

# PCC of St Mary's Sholing

## *Safeguarding Policy*

### 1. GENERAL STATEMENT

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St Mary's Church (along with its community projects) are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and considers that their safety and wellbeing is of paramount importance. St Mary's Church expects everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults to:

- Be attentive to the needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults, doing whatever is needed to maintain their safety and wellbeing;
- Treat children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity, defending their innocence and upholding their trust;
- Treat everyone in a way which demonstrates their high value as individuals, regardless of gender, background, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs;
- Be aware of potential risks to children, young people and vulnerable adults, and do what we can to minimise these risks;
- Listen to children, young people and vulnerable adults, taking their concerns seriously.

This policy applies everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults through St Mary's Church, whether they are paid or voluntary (even if they themselves are not yet 18), as well as to THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY'S, CHURCH SHOLING. Following this policy is also part of our commitment to the Charity Commission and to other organisations which, quite rightly, require us to be diligent in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. A statement reaffirming this commitment will be included in any annual report.

This policy is approved and endorsed by THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY'S, and should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and procedures which outline more specifically our expectations within specific settings in order to deliver the highest possible quality of care.

## 2. OVERSIGHT & LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY'S, CHURCH SHOLING are ultimately responsible for ensuring all vulnerable groups are safeguarded, and that St Mary's Church Club meets all legal responsibilities in this area.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY'S, CHURCH SHOLING will ensure the Safeguarding Officer maintains an overview of what is happening with regard to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and seek to improve this where possible.

## 3. DEFINITIONS OF CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS

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For the purposes of this policy, we use the following definitions:

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:** We define a child as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday.

**VULNERABLE ADULTS:** We define a vulnerable adult as anyone who is over the age of 18, but who has a reduced capacity to protect herself/himself against significant harm, abuse or exploitation – whether due to disability, learning difficulties, mental health problems, substance misuse, illness, old age, or other factors.

## 4. STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

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The process for recruiting and inducting staff (both paid and voluntary) can be found in separate policies/procedures. The general principles in those policies and procedures are:

- We will always **verify identity** and **check references** for staff (paid and voluntary).
- We will ensure all new staff (paid and voluntary) sign a **self-disclosure** form.
- **DBS checks** (Disclosure and Barring Service, formerly CRB) will be done for all eligible staff (paid and voluntary) before they start any regular role with children or vulnerable adults. DBS checks with a check of Barred Lists will always be done before people begin Regulated Activity with children or vulnerable adults.
- **Records** of application forms, references, identity verification information, Self-Disclosure forms, DBS check reference numbers/applicant names and dates may be kept in secure long-term storage (for a minimum of 50 years).

- **Training** in Safeguarding, including the principles of keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe, and implementing the relevant St Mary's Church policies, will be given to staff (paid and voluntary) on an ongoing basis, with annual refresher courses.
- **Expectations for all staff** (paid and voluntary):
  - to behave at all times in a way which is above reproach, taking care not to act in any way which is inappropriate, or which could reasonably be expected to be seen by others as inappropriate;
  - there should always be more than one adult in the room with children, young people or vulnerable adults, or there should at least be another adult within line of sight and easy calling distance;
  - staff should not be alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, hidden from the sight of others. It is good practice that staff and volunteers are kept safe in all situations and therefore they should avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
  - physical contact should be kept to a minimum, always in public, at the instigation of the child or vulnerable adult, and for their wellbeing.

## 5. WHAT IS ABUSE?

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In general terms:

**PHYSICAL ABUSE** is when a child, young person or vulnerable adult is deliberately hurt or harmed. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, suffocating, or inducing/fabricating an illness. This may also include female genital mutilation (FGM).

**SEXUAL ABUSE** involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities. This may involve physical contact (such as penetration or sexual touching), non-contact activities (such as encouraging inappropriately sexual behaviour, or involving children in watching pornography or sexual activities), or grooming in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by men or women, or by other children.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE** is the consistent maltreatment of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, causing adverse effects on their emotional development. This may include a child, young person or vulnerable adult being made to feel unloved or inadequate, being shamed, taunted, humiliated or bullied, suffering from over-protection, or being given responsibility beyond their years or capability.

**FINANCIAL ABUSE** (also known as material abuse) is the misuse of money and assets belonging to a child, young person or vulnerable adult. This may include theft, fraud, exploitation, exerting pressure regarding inheritance, misappropriation of property or benefits, controlling how they use their money or assets, or using these in ways which are not in their best interests.

