Christ Church Felixstowe
Safeguarding Policy

1. Adoption of this Safeguarding Policy

Our parish of Christ Church, Felixstowe, is committed to safeguarding children, young people, and adults from harm. We follow the House of Bishops' guidance and policies[i], and have our own Safeguarding Officer. Our Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich's safeguarding web pages[ii] contain vital links and information, including contacts for the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, who advises our Safeguarding Officer. Contact details for our Safeguarding Officer and the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer are displayed in the church building and on our website[iii].

This policy was formally adopted at a meeting of the Parochial Church Council on __9th September 2026_, and will be reviewed and re-adopted annually.

Signature of the vicar:___Dominic Turner_____, on behalf of the PCC.

2. Definitions

The following terms are used in this policy:

- "The Diocese" refers to the Church of England's Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.
- "The church" refers to the Parish church of Christ Church, Felixstowe, within the Diocese.
- "The PCC" refers to the Parochial Church Council of the church.
- "Church officer" refers to any person appointed by or on behalf of the PCC into a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid. Church officers hold a position of trust, responsibility, and delegated authority, and are required to undertake such safeguarding training as the Diocese requires, and to undergo the church's Safer Recruiting process before appointment.
- "PSO" refers to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

3. General Statement of Safeguarding Policy

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church and the PCC are committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims / survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally 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 church and PCC will:

- Create a safe and caring 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 to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the church.
- Display in the church building and on the 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, follow House of Bishops' guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims / survivors of abuse 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 church officer and member who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

4. Statement of Principles

- We recognise that formal policies and processes alone will not protect children or vulnerable adults. The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole church. Everyone who participates in the life of the church has a role to play in promoting a safer church for all.
- Safeguarding is an integral part of the mission and ministry of the church.
- The church recognises that the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount and that we have a duty of care when they are in our charge. We will do everything that we can to provide a safe and caring environment when they are engaging in church activities.
- We will carefully select and train all those with responsibility for children or vulnerable adults in line with our Safer Recruitment Policy.
- We will respond without delay to every report (verbal or written) which suggests that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, co-operating with the Diocese, statutory agencies, and the local authority as required.
- We will seek to pay attention to power, and challenge any abuse of it, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including referral to other organisations if appropriate, to all who have been affected by issues around abuse.

- We will seek to offer appropriate pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child.

5. The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)
The PSO is appointed to work with the Incumbent and the PCC to ensure the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and that all Safeguarding concerns are properly addressed. The PSO must ensure that any concerns about a child or an adult at risk are appropriately reported both to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer and any other relevant statutory agencies. The PSO also acts as the church's DBS administrator. A full role profile can be found on the Diocesan website.[iv] A deputy PSO may also be appointed with the approval of the PCC, to assist the PSO in any tasks as required.

6. Recruitment of Prospective Workers
The church has a Safer Recruitment Policy, which it will implement when appointing people as officers to work with children and vulnerable adults. All prospective candidates must undergo Diocesan Safeguarding training at the correct level for their role, and have an up-to-date Enhanced DBS certificate, before appointment. In addition, the Incumbent and the PCC reserve the right to remove any volunteer from a role working with children and young people without notice.

7. Training Requirements
For those working with children and vulnerable adults, there is a need to undergo regular training. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, all Diocesan requirements, as detailed in the document 'Diocesan Safeguarding Training Strategy 2024-2027.'[v] Copies of all certificates should be sent to the PSO for their records, and can be sent electronically. Access can also be given to the PSO to access the Diocesan safeguarding portal records, where people grant this. Where a person fails to complete training for their role within reasonable time the PSO should bring this matter to the PCC urgently, so that appropriate measures can be taken.

8. Responsibilities and Safety - Children
The PCC accepts that the church, through its officers, is responsible for children who are entrusted to our care by their parents or guardians: in the church building; on church property or other premises being used for church events; and during official church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places where such travel is organised by the church. However, the PCC and church is not responsible for private arrangements made by parents.

Children's workers have a duty to exercise adequate supervision at all times when a child is in their care. They are responsible for the child from the time they arrive at the place of activity or the meeting place, throughout the session until the end time stated on any advance information, or until the child is collected by their parent, guardian (or their previously authorised delegate).

8.a. Specific Roles

There are a number of roles within the church for people appointed to work with children. For roles without a Role Description (where people were appointed prior to the implementation of a Safer Recruitment Policy), the following points apply:

- Anyone working with children on behalf of the church must have an up-to-date Enhanced DBS certificate at all times.
- Anyone working with children on behalf of the church must undertake Diocesan Safeguarding Training to the correct level, and supply proof of this to the PSO.
- Anyone working with children on behalf of the church reports to the Incumbent on behalf of the PCC, and will be line-managed by the Incumbent or their delegate.
- Anyone working with children on behalf of the church must agree to comply with this Policy and other relevant church policies, as well as Diocesan or statutory requirements.
- When a role is vacated, new appointments must be made using the processes outlined in the church's Safer Recruitment Policy.
- If a person already in a role working with children on behalf of the church transfers into a different role, they can only do so after following the due process outlined in the church's Safer Recruitment Policy.

