

# Safeguarding Children at



## Child Protection Policy

June 2015

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- 1. GENERAL STATEMENT:** As Christians worshipping at Redland Parish Church we are concerned with the wholeness and well being of each and every individual, regardless of age. Everyone shares in the task of preventing the physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse of children and young people. However, the Vicar, Staff team, Churchwardens and P.C.C. have a responsibility for leadership in this area, most particularly in providing an appropriate environment and by ensuring the careful selection of Leaders and Helpers so that the children and their leaders can know they are safe and secure.
  
- 2. REDUCING THE RISK OF ABUSE:** The number of people who seek to harm children is small. However, the following guidelines are designed to reduce that risk of abuse and groundless allegations to a minimum.
  - Leaders/Helpers will be always aware of the responsibility they have for the children in their care. Registers will be kept and leaders should normally wear name badges.
  - The Child Safeguarding Officers, or Youth Minister, should be approached if abuse is suspected or disclosed.
  - It is recognised that from time to time Leaders will be meeting with children on a 1:1 basis; if possible this should be within full view of others.
  - Leaders should respect children's personal space. This does not preclude any physical contact which can be of benefit to a hurt (physically/emotionally) child, or unavoidable in some sports/games, but should make every effort to ensure that it cannot be misconstrued.
  - Parents should be made aware that they have full responsibility for their children until they have been received on Church premises and when the activity is over. Children not collected (unless they have another means of getting home agreed by parents) should not be left alone but every effort to contact parents should be made.
  - Always have a minimum of two adults (preferably male and female) responsible for each group on Church premises. (see page 8 Guidelines for Ratios of adults to children)
  - At all times, we aim to provide as safe and secure an environment as is reasonably practicable. Activities must be appropriate for the intended age group.
  - A Medical & Information Form will be completed for all children starting in a new group and a Permission Form will be completed by parents for each off-site activity.
  - Children must be given space to think for themselves and must not be subjected to pressure to accept the gospel.
  - Groups should not be taken off the premises with fewer than two adults of an appropriate gender, although this may vary depending on:
    - a) The age group involved
    - b) The style of activity
    - c) Its location
    - d) Provision of adult supervision by another organisation.
  - Where children have to be transported by car make sure that only the correct numbers of people are accommodated and that everyone uses a seatbelt and where appropriate a booster seat.
  - As a Church we undertake to follow those principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidelines issued by the Home Office. It will therefore be unacceptable for those people in a "Position of Trust" to engage in any behaviour that might allow a sexual relationship to develop while the relationship of trust continues.
  
- 3. A SAFETY NET:** The phone number of CHILDLINE will be displayed in a prominent place in the Church Hall, as will the names and numbers of the Safeguarding Officer and others who can be contacted.

- 4. GUIDELINES FOR ALL:** There is no certain way of identifying a would-be child abuser. Those who have abused before can be very adept at hiding their previous offences and there is also the possibility that someone, given the right circumstances and temptations could offend for the first time. As much as we would like to think otherwise such things do occur within Christian communities. For this reason ALL those who have close contact with children should be aware of and subject to "Safeguarding Children at Redland Parish Church - Child Protection Guidelines". This is not about treating everyone with suspicion, but about taking sensible precautions for the well being of all.
- 5. APPOINTMENT OF LEADERS:** The appointment, training and supervision of Leaders/helpers is of crucial importance in each Church group and the P.C.C. has a responsibility to provide adequate support and resources to enable this to happen.
- 6. CLEAR ROLES FOR ALL:** All Leaders/helpers should be made aware of their areas of responsibility and to whom they report.
- 7. WORKING TOGETHER:** Leaders/helpers should regularly share experiences and talk about their relationships with the children, paying special attention to any situation in which a child is being highly favoured or harshly treated. The P.C.C. delegates the responsibility for this matter and its regular review to the Youth Minister (and another appointed person for Sunday School) who will also try to ensure that Leaders/helpers are confident to carry out their role on behalf of the Church.
- 8. DECLARATION FORMS:** Everybody over 16 working with young people will complete Application & Declaration forms. These forms are confidential and will be reviewed by the Child Safeguarding Officer and the Vicar.
- 9. REFERENCES:** At least one reference should be sought for each new Leader/Helper. Where the applicant has worshipped at Redland for less than two years, a second reference will be taken up.
- 10. DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS) DISCLOSURE:** All workers with children/young people, who are over 18, will be required to obtain an Enhanced DBS Disclosure.
- 11. APPOINTMENT/REVIEW:** People who take on the organisation and leadership of a group must be appointed by the P.C.C. The Church Leadership and Group Leaders will at least once a year review progress and problems in their group.
- 12. OFF-SITE VISITS/ACTIVITIES:** All Off-site visits and activity programmes must be submitted to the PCC in advance for approval and recording in the minutes.
- 13. DISCOVERY OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE:** If any abuse is disclosed, discovered, suspected or alleged, listen to the child and do not interrogate them, tell them whom you will be informing. Make notes immediately afterwards. Inform the Safeguarding Officer or Youth Minister, who will report the matter to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser - do not talk to others.
- 14. TRAINING:** It is the responsibility of the P.C.C. with guidance from the Safeguarding officer to ensure that all volunteers and employees work towards completing the Diocesan Safeguarding Training Plan, appropriate to the level of work that is undertaken.
- 15. RECORDS:** The Safeguarding Officer will keep an up to date list of all volunteers and employees, store the Application Forms, Declaration Forms and correspondence.