**NEGLECT** is the persistent failure to meet the basic needs of a child, young person or vulnerable adult. This may include not being given the care needed to maintain their health, safety, and wellbeing.

### **Signs of Abuse:**

All staff (paid and voluntary) have a responsibility to be aware of signs of abuse and neglect, so that they are able to identify cases where children or vulnerable adults may be in need of help or protection. Signs of abuse or neglect may include:

- Physical injuries.
- Aggressive behaviour towards children, young people or vulnerable adults (physical/verbal)..
- Very young children left unsupervised.
- Fighting or bullying behaviour.
- Unexpected change or oddness in behaviour.
- A child or vulnerable adults disclosing their experience (writing, drawing, speaking).
- An adult spending a lot of time alone with children.

These are just a few of the more obvious indications of abuse; all staff should be vigilant in looking out for these and other indications.

*Further guidance about child sexual exploitation, cyberbullying, domestic violence, fabricated illness, faith abuse, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, gangs and youth violence, radicalisation, sexting, teenage relationship abuse, trafficking, and violence against women and girls (VAWG) can be found at [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) and via the [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK) website.*

## **6. REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE**

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### **General guidance for reporting suspected abuse:**

- Remember that the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is more important than all considerations such as whether you will offend someone.
- You can trust the Safeguarding Officer to take reports seriously, but not to overreact and to inform the diocesan safeguarding team.

- Reporting even small or seemingly insignificant things is important, because there may be a number of small things which, taken together, become significant.
- Do not talk to other people about the situation (not even the parent/carer), only the person you are reporting to and anyone you/they agree should be informed.
- Especially do not challenge/confront/question people who are suspected of abuse.
- Avoid people knowing that you are reporting them, since they may become aggressive towards you or towards the child, young person or vulnerable adult in question, or try to persuade you to not report it, or even destroy evidence.

### **Dealing with disclosures from children or vulnerable adults:**

People who are abused often let small clues slip out in normal conversation over a period of time. You should take note of these clues, write them down and take advice from the Safeguarding Officer. When a child starts to directly tell you about abuse, how you respond (what you do and say) is crucially important because:

- Your attitude could stop a child, young person or vulnerable adult telling you something which they may have taken a long time to get up courage to say.
- It can affect the outcome of any future court case/custody case.

### **What to do if a child or vulnerable adult starts to tell you something:**

- Never promise to keep anything a complete secret under any circumstances (*instead explain that anything shared will be treated in the strictest of confidence, but that there are certain circumstances in which disclosure will be necessary*).
- Show acceptance of what they say, however unlikely it seems.
- Keep calm and maintain an open mind.
- Look at the child, young person or vulnerable adult directly.
- Be honest, let them know that you will need to tell someone else.
- Even if they have broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware they may have been threatened.
- Never push for information, if the child, young person or vulnerable adult decides not to tell you after all, then you should accept their decision.
- Let them know that you are always ready to listen.

<p><b>Helpful things to say or convey:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ “I believe you.”</li> <li>✓ “I’m glad you have told me.”</li> <li>✓ “It’s not your fault.”</li> <li>✓ “I will help you.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Things you should avoid saying:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× “Why didn’t you tell anyone before?”</li> <li>× “Are you sure this is true?”</li> <li>× “Why?” “How?” “When?” “Who?” “Where?”</li> <li>× “I am shocked”, or “Don’t tell anyone else.”</li> <li>× Never make false promises.</li> </ul>
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### **Concluding:**

Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adults that they were right to tell you. Inform them of what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens. (Your next steps are to write detailed and accurate notes and report everything as outlined below immediately.) Concerns and allegations will be taken seriously, with referrals to relevant agencies and/or the police where appropriate.

### **Making notes:**

As soon as possible (preferably within an hour) write down the following:

- Date/time of the disclosure and date/time of the record;
- How the conversation took place (the context);
- Where it took place, and who was there;
- Exactly what the child, young person or vulnerable adult said, and what you said;
- (You may find it helpful to use a “body map” to indicate areas of injury/abuse, or the CP aide memoire form – but do not delay writing your notes in order to find these!)

Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. All records should be kept in a secure place; the Safeguarding Officer can show you where.

### **How to report if you see or hear something which concerns you:**

Tell the Safeguarding Officer what you observed. Your vigilance could save a child, young person or vulnerable adult from harm. This could include negligent or aggressive behaviour by a parent or carer, or inappropriate behaviour by adults or children. All concerns will be investigated and relevant action taken where this is appropriate.

