes concern

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to and acknowledge what is being said.</li> <li>• Try to be reassuring &amp; remain calm.</li> <li>• Explain clearly what you will do and what will happen next.</li> <li>• Try to give them a timescale for when and how you / the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) will contact them again.</li> <li>• Take action – don't ignore the situation.</li> <li>• Be supportive.</li> <li>• Tell them that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ They were right to tell you;</li> <li>○ You are taking what they have said seriously;</li> <li>○ It was not their fault;</li> <li>○ That you would like to pass this information on to the appropriate people, with their permission;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Be open and honest.</li> <li>• Give contact details for them to report any further details or ask any questions that may arise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not promise confidentiality.</li> <li>• Do not show shock, alarm, disbelief or disapproval.</li> <li>• Do not minimise what is being said.</li> <li>• Do not ask probing or leading questions or push for more information.</li> <li>• Do not offer false reassurance.</li> <li>• Do not delay in contacting the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS).</li> <li>• Do not contact the alleged abuser.</li> <li>• Do not investigate the incident any further.</li> <li>• Never leave an adult at risk or child waiting to hear from someone without any idea of when or where that may be.</li> <li>• Do not pass on information to those who don't need to know; not even for prayer ministry.</li> </ul>

Version 1. Adopted .....

Reviewed.....

### 2.1.2 Responding to Concerns

When there are concerns that a child, young person or adult is being abused, the following process must be followed.

#### STAGE 1 – The Worker

*A worker has a concern about the welfare of a child, an adult at risk, or the behaviour of an individual.*

*The person who has the concern has a duty to:*

**RECOGNISE, RESPOND AND RECORD**

A record must be made of the concern using a standard incident report form and the concern must be passed on to the benefice safeguarding officer within 24 hours. The written record should: be made as soon as possible after the event; be legible; where possible include the name, date of birth and address of the child or the adult at risk; include the nature of any concerns and description of any bruising or injuries that have been noticed; include an exact record of what the adult at risk or child has said, using their own words where possible; include any action taken; be signed and dated; be kept secure and confidential (available only to the PSO and others responsible for safeguarding).

#### STAGE 2 – The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

*The PSO receives the report of concern and then has a duty to:*

**REVIEW AND REPORT**

The report will be reviewed by the PSO with any other relevant information and a decision will be taken (often in liaison with others) as to what action should follow. Any formal referral to the police or Social Services should normally be made within 24 hours of receiving the report. The diocesan Safeguarding Contact should be made aware of any referrals to the statutory authorities.

#### STAGE 3 – The Next Steps

*After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken, the PSO, and Incumbent may have a duty to:*

**SUPPORT AND REPORT**

Support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns (this could be any member of the congregation as a whole, but more specifically victims; alleged perpetrators; adults at risk; children; other family members; volunteers; the PSO; Incumbent and other members of the leadership team.

Where formal referrals are made, reports may need to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Charity Commission.

If the DSO is not available, or is implicated in the situation, any reports or concerns should be passed to the Incumbent, or failing that the diocesan Safeguarding Team.

**If you think that anyone is in imminent danger of harm, a report should be made immediately to the police by calling 999.**

### 2.1.3 Responding to Concerns Raised about Adults

When a concern is raised about an adult, it should be treated in the same way as a concern about a child i.e. the paid or voluntary worker for either church in the benefice should:

- 1) **Recognise** that abuse may be taking place
- 2) **Respond** to the concern
- 3) **Record** all the information they have received
- 4) **Report** the concern to the PSO who may, in turn, report it to the statutory authorities

It is not your role to decide whether someone has mental capacity and is therefore able to make decisions that impact on their safety and well-being. Decisions on mental capacity are best made by professionals with the relevant background information to hand. Always share your concerns with the PSO even if you do not have the consent of the adult to do so – in this instance, make sure the PSO knows that the person concerned has not given consent for the information to be passed on.

The Care Act 2014 provides helpful guidance on these situations:

*“If the adult has the mental capacity to make informed decisions about their safety and they do not want any action to be taken, this does not preclude the sharing of information with relevant professional colleagues. This is to enable professionals to assess the risk of harm and to be confident that the adult is not being unduly influenced, coerced or intimidated and is aware of all the options. This will also enable professionals to check the safety and validity of decisions made. It is good practice to inform the adult that this action is being taken unless doing so would increase the risk of harm”.*

The PSO will consider all the information to hand and decide whether it is appropriate for the information to be reported to the statutory authorities. If there are any concerns about an adult's mental capacity, the PSO will contact the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Team for advice.

