

St. Mary's Church Luton

Safeguarding Children Policy

March 2021

CHURCH DETAILS

Name: St Mary's Parish Church Luton (hereafter, "The Church")

Address: Church Street, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 3JF

Tel No: 01582 721867 Email address: admin@stmarysluton.org

Denomination: Anglican

MISSION STATEMENT

The Church Leadership and Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Marys Parish Church recognises the importance of its ministry to children and young people and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care.

As part of its mission, the Church is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Safer recruitment, appropriate training and supervision for all the children's/youth workers within the church.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about actual and suspected abuse.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those affected by abuse in the church.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities and other organisations.

CHURCH POLICY

The PCC recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people. It also acknowledges that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The PCC has therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document (hereafter "the policy"). It also recognises the need to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary child protection agencies. The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on a model published by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) and prepared in consultation with Diocese of St Alban and Luton's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LLSCB).

We are committed to implementing a safeguarding children policy and accepting the Church of England Policy Protecting All God's Children (4th edition 2010) and to be responsive to local parish requirements.

The PCC is committed to on-going child protection training for all children/youth workers and will conduct a full policy review every 3 years.

The PCC also undertakes to follow the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a church worker carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following:

- Concerns must be reported as soon as possible to Martin or Sara Watson – Safeguarding Coordinators (hereafter the "Co-ordinator") tel no: 07930636330 who are nominated by the PCC to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- For serious incidents, the Co-ordinator may also be required by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company and will also inform the Incumbent & Bishop's Adviser. Jeremy Hirst tel no: 01299 841269
- In the absence of the Co-ordinator, or if the suspicions in any way involve the Co-ordinator then the report should be made to

Rev Mike Jones – Vicar tel no: 07834 359671.

If the suspicions implicate both the Co-ordinator and the Deputy Co-ordinator, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

Jeremy Hirst
Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
41 Holywell Hill,
St Albans,
Hertfordshire,
AL1 1HE.
Telephone 01727 818107/ 07867 350886

or alternatively contact:

Luton Child Protection Services.
The local office telephone number between 9.00am and 5.00pm is 01582 547653.
The out of hours emergency number is 0870 2385465.
The **Police Child Protection Team** telephone number is 01582 401212.

- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with church procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Co-ordinator, the absence of the Co-ordinator or Deputy Co-ordinator should not delay referral to the Social Services Department, using the above details.
- The PCC will support the Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly on a need to know basis.
- If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from CCPAS, although the PCC hope that members of the church will use this procedure. We hope by making this statement that the PCC demonstrate the commitment of the church to effective child protection.

The role of the co-ordinator/ deputy co-ordinator is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Social Services Department. It is Social Services task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

APPOINTMENT, SUPPORT, SUPERVISION & TRAINING OF LEADERS & WORKERS

The PCC will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the principles set out in government guidelines "Safe from Harm" (HMSO 1993), CCPAS guidance and Church of England practice guidelines. The same principles will be applied to those appointed to work with vulnerable adults. Training will be offered on a yearly basis with the expectation that workers will attend training at least once every 3 years.

All workers that have regular and direct contact with Children and Young People will be expected to complete a DBS check. This will be renewed every 5 years.

The PCC acknowledges its responsibility for all work with children and young people done in the name of the Church and requires all those engaged in such work to be properly appointed and supported in accordance with the Church of England Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment (July 2016).

SUPERVISION OF GROUP/CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

The PCC will provide details of the supervision for each specific activity within the children's and youth ministry. See youth minister for details

SUPPORT TO THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

The PCC is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to those attending the church who have been affected by abuse.

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children, the Incumbent and Co-ordinator will arrange supervision for the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its commitment to the protection of children, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. Known offenders who may pose a risk to children or young people will not be able to join children's ministry teams.

Approved by PCC: Date 25/03/2021 Signature M Jones

Reviewed by PCC: Date _____ Signature _____

Reviewed by PCC: Date _____ Signature _____

Date to be reviewed: Annually by PCC one year after each year.

Appendix I –Electronic Communications / Social Media Policy

Electronic means of communication (EMC) such as phone, text, instant messengers, email, social networking are useful and almost universal tools used by young people today. They create unprecedented opportunities and inherent dangers and, as such, St Mary's PCC recognises that extreme caution must be taken when considering the use of electronic communications with young people.

The following rules exist to minimise risk to young people presented by communicating electronically with any members of St Mary's Church whilst at the same time undertaking to reduce the vulnerability of staff and volunteers to situations that could lead to allegations of wrongful conduct.

As with all aspects of interaction with young people, St Mary's commits to always taking seriously any concerns that are raised by anyone in regards to electronic communications with young people.

Conduct of staff and volunteers when communicating electronically with young people falls firstly under the principles laid out in the Child Protection policy, secondly under recommendations of the Volunteers Guidelines, and thirdly under the following additional notes.

1. No volunteer should use electronic means of communication with a young person they have met through Church or the Youth Ministry without approval by the Youth Minister.
2. No volunteer or staff member should use their personal Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Blog (or similar) accounts to contact any young person under the age of 18 who they have met through Church or the Youth Ministry.
3. When permission to use electronic media to contact young people has been given, the following guidelines should be followed at all times.
 - a) Electronic communication should only be used for genuine work / ministry related reasons.
 - b) Use of electronic communication should be kept minimal as far as is reasonably possible.
 - c) Staff and volunteers should not communicate electronically with young people before 9am or after 9pm except in exceptional circumstances.
 - d) When considering use of electronic communication, preference should be given to that for which a record can be kept.
 - e) Staff and volunteers should endeavour to ensure parents / carers are made aware of electronic communication between themselves and their children.
 - f) Staff and volunteers should report any situation in which they fear an electronic communication may have been misunderstood by a young person or parent, or if an electronic communication has breached any of these guidelines.
4. All digital youth work is delivered through Discord. No volunteer should send direct messages to young people and should use all the text channels available. When engaging in a voice or video call, two adults should be present if possible. If not possible, then the Youth Minister should be informed before the call takes place. There must always be two leaders present to deliver a session via the platform.
5. The St Mary's Youth Team Instagram account (@stmaryslutonyouth) is the only social media account to be used by staff and volunteers when representing the youth team at St Mary's. The Safeguarding leads shall be given the account log-in details in order to be able to check on any electronic communication activity.
6. Discord is always the first point of contact with young people but where 'Whatsapp' is required to contact young people, all groups must have 2 DBS'd adults in them, one of which ideally being the Youth Minister. Direct messages are only to be sent via the Youth team phone which can be checked and monitored by the Safeguarding Leads upon request.