

HTH Church Safeguarding Policy 2023

HTH Church has adopted the 2016 Diocese of Chichester Child Protection Policy Statement.

HTH Church adheres to the House of Bishops Parish Safeguarding Handbook Published 2018 (revised 2019) and the Safer Environment and Activities 2019.

HTH Church complies fully with section 5 of the safeguarding and clergy discipline measure of 2016 from the House of Bishops.

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an integral part of the life and ministry of the church, set out clearly in legislation and is everyone's responsibility. It provides the basis for ensuring that within HTH Church we provide the safest possible environment to enable children to grow and flourish and for vulnerable adults to be protected and cared for.

It represents our commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and reflects our policy statement and guiding principles. We believe that the welfare of each person is paramount, and that all children, young people and vulnerable adults should be protected from harm or abuse. To do so we will work in partnership with children, parents, carers and other agencies to promote and safeguard the welfare of everyone.

At HTH Church we aim to provide a safe and caring environment for people who are entrusted into our care. We recognise and value their unique status as individuals, to respect them and listen to them. We will strive to achieve the highest standards in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational activities.

POLICY STATEMENT

As members of this PCC we are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of all our members, particularly the children and young people.

We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church community and, consequently, safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone.

We are committed to implementing the House of Bishops' Child Protection Policy 'Protecting All God's Children, 2010, and the diocesan procedures, which are based on the Children Act, and Government guidance "Working together to Safeguard Children", both published in 2013.

We will carefully select and train ordained and lay ministers; volunteers and paid workers with children and young people. We will use the Disclosure and Barring Service, amongst other tools, to

check the background of each person. We adhere to the Diocese 'Simple Quality Protects' safer recruitment process which includes two references and an enhanced DBS check for staff and volunteers.

We will respond, without delay, to every concern made that a child or young person, for whom we are responsible, may have been harmed.

We will co-operate fully with statutory agencies during any investigation concerning a member of the church community.

We will seek to ensure that any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse is offered support that meets their needs.

We will care for and supervise any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.

We will review this policy annually and as part of this process will ensure that all our procedures, particularly in relation to the Disclosure and Barring Service, are up to date.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We recognise that our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole church community.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection, appointment and support of those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, whether paid or unpaid.
- We wish to support parents and carers who have responsibility for looking after children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The principles below will guide all elements of safeguarding activity delivered by those at all levels within the diocese:

- Pastoral care which is respectful and informed
- Timely safeguarding action – advice to be sought/action to be taken within 24 hours
- The involvement of others on a need-to-know basis only
- The early identification and management of actual or potential risks
- The discharging of duties to the highest level of Christian behaviour
- The active commitment of all in promoting and keeping our community safe

HTH Church Safeguarding Officer

In line with the recommendations of the Chichester Diocese, Danny Peach has been appointed as HTH Church Safeguarding Officer.

The HTH Church Safeguarding Officer is a voice for children, young people and vulnerable adults in the church whose responsibilities include:

- Implementing the safeguarding guidelines
- Speaking up for the needs of children and vulnerable adults
- Being a link person between the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and the parish

HTH Church responsibilities

Our responsibilities in terms of Safeguarding are:

- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the Safeguarding Policy and are adequately trained.
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected.
- To have procedures in place regarding recruitment of staff and volunteers which follow the guidance of the House of Bishops Safeguarding Handbook.

Responsibilities of workers and volunteers

- To be familiar with the Safeguarding Policy
- To take the action appropriate, in line with their training, the guidelines and policy.
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions. Failure to do so will be regarded as gross misconduct, possibly resulting in dismissal.

SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

The following guidelines are taken from the 'Recommended Practice' section of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy. They set clear expectations of behaviour and codes of practice which serve to reduce the possibilities of positions of trust being abused or misused, or false accusations made. More detailed guidance on safe working practices such as when to gain consent, working with and transporting children, can be found in the Procedures and Recommended Practice sections within the full [Diocese Safeguarding Policy](#).

Good Practice when working with children and young people:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Always use appropriate speech, tone of voice and body language.
- Provide a good example, and a 'positive role model' to children
- Learn to control and discipline children without physical punishment, this must never be used even if they have the parent's explicit permission for this

