

If you suspect abuse or feel that inappropriate behaviour is taking place but the way forward is unclear, take the following action

a. *If abuse or inappropriate behaviour is suspected, inform one of the following people of your concerns:*

- the Nominated Person responsible for child protection in your parish; i.e. Christine Carson 01242 890251 or
- your parish priest or
- the Bishop's Adviser 01452 835526

b. *If the suspicions concern your parish priest or an authorised lay worker you should consult the Bishop's Adviser immediately.*

It is important to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of making a referral and naming names. The Bishop's Adviser is available to help if you have any doubt.

c. If there is clear evidence of abuse

While no one will want to react without careful consideration, when an allegation has been made it is important to avoid delay in order to forestall further abuse.

Clear evidence is

- where a child or young person is making a clear allegation of abuse
- where injuries to the child are raising strong suspicions

You should

i) Inform Social Services and/or the Police immediately
Safeguarding Child Protection Unit 01452 583636
(office hours 9.00 – 5.00)

Police Child Protection Unit (24 hrs)
01242 261112 (if no reply 01242 276086)

ii) *If the alleged abuse is taking place under the care of the Church or one of its organisations you should also inform one of the following:*

- the Nominated Person responsible for child protection in your parish; i.e. Christine Carson 01242 890251 or
- your parish priest or
- the Bishop's Adviser 01451 835526

The Diocesan Policy will then be followed with appropriate pastoral care given.

**If you suspect a child or young person is at risk of abuse
YOU MUST TAKE ACTION.**

Why do we need a policy on working with children, young people and vulnerable adults?

This concerns all who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the life of the church, all who come into contact with them and all who have to make decisions within the church community. If you are reading this, you have either joined a team of youth and children's workers, you regularly visit vulnerable people in their homes, or you are on a decision-making body in the church.

Children and Young People

It would be good to think that children in church-led activities are always safe. Most of the time, good common sense provides protection for our children, and much of the detail of this document is indeed that - normal common sense.

For the overwhelming majority of children and young people the experience at church and related activities is good and we are appreciated for it. But we also occasionally hear national news that a child is injured in a preventable accident. More rarely, a child is hurt or abused by another member of a church community. Further, we have a responsibility to our volunteers and leaders to protect them from situations where they may be falsely accused.

Much of our children and youth work is presently outside the law as we tend to meet under-eights for less than two hours a week in any group. However, the Church of England realises that when it takes responsibility for other people's children, it has a commitment to follow guidelines of Best Practice to safeguard the welfare of all ages to the best of its ability.

Our Child Protection Policy is based upon Diocesan policy. The Diocesan Policy is based upon the Home Office Code of Practice, "Safe from Harm" (1993) and work from the National Children's Bureau (which helps voluntary organisations to safeguard the welfare of under 18s). It applies to all paid and volunteer workers in voluntary organisations. Our own policy aims to follow the spirit of the Diocesan Policy with amendments and advice made for our own situation.

Vulnerable Adults

As Church members we have a duty to care for all vulnerable people who worship with us or we come into contact with in pastoral situations. There are separate guidelines and a policy for this area of work - these are on the green insert in this booklet and on pages 14 - 17.

Leaders may need to interpret the spirit of the guidelines/handbook on occasion, keeping the PCC aware of difficult areas.

We have a nominated person in the Benefice to ensure that another person shares with the parish priest the responsibility for child and vulnerable adult protection. He or she will be a person to whom the Leaders may turn for support and advice, particularly if they have concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker.

**Our Benefice Child Protection Officer is Christine Carson
Telephone 01242 890251**

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

Working with children and young people

Scripture teaches that all people are special because they are made in the image of God. This is therefore true for children and young people, who should be respected and protected. Jesus warned that those who exploited or abused children deserved profound condemnation. Within the Kingdom of God, children matter in their own right and are to be taken seriously.

The Church is required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Clergy and laity who work for the Church in a paid or voluntary capacity need to exercise the greatest care when working with those for whom they have been given responsibility.

The highest standards should be maintained therefore in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational circumstances. The exploitation of any relationships for any purpose will not be tolerated.

The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to creating a culture of informed vigilance which takes children, and adults who are vulnerable, seriously – and will work closely, and in partnership with, the local authority and statutory authorities to ensure that we offer best practice advice and guidance.

The Diocese of Gloucester accepts the principle of The Children Act (1989) that the welfare of the child is paramount, and will follow the Home Office Code of Practice: “Safe from Harm”, and the House of Bishops’ “Protecting all God’s Children” and “Safer Recruitment” advice and guidelines.

If allegations of abuse are made, the Diocese of Gloucester will respond without delay and collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with investigating such allegations of child abuse. It will not conduct investigations on its own and will work in partnership with the police, local authority, and others to follow legal compliance, and to ensure we are able to offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person, or adult who has suffered abuse.

