



The Parish of St Mary's Church of England, Watford SAFEGUARDING POLICY PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held **21st November 2022**.

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.



- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

This policy will be followed supported by the Safeguarding Practices document (see Annex A).

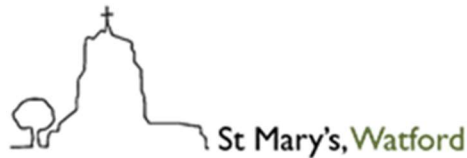
Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints **Mrs Lesley Gray** as the Parish Safeguarding Officer

Incumbent **The Revd Tony Rindl**

Churchwardens **Mr Peter Dean**

Date: **21/11/2022**



Annex A St Mary's Church Watford Safeguarding Practices

1. Aim of Practices

1.1 The aim of St. Mary's Parochial Church Council is to promote a safe, caring and welcoming environment and culture that is free from physical, mental, sexual and emotional harm for all children up to the age of 18, young adults to the age of 25 in the case of special educational needs and disability, and vulnerable adults who take part in activities at St. Mary's. This is the responsibility of the whole congregation etc.

1.2 The practices set out in this Annex form part of the Safeguarding Policy of St Mary's PCC.

1.3 This Practice has been prepared with reference to the following Church of England's policies

1.3.1 Protecting all God's Children:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/protectingallgodschildren.pdf>

1.3.2 Parish Safeguarding Handbook:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

1.3.2 Promoting a safer church:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>

1.3.3 Diocese of St. Alban's Child Safeguarding Guidance

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Promoting-a-Safer-Church-2017-Safeguarding-Policy-Statement-of-the-Church-of-England.pdf>

1.3.4 Other Diocese of St Alban's safeguarding guidance documents:

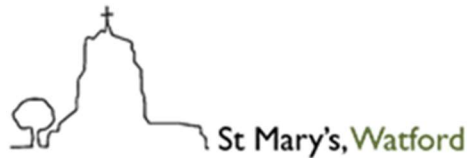
<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding-documents/>

Copies of each of these documents (see 1.3.1 – 1.3.3) are held in the Church Office (for printed copies see back of printed Safeguarding Handbook / Appendix N).

1.4 The PCC along with the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) will create and maintain regularly a Safeguarding Action Plan using the Safeguarding Dashboard [Parish Dashboards](#) (for printed copy of most recent plan see Appendix B).

2. Role of Safeguarding Officer

2.1 The role of the St Mary's Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is to take responsibility to ensure the PCC complies with the safe recruitment process as outlined below.



2.2 The St Mary's PSO will ensure that all required policy documents are in place and reviewed annually – these will include Safeguarding Procedures, Health and Safety Policy (see Appendix C), Lone Worker Agreement (see Appendix D), Risk Assessments (see Appendix E).

2.3 The St Mary's PSO will ensure that the contact details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs are clearly displayed in church premises and on the Parish website.

2.4.1 The St Mary's PSO will collate and clarify the precise details of any allegation or suspicion and pass this information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. On rare occasions it may be necessary to inform the Police immediately and/or to seek medical attention. In this event the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer must be informed as soon as is practicable. (see Appendix F 'Responding to a safeguarding concern procedure' and a 'Record of Concern Form')

2.4.2 Any concerns about a child or the conduct of an adult towards a child or a vulnerable adult should be referred to St Mary's PSO who should then consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. (It is important that no one within the Church becomes involved in investigating, which is a clearly defined legal obligation placed on the local authority and Police). (see Appendix F 'Responding to a safeguarding concern procedure' and a 'Record of Concern Form')

2.4.3 The St Mary's PSO will ensure that a written record is made of the disclosure or concerns that a person may have relating to a child, or adult. The disclosure or concerns made are based on what that person has seen or heard and quoting the exact words or terms used by the child or adult. In the event of a disclosure from a child or adult, a record of the conversation will be made as soon as is practicable. The record will be kept safe and made available to the police, if required. (see Appendix F 'Responding to a safeguarding concern procedure' and a 'Record of Concern Form')

3. Definitions

3.1 The Children Act 1989 defines a child as someone who has not yet attained their 18th birthday. The term "child" therefore includes young people throughout and, in the case of special educational needs and disability, young adults to the age of 25.

3.2 Section 6 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 defines a vulnerable adult as a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired.