- Ask a parent's permission if you need to see a child on his or her own. Make sure another adult is present nearby and that the child knows this.
- Where possible there should be a gender balance between leaders and helpers.
- Don't invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting.
- Don't play rough physical or sexually provocative games.
- Don't be sexually suggestive about or to a young person, even in fun.
- Don't touch inappropriately or intrusively.
- Don't scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child or young person.
- Don't show favouritism to any one child.
- Don't allow children to involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature.
- Don't make inappropriate remarks or jokes of a personal, sexual, racial, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature either face to face or using mobile or electronic methods
- Don't intentionally embarrass or humiliate children, for example by using sarcasm or humour in an inappropriate way
- Don't give or receive (other than token) gifts unless agreed with the Child Protection Coordinator
- Don't allow, encourage or condone children to act in an illegal, improper or unsafe manner e.g. smoking or drinking alcohol or taking drugs
- Don't permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying.
- Obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed.
- Don't make arrangements to contact, communicate, or meet children outside of approved church activities, unless this has the prior approval of the Child Protection Co-ordinator as well as their parent
- Never share sleeping accommodation with children or invite them to your home alone.
- Never give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own.
- Don't allow unknown adults to have access to children. Visitors should be accompanied by a known person who has been DBS checked.

Taking care of touching

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of the group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the adult's.
- Touch should be age appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the adult.
- Avoid all physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the child or the adult.
- Children have the right to declare how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances where they may need medical attention.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything which could be misunderstood. Concerns about possible abuse should always be reported.
- Try to avoid hugging young people of the opposite sex.

What to do about inappropriate advances

- Tell that young person that their language or behaviour is not acceptable and also tell their leader about the incident, however embarrassing this is.
- Record the incident. This may be a necessary safeguard if accusations are made later. The adult with their leader should decide on what measures will need to be taken to help the young person and prevent a re-occurrence.

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Concerns about children and young people will be diligently and promptly responded to according to our procedures, recognising the sensitivity it may hold for those involved. Where there is a concern, this should be reported immediately to:

Dave Mills, relating to a child aged 0-11 or young person aged 11-18; or
Danny Peach Parish Safeguarding Officer
Simon or Sarah Larkin, Church Leaders.

What is SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding: the broader activities through which we are vigilant and responsive to promoting the welfare of our children and young people and protecting them from potential harm.

This is demonstrated through carefully planned activities for children, offering support where possible, responding to concerns and working with partner agencies. The primary concept in safeguarding is recognising and responding to potential significant harm to children. Significant harm is any single or multiple maltreatment or impairment to the health and development of a child.

What is CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Faith communities need to be especially aware of mixed age activities where adults have the opportunity to build up a relationship with a child in an informal setting.

Spiritual harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include; the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries, any of which may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in the usual way. Other forms of spiritual harm include the denial to children of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow and develop within their own faith community.

There are four categories of abuse described in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2013) from which the following definitions are taken.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse may involve 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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate caretakers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child which causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ridiculing what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, for example in domestic violence situations; serious bullying (including cyber-bullying); causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child but it may occur as the sole or main form of abuse.

What is abuse and neglect of Adults?

All adults, including vulnerable adults, have a fundamental human right to choose how and with whom they live, even if this appears to involve a degree of risk. They should be supported to make those choices, to live as independently as possible and treated with respect and dignity.

Who abuses adults?

Potentially anyone, adult or child, can be the abuser of an adult. Abuse will sometimes be deliberate, but it may also be an unintended consequence of ignorance or lack of awareness. Alternatively, it may arise from frustration or lack of support. The list can include: relatives of the vulnerable person including husband, wife, partner, son or daughter. It will sometimes include a relative who is a main carer. It can also be neighbours, paid-carers, workers in places of worship, people who are themselves vulnerable and / or are users of a care service. Confidence tricksters who prey on people in their own homes or elsewhere. Carers can experience considerable stress, exhaustion and frustration without respite or support. This can lead to unintended poor care or abuse. Relatives who are the main carers may also be subject to abuse by those for whom they are caring. This abuse is often endured for long periods and unreported.

Institutions: Some members of the parish may be visiting adults in institutions – hospitals, prisons and residential homes. If, as part of these responsibilities, they have concerns about the care being given and/or the way that someone is being treated, the DSA should be contacted.

Definitions of adult abuse

The UK central government document ‘Care and Support Statutory Guidance’ categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

Physical abuse including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual abuse including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.

Psychological abuse including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect or acts of omission including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory abuse including racist, sexist, based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Domestic abuse that is usually a systematic, repeated and escalating pattern of behaviour, by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors.

Organisational abuse including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Modern slavery including human trafficking; forced labour and domestic servitude; and traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Spiritual harm and abuse can also be caused to adults by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include; the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries, any of which may result in the person experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in the usual way.

