

The Parish of St Nicholas, Sevenoaks

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Promoting a Safer Church

Safeguarding at St Nicholas is everyone's responsibility and is at the heart and soul of our theology and mission. At St Nicholas church we are building a strong culture where we seek continually to educate and equip ourselves with a deeper knowledge and understanding of safeguarding. We see this as way to love one another as we are called, with an appreciation that safeguarding each other is an external expression of Christ's love for all people. St Nicholas' values everyone and so we aim to be a church where everyone feels safe and able to speak up.

In accordance with the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture for all within our church.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility, in accordance with diocesan policy, related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding appropriately and in a timely manner to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring, as Christ would, for victims/survivors of abuse
- Caring, as Christ would, 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 nurturing 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 appropriately 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.
- Ensure victims/survivors of abuse are offered support which may include being directed to relevant professional support services, 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.

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 Emma Watson as the Parish Safeguarding Officer and Helen Greig as the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

Incumbent: Angus MacLeay

Churchwardens: Robert Von Kaufmann and Mark Walkington

Reporting a concern

Recognise

- Accept and take seriously what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Let the person tell their story and don't push for information or ask leading questions
- Do not interrogate them or decide if they are telling the truth
- Be alert to signs and symptoms of abuse

Respond

- Reassure the individual that they have taken the right step in sharing this information and that they are not to blame
- Be honest; never make promises to keep what you are being told confidential. If abuse is involved, you will need to tell someone
- Tell them what you will do with the information they have shared, and that they will be kept informed
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or that of others.
- Do not investigate the matter any further yourself, nor approach the person about whom allegations may have been made.

Record

Write down, concisely, exactly what was seen, said or heard, and make clear where you have added your own views or interpretation. Remember that this is your information and that you are responsible for passing it on to the person with safeguarding responsibility. Be mindful that your written comments may be needed in the event that further legal or disciplinary action is taken.

You may find it helpful to use the 4 Ws as follows:

- WHO was involved? Name the key people
- WHAT happened? Facts not opinions
- WHEN did it happen? Date and time
- WHO have you referred the issue on to?

Only pass the information on verbally if it is an emergency situation. Even so, you must also find time as soon as possible to write it down and send it on to the relevant person

Refer

- Pass the information to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor in your setting within 24 hours. You can do this by completing a safeguarding form or by sending an email to safeguarding@stnicholas-sevenoaks.org
- In case of an emergency, call the police or dial 999