8.b. Record Keeping

Accurate and appropriate records should be kept for each child / youth group. Such records should be collected by or on behalf of PSO, and stored centrally at the church office. Records must be destroyed in-line with GDPR regulations, after a period of no longer than seven years (except where a legal requirement exists to keep records for longer or shorter periods).

The records collected or held for each child / youth group are:

- A registration form for each child / young person who attends a group, including:
    - Name, age, date of birth, address, parental / guardian contact details, details of allergies, medications, or other special requirements.
- A consent form for each child, signed by their parent or legal guardian, covering the normal activities of the group.
- Consent forms for each child, signed by their parent or legal guardian, covering any special or 'one off' events to which the child is invited.
- Attendance records for each meeting.
- A record of any accidents or injuries which occur (to be recorded in the church First Aid book, in the First Aid box).
- A record of any disciplinary action taken, giving clear details including date, time, action taken, and reasons for taking the action.[vi]
- A list of workers for each group, their assigned roles, and details of their training and Safeguarding checks (Enhanced DBS etc.)
- Where a Safeguarding issue or concern has arisen, the group leader must make a detailed record as soon as possible, including the date, time, and a signature, and consult with PSO. If the concern is immediate and / or very serious, the police or other external agencies should be consulted without delay.

8.c. Staffing Levels

Every group session must have a minimum of two adult helpers, with (if possible) a gender balance being maintained. Young people aged 16 or 17 may help with groups, if authorised to do so, but must be supervised at all times by an adult, and do not count as part of the staffing levels.

8.d. Physical Contact Policy

We recognise that it is not practicable or desirable to have a 'zero-contact' policy: it may be, for example, that a child needs comforting, or that a plaster might need to be applied. However, notwithstanding these and similar situations, the following rules apply:

- Physical contact should be kept to a minimum as far as possible, and should be initiated by the young person, not the worker.
    - Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have, apart from where exceptional circumstances exist (for example, a medical emergency).
- Physical contact should be age-appropriate, and never sexual (and workers should take care to ensure that their actions might not be construed as sexual in nature).
- Adult workers should never be alone with any child in their care.[vii]
- Everything should be kept public. If a child requires a hug, do this in front of the rest of the group. If they require comfort privately, contact their parent or guardian.
- Adult workers should not make assumptions about a child's needs.
- If an adult helper sees another adult acting in a way which seems inappropriate, or which goes against this policy, they should (if possible) seek to stop the behaviour occurring, and / or report it to the PSO for further assessment.

8.e. Prohibited Activities

Those working with children or young people must never:

- Engage in rough, physical, or sexually provocative activity.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in 'fun'.
- Use physical chastisement at any time.
- Use disparaging statements to a child that are calculated to, or have the practical effect of, diminishing their self-esteem.
- Meet a young person alone, even at their own request.
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Allow young people to engage in inappropriate physical activity unchallenged.
- Engage in social networking or texting with a child or young person except for the specific purposes of information within a social media group about events or services, and with parent's or guardian's prior consent.

8.f. Good Practice

- Coordinators, leaders, and assistants should pray regularly for the young people in their care.
- All regular and occasional meetings should have an up-to-date risk assessment, to be completed by the group coordinator or their delegate.
- Leaders should remember that they are a role model, and should seek to set a good example in their words and actions.

- Photographs of children and young people should not be taken or used without the written permission of their parent or guardian.
- Leaders should aim to build good relationships with the young people in their care, and with their parents / guardians.
- Everyone has a responsibility for Safeguarding, and any concerns which a leader notes should be reported and recorded as soon as possible.
- Leaders should ensure that the spaces used by children and young people are clear of clutter and any potentially dangerous hazards, before the meeting commences.
- Leaders should ensure that spaces are tidied up after meetings, leaving them as you would wish to find them.
- Any equipment used must be safe and in good condition: if in doubt, don't use it.
- If a child needs to be accompanied to the toilet, the child's parent or guardian should be contacted and asked to accompany them if possible. The child should only be accompanied otherwise by someone with an up-to-date enhanced DBS.

8.g. Special Needs

We want the church to be a safe and welcoming space for all. We have disabled toilets and level access, but where a child or young person has specific needs we invite a conversation with the child, their parents or guardians, and the group coordinator to understand any reasonable steps we can take to facilitate this.