If you have a concern that a child or adult is or may be being abused, or that a church officer is or may be abusing a child or adult:

1. 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 respondent will be shared with key church officers, and may be shared with the statutory agencies, if there is any current risk to children or adults. The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know.
 2. Emergency: If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, contact the emergency services on 999.
 3. Non-emergency: Contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent, in the first instance. They must then contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA). If neither are available, contact the DSA directly. If the concern arises in an activity, discuss with the group/activity leader, who will contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent.
 4. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSA within 24 hours.
 5. If the PSO/ incumbent or the DSA are not available within 24hours, contact Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care and/or the police directly, if the concern is that a child or adult 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 or adult.
- Advise the Parish Safeguarding Officer 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 statutory agencies.
6. Do not contact the respondent 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.
 7. 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 PSO/incumbent. The records should be kept secure and confidential (please see Model Parish Recording Template).

If the concern is about a child or adult:

8. The DSA will act in line with the House of Bishops' 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. This would be Children's or Adult Social Care and/or the police.

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:

9. The DSA will act in line with the House of Bishops' guidance.

They will offer advice, support and guidance and refer the concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 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 also 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 LADO.

Please note that the procedure is the same for non-recent abuse.

Making a referral to the Social Services SPOA (Single Point of Access).

Telephone: 01323 464 222 Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Out of hours, with serious concerns that cannot wait until the next working day, contact their Emergency Duty Service. Telephone: 01273 335 906 or 01273 335 905 Monday to Thursday 5pm to 8.30am and Friday's, weekend's and bank holiday's after 4.30pm to 8.30am

Email: 0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk

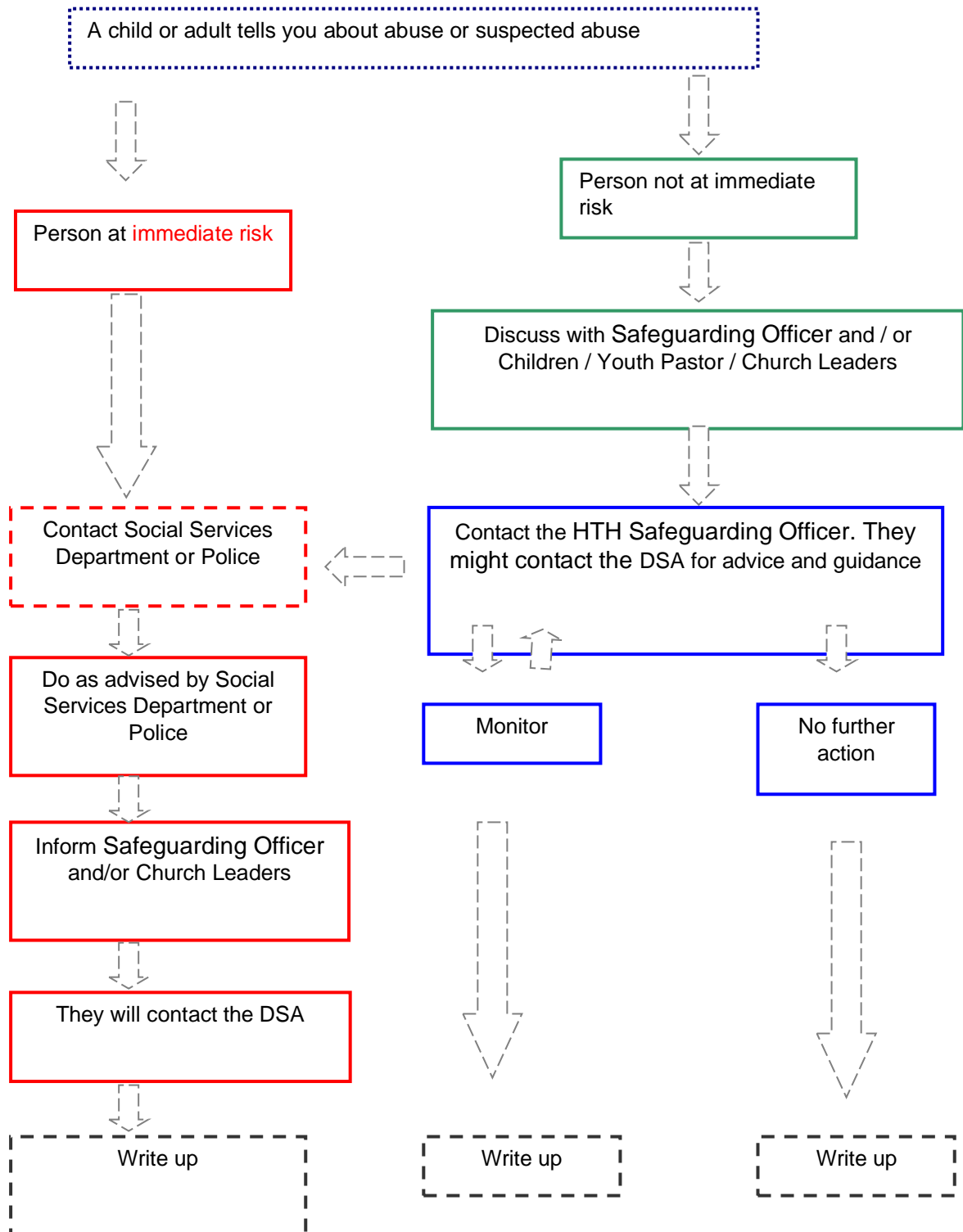
- Give the social worker as much detail as possible: descriptions, dates, times, and what was actually said.
- Distinguish between fact and opinion, between what you have seen and what others have told you.
- It is wise to follow up a referral by a letter confirming what you have said (a copy of this can be given to the HTH Safeguarding Officer who will send it on to the DSA).