### 2.1.4 Allegations Against Workers

If you see another worker acting in ways which concern you or might be misconstrued, speak to the PSO about your concerns as soon as you can. This includes the actions or behaviours of those in leadership positions.

Clergy, licensed lay workers, PCC members and all volunteers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual accountability, holding each other to the highest standards of safeguarding practice. The following procedure should be followed:

- 1) When an allegation of abuse has been made do not approach the alleged perpetrator

Version 1. Adopted .....

Reviewed.....



- 2) Follow the usual safeguarding procedure: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report**
- 3) Once the allegation has been reported to the PSO they can liaise with the relevant statutory authority
- 4) Whilst waiting for an outcome from the statutory authorities, the worker about whom concerns have been raised will be supervised as closely as possible, without raising suspicion
- 5) Once the statutory authorities are involved, the PSO & PCC will follow their advice regarding the next steps to take (for example, suspension of worker, putting a contract in place)
- 6) A written record of all discussions with statutory authorities or other parties should be maintained by the PSO and stored securely and confidentially, where only those directly involved in safeguarding (PSO, Incumbent) can access them.
- 7) No information about the allegation will be shared with people in the church other than those directly involved in safeguarding; not even for prayer purposes.

The suspension of a worker following an allegation is, by definition, a neutral act. Our priority as an organisation is to protect adults and children from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.

### **When concerns are expressed about the PSO / Incumbent**

Any safeguarding concerns involving the PSO or Incumbent should be raised with the diocesan Safeguarding Team. Do not tell the PSO / Incumbent that a concern has been raised about them.

#### **2.1.5 Abuse of Trust**

Relationships between adults/children and their church leaders/workers can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The worker is someone in whom the child or adult at risk has placed a degree of trust. This may be because the worker is in a position of leadership, is a provider of activities, or is even a significant adult friend. It is not acceptable for any church worker to form a romantic relationship with an adult at risk or child with whom they have a relationship of trust.

While by no means restricted to young leaders, those who are in their early adult years will need to be particularly aware of the need not to abuse their position of trust in their relationships with other young people who are not much younger than themselves.

#### **2.1.6 Allegations Made Against Visiting Adults**

Allegations against adults will be investigated by the statutory authorities. If the alleged perpetrator is unable to understand the significance of questions put to them or their replies, they can access support from an 'appropriate' adult whilst they are being questioned. This role can be filled by a range of people, such as a family member, carer, social worker, etc. In court, adults at risk may be allowed to be assisted by an intermediary or give evidence through a live link.

When an allegation is made against an adult at risk the following procedure should be followed:

- 1) Do not approach the person about whom the allegation has been made
- 2) Follow the PCC's safeguarding procedure: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report**

Version 1. Adopted .....

Reviewed.....

- 3) Seek advice from the PSO, who will speak to the police or social services. The PSO will also seek advice about what steps need to be taken to ensure the needs of both the victim and alleged perpetrator are met; this may include placing the adult at risk on a Safeguarding Contract or equivalent
- 4) Make sure there is pastoral support in place for the adult at risk throughout the process involved.

### **2.1.7 Pastoral Care**

#### **Following an allegation / suspicion**

When an allegation/suspicion arises in either church within the benefice, a period of investigation will follow, which will be stressful for all involved. The PCCs will ensure that one person is responsible for dealing with the authorities, another offers support to the victim/s and their family, and another gives pastoral care to the alleged perpetrator without compromising the alleged victims or their families. It may be necessary to appoint other people to support the families involved.

Where a statutory investigation is under way, this support will be provided with the knowledge of the statutory authority involved.

Where the perpetrator accepts some responsibility, they will be encouraged to seek specialised interventions/treatment to reduce the risk of re-offending. This may only be appropriate once the investigation and legal processes have been completed.

#### **Supporting those who have experienced abuse**

As a benefice, we are committed to caring for those who have experienced abuse and will adhere to a model of best practice.

We recognise it is important that those who have experienced abuse:

- Are accepted for who they are, without being made to forgive or being put into a position of feeling guilty and responsible for what happened to them.
- Know that God loves them unconditionally, and that nothing can or will change this truth.
- Can be confident that those in the Christian community who know about the abuse are with them on their journey – no matter how long or difficult that journey may be.

It may be necessary to signpost individuals to specialist support.