8.h. Guidelines for Discipline[viii]

Discipline is the education of a person's character, and includes nurturing, training, instruction, verbal correction, teaching, and encouragement. Discipline, in this context, does not refer to punishment (either physical or verbal).

It is probable that, from time to time, a child or young person's behaviour might be disruptive to the group. On such occasions, gentle discipline is appropriate, following these guidelines:

- The objective should always be to help the child or young person to thrive, and never to make them feel ashamed or victimized.
- Ask God for wisdom, discernment, and understanding, and pray for the young person before you speak.
- **Never** use physical punishment or discipline.
- Always ensure that conversations about disruptive behaviour occur while another leader is present and aware of what is going on, and make a note immediately following the meeting, recording exactly what occurred and what was said.
- **Never** discipline a child or young person who is alone: disciplinary conversations should occur either in the group setting, or with a parent or guardian present
- Always inform the parents or guardians of any disciplinary conversations which have occurred.

8.h. Transporting children on behalf of the church

As a general rule, children and young people should only be transported by their parents or guardians. Where a specific situation or event demands it, however (for example, if a group of young people are being transported to a conference or event by the church), the following guidelines apply:

- Written consent from the parent or guardian must be obtained prior to travel.

- Normal rules around numbers and ratios apply, meaning there must be at least two adults in every vehicle.
- Drivers must have a full license for the vehicle being used, and must have held it for more than two years. They must have no unspent convictions, and fewer than six points on their license.
- Drivers must have comprehensive insurance for the vehicle being used, including cover for voluntary work. They must check, prior to travel, that their insurance covers transporting young people for church purposes.
- Vehicles must be safe, maintained regularly, and fit for purpose, and have up-to-date MOT certification where required.
- All passengers in the vehicle, including the driver, must wear a seatbelt at all times. The driver is responsible for checking this. Certain vehicles carry exemptions for passengers wearing seatbelts. If this is the case, written consent from the parent or guardian must be sought, stating that they are aware the vehicle does not have seatbelts, before allowing young people to travel.
- Transporting young people on the behalf of the church is a regulated activity, and so volunteers must be safely recruited, DBS checked, and undertake required safeguarding training prior to travel.

8.i. General guidelines

Where working with children and young people, the following rules must be followed:

- All events organised by, or on behalf of, the church must have a Risk Assessment, agreed by the PCC prior to the event.
- All events organised by, or on behalf of, the church must have staffing levels in line with this policy, and all helpers must follow this policy at all times.
- Any 'one off' events organised by, or on behalf of, the church, such as conferences, camps, or sleepovers, must be authorised by the PCC before they take place, and any guidance issued must be followed.

9. Responsibilities and Safety – Adults

The church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all vulnerable adults. We recognize that it is our responsibility as Christians to care for one another, to offer appropriate support, and to ensure that the church is a safe space for everyone.

9.a. General statement

- We are committed to the pastoral care of all those within out church community.
- We will carefully select and train those with particular pastoral ministry in line with our safer recruitment policy and Diocesan guidelines.
- We will seek to work closely and carefully with those who have suffered abuse, and, as appropriate, offering healing prayer and ministry.
- We will work with the Diocese and other relevant bodies to ensure that we safeguard against possible abuse, which may include (but is not limited to) supervising those who are known to have offended against vulnerable people.

9.b. Respecting rights

We recognize that all people, including those who are vulnerable, have the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity
- Have their privacy respected

- Be able to live as independently as possible
- Be able to choose how to live their life
- Have the full protection of the law
- Be able to use their chosen language or method of communication, and to be heard
- Have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, religion, cultural background, or ability

9.c. Recognizing vulnerability

Whereas childhood has a legal and absolute definition (someone under the age of 18), vulnerability is a more nebulous concept. Therefore it is important that we recognize some of the possible factors which might increase someone's vulnerability:

- Illness or disability, such as[ix]:
    - A sensory or physical disability or impairment
    - A learning disability
    - A physical illness
    - Mental ill health (including dementia)
- Addiction, particularly to alcohol or drugs
- Loss of ability or faculty through old-age or other circumstances
- A reduction in physical, mental, or emotional capacity brought about through circumstances, such as (for example) bereavement, previous abuse, or trauma.

10. Action where abuse is suspected or disclosed

Statutory and Diocesan guidance will be followed at all times. In general terms, where a safeguarding issue arises:

- If someone is potentially facing an imminent risk of harm, the police should be notified immediately.
- The Parish Safeguarding Officer should be made aware as soon as possible, and their advice followed.
    - If the PSO is unavailable, the report should be made to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
- The person reporting the concern will be taken seriously, and believed.
- Detailed records should be kept by the person who receives the report, including a written account of any conversations or other evidence, with a date and time of the incident, and the date and time that the report was written.
    - It is vital that the report is written as soon as possible after the incident in question
    - The person raising the concern (whether doing so knowingly or not) should be told, during the conversation, that the issue will be recorded and reported.
- No further investigation or attempts to talk with other concerned parties should be undertaken: the concern should be recorded and reported, and further action left up to the Diocesan Safeguarding team or other relevant organisations such as the police.
- Unless directed otherwise by the Diocese or other authority, copies of all Safeguarding reports and records should be kept securely in the church office, in a locked file which can only be accessed by the PSO. Electronic files should be password-protected, and stored on the church computer in the office.