It will be standard practice in the Diocese of Gloucester to require completion of a common declaration form in accordance with guidelines of the Children Act 1989, from the following categories of people prior to selection or appointment for work within the Diocese:

- all candidates for ordained ministry and accredited lay ministry
- all clergy and accredited lay ministers moving into and within the diocese
- employees of the Diocesan Board of Finance who are likely to have opportunities for contact with children and young people
- volunteers who support the work of the Diocesan Advisory Boards and Committees on a regular basis

It is Diocesan policy that all PCCs should have in place a policy for Safeguarding/child protection – and that this is reviewed annually and a copy supplied as part of the requirements of the Archdeacon’s Visitation.

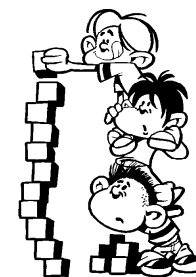
IF A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON WANTS TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE

It is usually very difficult for a person to tell someone that they are being abused. So.....

- *Let them know that you will listen to anything they have to tell you, but that there are some things so serious that you have to tell someone else. **Do not promise confidentiality;***
- *Accept what the person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly;*
- *Listen carefully and do not stop a person who is revealing painful events;*
- *Never push for information or ask leading questions*
- *Be aware that the person may have been threatened;*
- *Reassure the person they were right to tell you;*
- *Let the person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens*
- *Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. **Record the date, time and location and whether other people were present. Keep the hand-written record.***

What to do if you suspect abuse

- *The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that his/her concern is taken seriously.*
- *Suspicion may vary from a vague disquiet about possibly inappropriate behaviour to clear evidence of serious abuse with many intermediate levels*
- *Information may reach you from a variety of sources:-*
 - a person claiming that he/she has been abused
 - another person who is concerned
 - a member of the person’s family
 - a fellow worker of the suspect
 - someone who believes he/she is the object of malicious or unfounded rumour
 - your own concerns



If a vulnerable adult wants to talk about abuse see the separate insert for guidelines.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a person's basic emotional needs.

Spiritual abuse - Abuse can occur in all cultures and religions. Within faith communities 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. Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of children should help to prevent harm occurring in this way.

Organised Abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related abused children, young people and vulnerable adults. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert, acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit people for abuse. Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

The following may be signs of abuse

Those who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a person. It is important to keep an open mind and consider carefully what is causing you concern.

- *Physical abuse: unexplained injuries or those that have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, signs of neglect;*
- *Sexual abuse: allegations made by the child, young person or vulnerable adult, preoccupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, children may be sexually provocative with adults;*
- *Emotional abuse: regression of behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared for.*
- *Other: unexplained reluctance of the person to be left in the care of an individual – unexplained mood changes.*

NB: Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

PCC POLICY

Working with Children and Young People

1. The PCC accepts the Diocesan Policy on Working with Children and Young People, and so seeks to follow the 'Safe from Harm' guidelines in the ways described in this booklet.
2. The PCC seeks to provide a caring, warm and consistent atmosphere and environment in which children and young people can develop and grow, and in which they can learn in safety. Children and young people will be treated as individuals and with equal concern.
3. Therefore the PCCs of the Coln River Group of Parishes, i.e. Sevenhampton with Charlton Abbots, Hawling, Whittington, Dowdeswell and Andoversford, The Shiptons, Salperton, Withington:
 - recognises the following areas of work with children and young people:
 - Toddler Play and Praise - Sunday Club - Messy Church
 - Youth Group - Withington Choir, Bell Ringers etc
 - will ensure that everyone involved in the care of children and young people is personally made aware of the Diocesan Policy and the PCC Policy.
 - will ensure everyone involved in the care of children and young people (*existing and future/from the date the PCC policy is accepted*) will have a meeting with the parish priest or person in charge of Child Protection in the Benefice and asked to complete the **disclosure** form (DBS) which will be checked by a Diocesan Counter-signatory. (It will be strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law will be seen only by the above named person or those acting on the Bishop's behalf).
 - will ensure everyone involved in this work is clear as to the nature of the work they have agreed to do and the name of the person to whom they are responsible.
 - will ensure the Parish Priest and the Benefice Child Protection Officer will be responsible on the PCC's behalf for implementing and monitoring the PCC's policy.
 - will ensure that training opportunities are encouraged
 - will ensure that at least two adults will be present with any group of children or young people.
4. The PCCs will be informed of the names of those that work with children and young people and will be kept notified of any changes.
5. The PCC nominated Christine Carson to be the Nominated Person to whom all cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be reported immediately.
6. The PCC will make adequate provision for insurance cover.
7. A copy of this policy will be made available to members of the church and to parents/guardians.
8. If any other body or party uses church or associated premises for the use of children or young people then it will be made clear that we expect them to undertake to follow the 'Safe from Harm' Guidelines.
9. This policy will be reviewed periodically and at least every three years and a report will be on the agenda at the APCM, a copy of which is to be returned to the Benefice Office