## **Allegations of historic abuse:**

All staff (paid or voluntary) should bear in mind that, as well as children, young people and vulnerable adults, disclosures might also be made by adults who suffered from abuse or neglect as a child. This still counts as child abuse, and these same guidelines should be followed.

*NOTE: All information must be handled in accordance with good Data Protection principles; confidential information should only be shared as appropriate.*

*NOTE: See Appendix for a flow chart outline for how to report safeguarding concerns.*

## **7. RECORD KEEPING & STORAGE**

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Incidents of abuse may only come to light after a long period of time, in some cases many years. Therefore, all relevant records, documents, and correspondence must be securely retained for a minimum of 50 years. This should include:

- Staff and volunteer application forms, references, and identity verification;
- Records of DBS check reference numbers/applicant names and dates;
- Copies of our Safeguarding Policy and revisions;
- Records of Safeguarding training for staff (paid and voluntary);
- Records of abuse allegations/incidents and notification to appropriate authorities;
- A record of our historic public liability insurance policies.

Individuals mentioned in these records should be notified that this information may be held for a long time. All such records should be reviewed periodically to ensure that the storage of such information is still appropriate in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

All records should be kept separately and securely in lockable storage containers, with access strictly limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. In the event that St Mary's Church ceases to operate, alternative storage provision must be arranged to ensure that the documents are available if an allegation of abuse arises.

## 8. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

(Please refer to Social Media Policy alongside this document)

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St Mary's Church expects all staff (paid or voluntary) to ensure that all their communications with children, young people and vulnerable adults (including email, text, online messaging, social networking):

- Are appropriate and wholesome in content.
- Are at appropriate times (good practice would be not to contact children, young people or vulnerable adults between 10pm and 7am).
- Avoid children, young people or vulnerable adults getting the idea that there is a "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" developing beyond that of staff and child/young person/vulnerable adult.
- Avoid allowing the contact information of the child, young person or vulnerable adult to be shared with others. (it is important to be vigilant in this so that no child, young person or vulnerable adult is put in harm's way).
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Furthermore, all staff (paid or voluntary) are expected to follow these guidelines:

- Staff should not be 'friends' with any of the children, young people or vulnerable adults that we work with on Facebook or other social networking platforms. St Mary's Church will sign up for an account with the most relevant platforms and, if necessary, staff will be able to communicate with children, young people or vulnerable adults through this account.
- Staff should not share their personal phone information with children, young people or vulnerable adults. When necessary, staff should only text children, young people or vulnerable adults via official staff mobile phones.
- All staff (paid or voluntary) should keep a record of any electronic communications with children, young people and vulnerable adults in case of misunderstandings – this applies to all messages in both directions. Trivial items only need be kept for a month or so, but more significant items should be kept for a year (although if the communication is the subject of further action, they may need to be kept for a long time).
- As always, any indication which suggests a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being harmed or neglected must be referred to the Safeguarding Officer.



*The Safeguarding Officer can direct staff to information which helps people understand how to keep safe online.*

## 9. PHOTOGRAPHY

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Nobody should take photos or videos at St Mary's Church without the express permission of their Team Leader. In most cases, when children, young people or vulnerable adults are the subject of photos/videos, parents or carers should be given notice that photos will be taken, and parental or carers consent obtained. However, when they take part in a public performance or event, this will be taken as tacit consent from parents or carers that photos/videos may be taken by members of the public.

If staff (paid or voluntary) take photos/videos of children or vulnerable adults, they should not be stored on their personal camera/phone/device, but should be uploaded to the St Mary's Church system for security as soon as possible, and then the original images should be immediately removed from personal devices.

Photos of children or vulnerable adults must show them appropriately dressed and should not be sexually suggestive. We accept that children and vulnerable adults may take photos of each other, but if we find out that these photos are inappropriate or being used in bullying, we will take action to prevent this.

### **Where photos of children or vulnerable adults are used in publicity or on the website,**

- Then no names or contact details are to be given.
- Then the written consent of their parent or carer must be given before it is downloaded (this is a legal requirement under the Data Protection Act).