10.a. Disclosures made by a child about abuse, or made by an adult about the abuse of a child
Where a disclosure is made about the abuse of a child, it would normally be the case that a referral should be made to the Social Care Services. In all cases:

- The disclosure must be taken seriously, believed, and reported as soon as possible
    - This reporting must occur, even if the person making the disclosure doesn't wish for it to go further.
- The disclosure must be reported to the DSO, the PSO, and any other organisations they request (normally the Social Care Services and the police)
    - Support will be offered by the Diocese to those having to make such referrals / reports.
- In cases where a child is in immediate danger of harm, the police should be informed urgently.
- The church will follow all advice, procedures, and processes that it is asked to by the Diocese or other involved agencies.

10.b. Pastoral response to disclosures
At all times the person making the disclosure should be treated with respect, and should be listened to without judgment or investigation. Furthermore:

- The church commits to praying regularly at PCC and leadership team meetings for all those who are suffering from, or have suffered from, abusive behaviour.
- Appropriate pastoral support can be offered to all those making disclosures, which can include (but are not limited to) conversation with someone from the pastoral team
    - It is essential that this offer is made, but confidentiality should be maintained. The pastoral team should only be asked to have the conversation where the person making the disclosure requests it, and they should not be told anything about the nature of the disclosure or conversation. If the person concerned makes further disclosures to the pastoral team, these disclosures should be recorded and reported separately.

11. Contact details and other support

- Our Parish Safeguarding Officer is Chris Moran, who can be contacted on 07841 207139 or safeguarding@christchurchfelixstowe.org.uk
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer is Karen Galloway, who can be contacted on 07785 621319 or safeguarding@cofesuffolk.org
- Our Vicar is Rev'd Dom Turner, who can be contacted on 07707 910134 or dom@christchurchfelixstowe.org.uk
- For social care in Suffolk, contact Customer First on 0808 8004005 or customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk
- NSPCC can be contacted on 0808 800 5000.
- Child-line is on 0800 1111
- The National Domestic Violence helpline is 0808 2000 247 (for women experiencing abuse)
- The Respect Men's Advice Line is on 0808 8010 327 (for men experiencing abuse)
- Samaritans are on 116 123
- Hourglass (formerly known as Action on Elder Abuse) is on 0808 808 8141
- Safe Spaces (for adults who have been abused by someone in the Church) is on 0300 303 1056.

- Other organisations are listed on the Diocesan Website: cofesuffolk.org/safeguarding-support-services

12. Other items

12.a. Managing individuals who pose a risk of harm to others

- Any individual who is known to pose a risk of harm to others will be reported to the Diocese, and the church will follow the Diocese's advice and requirements at all times.
- This will include putting in place and adhering to any safeguarding plans, following supervision guidance from the Diocese, and reporting and recording all information required.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as closely as possible, but it is expected that, where such a person might attend worship or other events, they would be required to attend alongside a named individual who would ensure that they are compliant with the plans in place. This supervision will be set up and managed in close conversation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

12.b. Insurance

The church accepts responsibility to ensure adequate insurance (public liability and indemnity) is in place for all authorised church activities.

12.c. Management of personal data

All personal data collected by the PSO or PCC will be managed in line with the church GDPR policy.

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[i] www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance, accessed 25th June 2025.
[ii] www.cofesuffolk.org/promoting-a-safer-church, accessed 25th June 2025.
[iii] www.christchurchfelixstowe.org.uk
[iv] https://www.cofesuffolk.org/parish-safeguarding-officer/, accessed 25th June 2025.
[v] https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f214e41ab1e4/content/pages/documents/diocesan-training-strategy-2024-updated63069437432.pdf, accessed 25th June 2025.
[vi] Discipline **does not refer to punishment** (physical or otherwise), but rather to enabling young people to thrive. See https://www.parentingforfaith.brf.org.uk/post/discipline-and-sunday-groups/ for a useful summary and training.
[vii] https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f214e41ab1e4/content/pages/documents/diocesan-training-strategy-2024-updated63069437432.pdf, accessed 25th June 2025.
[viii] Discipline **does not refer to punishment.** See note viii, above.
[ix] It is important to note that illness can be both acute (that is, sudden and relatively short-lived) and chronic (longer-term, with perhaps no medical hope of cure). Both these types can contribute towards vulnerability.