4. Recruiting of Volunteers

4.1 One of the ways that children and vulnerable adults are protected from harm is to take care over the way adults are appointed when they are likely to have contact with children and vulnerable adults. All such applicants should be subject to the following:

- Prospective volunteer leaders and assistants should be regarded as job applicants and have a discussion with the children's leader/vicar about the role that is being undertaken. With this in view, each role which will require a DBS should have a written job description (see Appendix G).
- For all new appointments, the applicant should be on electoral roll of St Mary's and must name two referees, one of which should be their current employer, or from a previous church. This is done via the application process. These references will need to be checked before the person is accepted into their new role.
- Be given appropriate training, guidance and supervision.
- Be referred to Diocese of St Alban's Best Practice Guidelines for working with children and / or vulnerable adults.

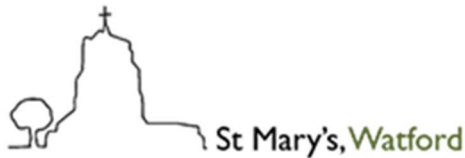
See Appendix H for Application Form, Confidential Declaration Form, Practice Guidance working with children, Practice Guidance working with Vulnerable Adults, DBS request email template, Application guide enhanced disclosures Sept 2021, Reference Request Form

5. Clearance

5.1 If the decision is made to appoint a person (paid or voluntary) who is acting in a supervisory role with children, the elderly or those who are vulnerable (for example driving the minibus for the elderly), a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) disclosure at Enhanced Level should be carried out. Those who could be deemed as taking on roles of leadership for groups which include those from these three areas will also require an Enhanced DBS - this includes persons elected to the PCC, those leading Connect (home) groups and those elected to the stewarding team.

5.2 All people in paid employment or working as an assistant volunteer who come into frequent, unsupervised and regulated activity with children during their work or activities have a duty of care or responsibility for children will also require an Enhanced DBS check. Where there is any doubt as to the criteria the PSO will refer to the Thirtyone:Eight (formerly CCPAS) flow chart titled 'Eligibility for DBS' for clarification (see Appendix I) .

(*"frequent"* means once a week or more, or four times in a month or more, in a regulated activity).



("regulated" means anyone working with vulnerable groups, children or vulnerable adults. All church activities involving vulnerable groups are considered "regulated").

5.3 Examples of this will include activities in which both children and adults participate. There are some exceptions to this. In the case of bell ringers, it is only necessary for the Tower Captain to be DBS cleared. In the case of the choir it is not necessary for all members to be DBS cleared but the Director of Music, who has a duty of care, should be subject to this procedure. In both these circumstances a deputy within the Tower or choir should be DBS cleared – see below.

5.4 Good practice, for everyone's benefit, dictates that there should be a reasonable ratio of the number of adults, in proportion to the number of children (outlined in The Children Act 1989). At all regulated activities there must be at least one person present who is DBS cleared at enhanced level, however it would be desirable to have at least two adults present.

5.5 "Regulated Activities" also includes residential activities.

5.6 There will be instances where parents remain present throughout the activity and in these circumstances the supervisors should be DBS cleared. Where there is a doubt or ambiguity, the St Mary's PSO should contact the Diocese Safeguarding Officer for advice.

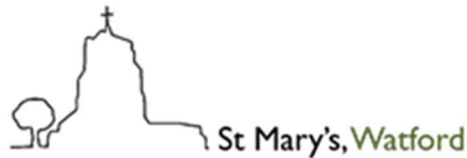
6. Confidential Declaration Forms

6.1 The first step in the DBS clearance process is to complete a Confidential Declaration form (see Appendix I). The purpose of the Confidential Declaration is to give the applicant an early opportunity to disclose any convictions or cautions and to discuss, in confidence, anything that may cause embarrassment. It also encourages honesty and integrity from the outset.

6.2 The House of Bishops has directed that all DBS checks should be renewed every 5 years.

7. Domestic abuse

7.1 Any concerns about Domestic Abuse should be referred to St Mary's Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) who should then follow the guidance in Section 2 of the Church of England's 'Responding Well to Domestic Abuse' (the Guidance) and the 'Domestic Abuse flow chart' in how to respond to either the victims or perpetrators of Domestic Abuse. Further advice is set out in the 'Domestic Abuse Policy' and 'Statement of Domestic Abuse'. The PCC undertakes that St Mary's will promote the theology set out in these documents. These Documents can be found in Appendix J.



8. Spiritual abuse

8.1 Any concerns about Domestic Abuse should be referred to St Mary's Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) who should then follow the guidance in 'Responding to, assessing and managing safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers' or 'Responding to a safeguarding concern procedure' depending on who the alleged respondent is. Further advice on supporting victims is set out in 'Responding to victims and survivors of Abuse – Section 6'. The PCC undertakes that St Mary's will promote the theology set out in these documents.

