

# **St Helen's Church** **Safeguarding Policy –** *General Info*

## Policy Statement and Principles

St Helen's is committed to the safeguarding of all children, youth and vulnerable members of and visitors to our church. To that end:

- We will seek to prevent abuse or neglect wherever possible
- We will raise awareness across the church family so that everyone plays their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect
- We will be responsible for appropriate selection and training of those who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. This may include the use of DBS checks and other measures
- We will safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live
- We will respond immediately to any complaint of harm or potential harm to a child or vulnerable adult, and cooperate with other agencies such as the police or local authority where appropriate
- We will report any concerns about children or vulnerable adults via the appropriate channels
- We will offer pastoral care to victims of abuse
- We will suspend any volunteer under suspicion of abuse, offering them pastoral support throughout the process

## Overview of Safeguarding Responsibilities

**(1) The PCC** has overall responsibility for Safeguarding within St Helen's. This policy is maintained, reviewed, and sanctioned by the PCC.

**(2) The Church Safeguarding Committee** is a source of advice and guidance on Safeguarding issues. They will advise the PCC on any matters relating to Safeguarding, making recommendations for changes in policy and procedure, and hold Ministry Area Leaders accountable for policy implementation.

**(3) The Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO)** is the PCC member given responsibility for Safeguarding within the church family and all its various ministries.

Given the size of our church and the diversity of our ministries it is necessary for the CSO to delegate their responsibilities to Ministry Area Leaders. The CSO will assist and advise Ministry Area Leaders if a Safeguarding issue or risk arises and needs to be addressed.

The CSO will also be included in decisions about whether to permit someone to be involved in ministry with children where their DBS check is blemished or information is provided about them under the DBS scheme.

**(4) Ministry Area Leaders** are responsible for Safeguarding within their ministry area. This includes:

- Ensuring all caregivers within their area are recruited in accordance with this Safeguarding Policy
- Acting as Safeguarding Officer for any disclosures of abuse within their ministry area

**(5) The Children's Champion** raises the profile of children within the church and on the PCC.

**(6) Caregiver** refers to anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

All caregivers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the person as Christ loves them
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct
- Praying for those in their care

# Outline of Ministry Areas

For the purposes of Safeguarding, the church's various activities have been divided into separate ministry areas. Ministry areas which make formal provision for children and young people require a named Ministry Area Leader and must comply with the St Helen's Safeguarding Policy. Caregivers recruited to these ministry areas must read the relevant policy.

## **IMPORTANT:**

- All caregivers must read **Section A** of the relevant policy
- They must then read any additional information from **Section B** of that policy that is relevant to the area of ministry they are serving in
- A list of key **Contact Details** can be found on the last two pages of each policy

None of the ministry areas make formal provision for **vulnerable adults**, however the vulnerable adults policy outlines considerations relevant to all ministry areas where vulnerable adults may be in attendance. This supplement must be read by anyone providing formal care for vulnerable adults. For the purposes of this document, we have opted to use the term 'vulnerable adult' in place of 'adult at risk' due to this being a more familiar term.

The ministry areas that make formal provision for children and young people are as follows:

### **Sunday Morning**

*(including crèche, Sunday school, Central Focus weekend, Long weekend, Occasional Seminars e.g. Marriage or Parenting Days)*

### **Sunday 2.30**

*(including crèche, Sunday school, International Growth Groups weekend, 2.30 weekend)*

### **Sunday 4pm**

*(including crèche, Sunday school, Food at 5s, 4pm weekends)*

### **Sunday 6pm**

*(including RML weekends, training weekends, Leaders' weekend)*

### **City**

*(including Summer School, City weekend)*

### **Youth**

*(including Bridge, Junction, Youth RML, youth weekend, Sorted, Sorted Nano, socials)*

### **Little Pickles**

*(including any activities additional to the morning stay and play group)*

### **Women on Wednesday**

*(including Central WoW crèche, any WoW event with advertised childcare or activities)*

### **Homework Helpers**

The **Student** ministry and the **Offsite City** ministry do not make formal provision for children or young people.

**Babysitting** is an area in which we are unable to provide formal provision. Families can make informal arrangements within the congregation, and must take full responsibility for assessing the suitability of the volunteer.

There is a supplement for the **Church Staff Team**, covering the work they do outside of the above formal ministry areas.

# Screening Procedure for Caregivers

Every applicant who wishes to serve in any ministry area involving children or young people must complete a screening process prior to serving, and anyone providing formal care (as defined by the Diocesan policy) for vulnerable adults must complete this process.

To ensure safe and quality care, the church has established several criteria that all caregivers must meet in order to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults:

## 1. Recruitment

- All caregivers must be people in good standing with the church.
- All caregivers must be 18 years of age or older.
  - With the prior approval and direction of the Children's Worker, young people who are aged 14+ can assist with children's work. Such volunteers contribute towards the number of children not the number of adults when it comes to required ratios.

## 2. Assessment

- All caregivers must have a face to face conversation with the Ministry Area Leader (MAL) for which they are volunteering (or the leader to whom the MAL has delegated this task), in order to go through the role description and to have the opportunity to ask any follow-up questions needed to confirm their suitability for the role. The volunteer must also complete and sign the Diocesan Volunteer Agreement.
- All caregivers must complete a Diocese of London Confidential Declaration form, requiring the honest declaration of any criminal convictions.
- All caregivers must provide the names of 2 people to act as personal referees, which will be followed up. Referees must not be relatives/partners, current parish clergy, or church staff
- All caregivers must complete a Parish Safeguarding form requiring a Christian testimony and a signed declaration of having read the relevant policy.
- All caregivers must complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) form for the applicable Enhanced level Disclosure. Details of how to do so will be sent to the caregiver via email.

## 3. Appointment

- A caregiver can begin their role **only when** the following have been completed:
  - The Diocese of London Confidential Declaration form and the Parish Safeguarding form have been filed as complete.
  - The personal references have been sent for, received, and reviewed as being acceptable.
  - The satisfactory DBS Disclosure outcome has been received from CCPAS.

## 4. Data Protection

- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely and indefinitely. The church will have record of the following:
  - Diocese of London Confidential Declaration form
  - Two personal references (which will be available to the DST (Diocese of London Safeguarding Team) should they request it)
  - Parish Safeguarding form
  - DBS Disclosure Certificate reference number
  - Additional notes pertaining to the above

## 5. Training

- All volunteers are encouraged to complete the online Diocesan Safeguarding training upon recruitment, and additional training is then provided for Sunday School and Youth helpers, and we are working towards implementing regular safeguarding training more widely.