Disclosure in Confidence

- The duty of confidence is not absolute – where a child or adult is judged to be at risk of significant harm, usually it will be legally possible, appropriate and highly desirable to disclose relevant information to the public authorities for the sake of protecting the person. 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 well-being of a child. If an adult has disclosed information, they should be encouraged to report the abuse, or else permission should be sought from them to disclose, if they refuse individuals may still report confidential information where the situation is as outlined above.

Complaints Procedure

If abuse is suspected or disclosed, this flow-chart summarises the procedures which should be followed:



Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse

Respond

Do:

- Listen.
- Take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where 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/ Parish Safeguarding Officer/ 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 or adult what you are going to do next.

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.

Record

- 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 and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

Report

- If there is immediate danger to a child or adult contact the police.
- Otherwise report to your activity leader/Parish Safeguarding Officer/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.

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 abuse 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.

Domestic abuse

The House of Bishops' 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 (see section 10).

Recruitment of Workers and Volunteers

When recruiting staff or volunteers who are to have regular contact or supervision with children particular, care must be taken and certain checks must be carried out including:

DBS (Disclosure and Barring service) / Independent Safeguard Authority ('ISA')

All staff and volunteers who have regular contact or supervision with children and young people will be asked to go through a DBS check and when relevant be checked by the ISA.

Confidential Declaration Form

All staff and volunteers who have regular contact or supervision with children and young people will be asked to complete the Confidential Declaration Form.

Volunteer Agreement Form

All volunteers who have regular contact or supervision with children and young people will be asked to complete the Volunteer Agreement Form.

Interviews

All staff and volunteers who have regular contact or supervision with children and young people will be interviewed.

References

Two references are requested for each worker and volunteer. This should be able to comment on a person's suitability to work with either children or vulnerable people.

It is suggested that where a volunteer is drawn from the church community that they be involved in the life of the church for at least six months before being asked to help with children or vulnerable

people. Where people are simply visiting groups and it is unrealistic to recruit them using this procedure it is important that they are not made responsible for a group or left in sole charge.

Outside Group using the organisation's premises and hiring agreement

We have a duty of care to advise organisations working with children who hire or use church property of their responsibility for the welfare and safety of children. Any formal hiring agreement should include the following statement:

"HTH Church regards the safe care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults as of the utmost importance. Groups that hire or use church premises are expected to share this concern and make appropriate provision for the protection of children and adults within their care.

[hiring organisation] confirms that it is familiar with the Home Office Guidelines 'Safe from Harm' and undertakes to follow their recommendations in relation to their work with children, young people and vulnerable adults."

The second paragraph can be omitted for one-off hirers (e.g. children's parties).

Important Contact Details

HTH Church Safeguarding Officer: Danny Peach danny.peach@hthchurch.org

Chichester Diocese Safeguarding Adviser: Colin Perkins, 01273 425792, 07500 771210

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS): 0845 1204550

Social Services (Single Point of Advice (SPoA)): 01323 464222

NSPCC for adults concerned about a child – 0808 800 5000

Childline for children and young people – 0800 1111

Action on Elder Abuse helpline – 0808 808 8141

24-hour National Domestic Violence helpline – 0808 2000 247

NAPAC offers support and advice to adult survivors of childhood abuse – 08088010331

Stop It Now helps prevent child sexual abuse – 0808 1000 900

Cruse bereavement helpline – 0808 808 1677

Family Lives provides support and advice on family issues – 0808 800 222

MACSAS for people who have been abused by church officers – 0808 801 0340

Samaritans for people struggling to cope and needing someone to talk to – 116 123

PLEASE read fully the HTH Church Safeguarding policy and sign the form below to say you have read and fully comply with all the child protection and health and safety guidelines set by Holy Trinity Hastings.

Please return the form to your team leader.

HTH Church Safeguarding and Health and Safety Declaration

I _____ (*full name*) have read thoroughly, fully understand and will comply with all the safeguarding, child protection and health and safety guidelines set by Holy Trinity Hastings.

Signed _____

Date ___/___/_____