SAFE FROM HARM
(Home Office Code of Practice)

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children
2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur
3. Introduce a system whereby children may appeal to an independent person
4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles
6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children
7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children
8. Gain references from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid or voluntary work with children
9. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in a meeting before appointment
10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction(s) for criminal offences against children
11. Make all appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period
11. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse
13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
ABUSE: WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND WHAT TO DO

Kinds of Abuse

Definitions of Abuse (England & Wales)

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Employment and the Home Office in their joint document, Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999) are as follows:

Abuse and Neglect

Somebody may abuse or neglect a person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a person whom they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a person for example to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on someone. It may involve causing someone frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a person, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving the person in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging the person to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CARE OF CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL SCHEMES AND HOLIDAY PLAY-SCHEMES

The following are the main recommendations to be taken into consideration for the protection of the children and of the leaders and helpers.

1. Group Size and Staffing Ratios

- not normally more than 30 children (under 8) and in small groups of not more than 10.
- 1 adult to 8 children – a higher ratio for trips out or for children with special needs
- the person in charge to be over 21 years

2. Premises and Space Requirements

- minimum of 25 square feet of clear play space per child
- one toilet and washbasin for every 10 children

3. Safety, Health and Hygiene

- equipment should meet relevant safety standards and be well maintained and in good condition
- careful attention should be paid to hygiene
- a general safety check should be made inside and out

4. Records

- To include: name, address, age, date of birth, emergency contact number, relevant health problems, special needs
- **Who is authorised to collect the child**
- attendance records should be kept (adults and children)
- note should be made of any medical problems occurring during the scheme and any accidents and first aid treatment

Other guidelines on

Equal Opportunities, management and leaders and helpers are covered by other sections of our policy.

Informing FACS (Families and Children's Information Services) about your Children's Workshop or Holiday Club

You should phone FACS about any workshop or holiday club that includes children less than 8 years of age and lasts for 2 hours or more

Telephone: 01452 336100

GUIDELINES

Plan work in order to minimise situations where abuse may occur

1. **Opportunities for adults to supervise each other.** So far as possible, arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of activity being observed. Groups may need to meet in one large room or in adjoining rooms with the door left open. At least two adults should be present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. In many situations one should be female. (e.g. young children or girls being present).
2. **The situation of toilet facilities.** Avoid the situation where an adult takes a single child to the toilet away from the rest of the group. If this is unavoidable, inform another adult of where they will be and for what purpose.
3. **The policy for meeting a child/young person.** Ensure that no arrangement is made to meet a child or young person away from church premises without a parent or other adult being present.
4. **Arrangements for taking children on outings.** Never take a group of children or young people off the premises with fewer than two adults.
5. **Arrangements for transporting children.** Where children or young people have to be transported by car or minibus, arrange to have more than one child in the vehicle.
6. **Access to the premises.** Consider the path to and from your premises. Avoid expecting children or young people to walk along a dark, unsupervised path.
7. **Who can have access to the groups?** Someone unknown to the group organisers should not have unsupervised access to children or young people.
8. **Discipline procedures.** It should be made clear that no physical punishment is allowed.

Giving children a chance to talk with an independent person

The Childline phone number **0800 1111** will be displayed on Church noticeboards, in the Church Centre, and in the Bell Tower.

Apply agreed procedures to all paid staff and volunteers

We shall provide volunteers with details of who to refer problems or suspicions to, by informing them of who their supervisor is, and by giving them a copy of this policy document.

Clear roles given to all paid staff and volunteers

Clear roles will be given to volunteers, in the form of a “job description”, with a checklist (see Page 9) before each meeting.

Supervision as a means of protecting children

We shall aim to meet with children and young people’s workers every 18 months to review work and experiences and to discuss training and development needs. Individual groups will meet more regularly than this for specific planning of work.

Treat all potential paid staff and volunteers as job applicants

We shall keep a record of the people who work with children and young people. This will include name, address, date of birth, previous address and church if moved in the last 12 months, details of related experience and a contact name for a referee if appropriate.

We shall seek references for children or youth workers where we have not known the person for at least 2 years.

Convictions for criminal offences against children

A DBS check is required for every person working with children or young people in our churches. The Diocesan Policy states that these will be repeated every 5 years.

At present, this is at no cost to the individual or to the parishes.

Results of the DBS check are declared to the Diocesan Child Protection Officer and the Priest in Charge, who may share this with the Benefice Child Protection Officer. People will be required to complete a DBS even if already DBS checked in another capacity.