9. Conviction

9.1 A caution or conviction does not necessarily bar a person from working with children; this will depend on all of the circumstances. A system is in place within the Diocese where positive disclosures are considered by a panel which will advise on the suitability of the person to the post for which they are applying. Further details can be obtained from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. The PSO must show a copy of the Confidential Declaration in any situation where it brings up a previous conviction or investigation by police, if that person is working or volunteering in a position that would need a DBS disclosure.

10. Support, Supervision and Training

10.1 St. Mary's PCC undertakes to support and train all who work with our children and vulnerable adults so that they have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse. The PCC will do this by taking an interest in the work, and by carefully reviewing the policy and guidelines annually at the July PCC meeting to check that the policy and guidelines are being adhered to and to make any necessary improvements. Those adults working closely with children and vulnerable adults will be offered basic child protection training annually.

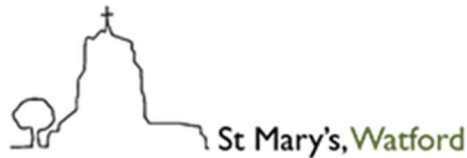
11. Keeping of Records

11.1 Subject to the General Data Protection Regulation the Administrator and PSO will keep a secure file for all DBS related documents. These will only be held for as long as is necessary to complete the DBS check.

12. Communication of practices

12.1 The PCC undertakes to make available a copy of this policy to all employees and volunteers who are cleared under section 5 above.

12.2 The PCC further undertakes to display for those entering the church and church centre the Statement on Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse (see Appendix J). It will further be displayed prominently on St Mary's website.



13. Use of photographs

13.1 In line with the Safe Use of Images Policy, photographs of any children involved with St Mary's church whether individual or in group settings will not be used on any publication or on the website or social media without first speaking to the Vicar, Sunday School or Youth Leaders as appropriate and then obtaining the written permission from the parent or guardian of the child. See also, the 'Safe Use of Images Policy' and 'Policy for Video Conferencing Platforms'. (See Appendix K)

14. Insurance Cover

14.1 St Mary's PCC will ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.

15. Working with Offenders

15.1 If the PCC becomes aware of someone at St Mary's who might pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults, the St Mary's PSO will contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. See also the Ex-offender's policy (See Appendix L).

16. Liaison with ALL Groups using our Premises

16.1 The Administrator will liaise with any parties (whether an individual, charity or other group) who hire out the premises (including the church, church centre, offices and meeting areas) to ensure that said group has a policy in place in line with St Mary's 'Safeguarding Provision for the Hiring of Church Premises Agreement' (See Appendix M).

17 Date of next review

18.1 This policy and its practices will be reviewed annually in July of each year. The date of the next review by the PCC will be in July 2023.

18 Appendices

See below a list of all mentioned appendices B-N (these can either be found in the corresponding files in the 'Safeguarding Folder' on Google Drive or are a printed accompaniment to this 'Safeguarding Handbook').



Appendices:

- A. see Annex A: Safeguarding Practices
- B. Printed copy of most recent "Safeguarding Action Plan" (see Practices 1.4)
- C. Health and Safety (see 2.2)
- D. Lone Worker (see 2.2)
- E. Risk Assessments (Covid, Centre Club, Pancake Event, Pastoral Visiting, Transport, Bell Ringers, Sunday School and Pathfinders) (see 2.2)
- F. Reporting a Safeguarding Concern – see 'Responding to a safeguarding concern procedure' and a 'Record of Concern Form' (see 2.4.1)
- G. Job Descriptions: Parish Safeguarding Officer, Sunday School Pathfinder Teacher
- H. Application Pack: for Application Form, Confidential Declaration Form, Practice Guidance working with children, Practice Guidance working with Vulnerable Adults, DBS request email template, Application guide enhanced disclosures Sept 2021, Reference Request Form (see points 4 and 5).
- I. Eligibility for DBS (See 5.2)
- J. Domestic Abuse: 'Responding Well to Domestic Abuse'; 'Domestic Abuse flow chart'; 'Draft Domestic Abuse Policy'; 'Statement of Domestic Abuse'. (see 7)
- K. 'Safe Use of Images Policy' and 'Policy for Video Conferencing Platforms' (see 13)
- L. Ex-offenders Policy (See point 15)
- M. Safeguarding Provision for the Hiring of Church Premises Agreement (see point (see point 16)
- N. Diocese and Church of England Policies: printed copies of Protecting all God's Children, Parish Safeguarding Handbook, and Promoting a safer church, and Diocese of St. Alban's Child Safeguarding Guidance (see point 1.3)