## 10. USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

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**SAFEGUARDING OFFICER:** SU BRAKEWELL / [safeguarding@sholing.church](mailto:safeguarding@sholing.church)  
07885 218564

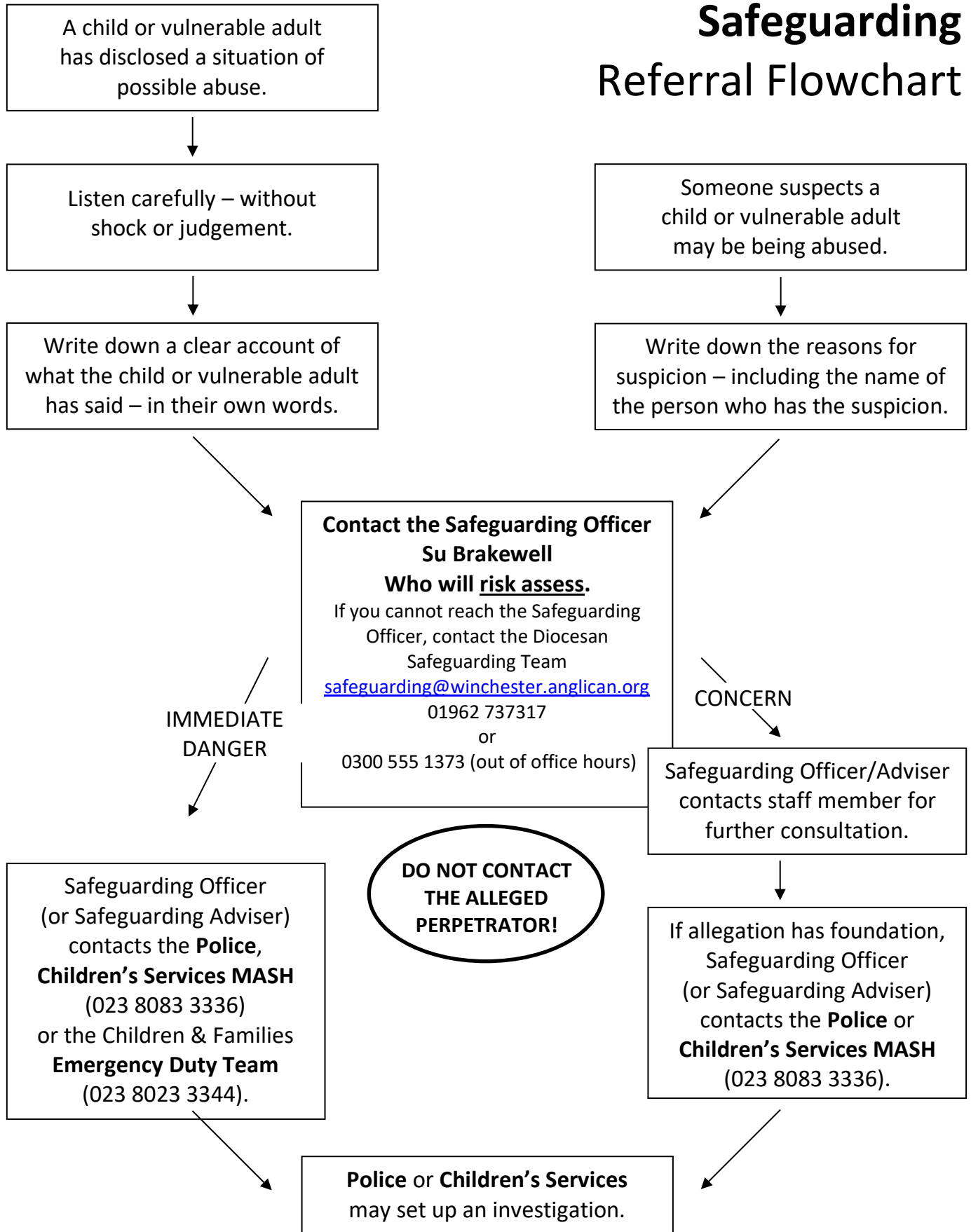
**ST MARY'S CHURCH** Rev Garry Roberts / [vicar@sholing.church](mailto:vicar@sholing.church)  
02380 448337

**MAKE LUNCH SO'TON EAST** SU BRAKEWELL / [safeguarding@sholing.church](mailto:safeguarding@sholing.church)  
07885 218564

**CLASSIC CUPPA** SU BRAKEWELL / [safeguarding@sholing.church](mailto:safeguarding@sholing.church)  
  
07885 218564

**DIOCESE SAFEGUARDING  
TEAM:** [safeguarding@winchester.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@winchester.anglican.org)  
01962 737317 / 0300 555 1373 (out of office  
hours)

# Safeguarding Referral Flowchart



\*If you cannot reach the Safeguarding Officer (or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser) and it is deemed that the child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, contact **Police** or **Children’s Services MASH** on the number above.

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