How to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse

Refer to diagram on page, and detailed notes on pages 14 - 18.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

Our advice on transporting children is as follows:

- Where possible only those who have gone through the church/organisation recruitment procedures for workers should transport children.
- All drivers to have read the child protection policy of the church/organisation and agree to abide by this.
- Parental consent to be given and all journeys to be carried out with the knowledge of the leadership.
- Seat belts must be worn, the driver must have adequate insurance and the vehicle must be road worthy. Drivers must ensure that booster seats are used in accordance with current legislation. The child should be encouraged to fasten their own seatbelt, the adult must ensure these are correctly fastened.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited till other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn’t appropriate to talk in the car. They should offer to meet with the child/young person at a location where there can be other adults around. (Remember a child/young person may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- Having checked drivers (application form, interview, references etc.) it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. decide who is the most suitable child to be dropped off last and plan routes accordingly.
- At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that an appropriate adult collects children.
- Obviously look at instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a child e.g. where they have had a disagreement that evening, where a child/young person has a ‘crush’ on a driver etc., and arrange for someone else to transport the child/young person.

If you are planning to use a minibus, please consult the Diocesan Booklet on Child Protection, or speak to the Parish Priest, or Benefice Child Protection Officer.

DISCIPLINE – WHAT CAN WE DO?

1) **Team Agreement**

The leadership team should be in agreement as to the standard of behaviour allowed in the group.

2) **The Rules**

The young people in the group must be given boundaries of behaviour that are acceptable. If necessary separate children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together. But give them a chance, warn them and only separate them as a last resort.

3) **Supervision**

Always ensure adequate supervision of activities by leaders.
Have other leaders helping.

4) **Control**

If necessary stop all activities until order is restored.

5) **Consistency**

Apply all rules fairly and consistently.

6) **Don't**

Shout, lose your temper or strike a child.

The aim is to build healthy relationships with children, and to be a good role model. If there are problems, look honestly at the programme – if children are bored, they misbehave. Each child is unique, and each child may need a different method of being dealt with. We need to ask why is the child behaving in this way.

Pray for wisdom, discernment and understanding, and for the child.



GENERAL SAFETY

- 1 Ensure adequate child/leader ratios, (see below about Supervision.)
- 2 Ensure access to First Aid. Each group is to have access to a First Aid Kit and an Accident book. Each group is to have access to a telephone, and knows who is First Aid trained in the church.
- 3 Ensure electric plugs and appliances are safe and that they, and any hot surface, are suitably protected.
- 4 Ensure Fire Extinguishers and Fire Exits are present.
- 5 Ensure that contact details are available during the meeting (“Consent Forms or Book”) and that leaders are aware of allergies/medical requirements of the children.
- 6 Ensure buildings have suitable insurance.

SUPERVISION

It is important to have an appropriate ratio of adult supervisors to children for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- Sex, age and ability of group
- Pupils with special educational or medical needs
- Nature of activities
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey
- Type of any accommodation
- Competence of adults, both general and on specific activities
- Requirements of the organisation/local to be visited
- Competence and behaviour of pupils
- First Aid cover

Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe, as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. However, a general guide for visits in normal circumstances, might be:

Less than 11 years old: 1 adult to 6 children
More than 11 years old: 1 adult to 10 children
There must always be at least two adults present.

The above is an example only. Group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group. There should be a minimum of one adult in charge.

In addition to the adult in charge there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.

Coln River Group of Parishes
CHECKLIST FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHURCH POLICY TOWARDS
CARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Before the meeting

How are the young people received into the group meeting?

- Is there adequate lighting on entry?
- Is there always someone to welcome them?
- Is there an adequate number of leaders to both set out any facilities and to be in charge of the group members?

During the meeting

Are the facilities suitable for the activities taking place?

- Is there an adequate child/leader ratio?
- Are leaders supported and supervised?
- Is the meeting structured to minimise the times when an adult is alone with a child?
- Is there access to a first aid kit?
- Do leaders know what to do in the event of an accident?
- Are the toilet and washing facilities clean and properly stocked?
Is any equipment to be used checked for safety?

If off site activities are taking place -

- Is any transport being used safe and properly insured?
- Are drivers of any vehicles sufficiently experienced?
- Does the group need extra insurance cover for the activity taking place?
- Are the leaders properly trained for the activities taking place?
- Are the parents fully informed as to the nature of the activity?

After the meeting

How are the young people returned to their parents?

- Are they handed over to a known adult?
- What happens if a child is not collected?
- Is there a leader responsible for supervision of children while others clear up?
- Are parents informed of changes to times and venues, or of weeks when there is no meeting, to avoid children arriving to find nobody present?

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child.
- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances, i.e. when they need medical attention or their own safety.
- Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact and should notify any concerns to the Nominated Person or Priest in Charge.
- Touch should not be prolonged.
- Corporal punishment is neither appropriate or legal.