- 16. NON-REDLAND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES:** All non-Redland Church organisations who run activities for children on Church and/or Hall premises will be notified of our Child Protection Policy and encouraged to adopt similar standards.
- 17. WORKING WITH OFFENDERS:** The PCC has a Fair Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy, a copy can be obtained from the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Known abusers will not be allowed to work with children.
- 18. POLICY REVIEW:** The P.C.C. is responsible for reviewing this Policy and Guidelines in the light of any changes in practice, guidelines or legislation.

## Theological Basis for Good Practice in Child Protection

*Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*  
(Deuteronomy 6.4-9)

The writer of Deuteronomy is clear about the need for God's law to be known by everyone. The law is to be in their minds at all times. Children are specifically mentioned (rare in itself) and they are to be included in this – what one might almost call - absorption with the commandments of God. Jesus too refers to this in His summary of the Law.

Many today find difficulty with this concentration on the law of God, and with good reason. Law, from God or our legislature, functions differently in a democratic and literate society from the way it worked in ancient cultures. Then, little was written down, few could read, and a declaration of God's commandments was big news!

But there is another difference in how the law is regarded today to which we wish to draw attention here as we begin to consider the law, and our own parish guidelines, in the area of Child Protection.

Law may be experienced as prescriptive, diminishing of personal freedom, and even intrusive. Or it may be seen as freeing to life-enhancing choices because it protects.

If we see God's law in this way, perhaps we may see child protection legislation and our parish guidelines in the same way. We do have a responsibility to our parish, we have created our own policy based on the diocesan guidelines, and we must put it into operation. Good child protection does not happen when we produce the words on paper which say they must be protected; it happens when and where children **are** protected.

## Safer Recruitment

The PCC is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all volunteers and employees.

All those who work with children and/or vulnerable adults, and those who supervise workers will be required, if eligible to undertake a DBS check prior to starting in any role. The suitability for the role is not wholly dependent on a DBS check, but is part of Redland's Safer Recruitment Policy.

A copy of the policy is available from the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

All members of the PCC should have a copy of the policy.

Everyone within the Parish must follow this policy when recruiting paid and unpaid staff.

## Useful telephone numbers:

<b>Parish Safeguarding Officer</b>	Margaret Matthews	924 3350
Assistant	Celia Howe	celia@jinsi.co.uk
Youth Minister	Fran Dawes	07703 744183
Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – Leanne Smith		9060132
		leannesmith@bristoldiocese.org
Police – Avon & Somerset Constabulary		101
Childline – NSPCC helpline for parents and carers		0808 800 5000
Childline – helpline for children		0800 1111
<b>Social Services:</b>		
Children's and Young People's Services		903 6444
Emergency (out of office hours)		0145 461 5165
Immediate Danger		999