Christ Church Felixstowe
Safer Recruitment Policy

1. Adoption of this Safer Recruitment Policy
This policy was formally adopted at a meeting of the Parochial Church Council on __13th October 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.
- "PSO" refers to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

3. General principles
As part of our responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, the PCC is committed to safely recruiting all volunteers and paid staff. We acknowledge and will act in accordance with the guidance issued by the Church of England, including the document "Promoting a safer church"[i] and the "Safer Recruitment and People Management Guidance" included in the Church of England's Safeguarding e-manual.[ii] Our aim is to:

- Attract the best possible people into all roles through fair, consistent, transparent, and inclusive processes.
- Follow a proportionate and thorough selection and training process for each role within the church to determine whether candidates are suitable or unsuitable for the role.
- Ensure that robust and proportionate induction, oversight, and supervision processes are in place for all roles within the church, especially for those who are working with children or vulnerable adults.

While this policy will only apply to people applying for roles following the adoption of the policy, we are committed to:

- Ensuring that all volunteers and paid workers have completed all relevant Diocesan safeguarding training, and (where appropriate) have up-to-date DBS checks at the correct level.
- Ensuring that appropriate supervision and oversight processes are in place for all volunteers and paid workers, whether they have historically been safely recruited or not.
- Ensuring that all volunteers and paid workers are aware of their role descriptions, risk assessments, and (critically) safeguarding policies.

- Ensuring that people who have historically inhabited roles within the church cannot move to different roles without first going through a full and proportionate safer recruitment process, as outlined in this policy.

The PCC is committed to following the sixteen step process to safely recruit volunteers and paid staff, as is required under law. These sixteen steps are outlined in this policy. In addition:

- The PCC will identify and recruit a Safer Recruitment Lead, who will:
  - Have overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is kept up-to-date and implemented.
  - Ensure they have undertaken, and keep up-to-date, the Diocesan Safer Recruitment training, alongside all other relevant training and checks required.
  - Work with the named responsible person for each recruitment process, as required, to help guide them through the process of Safer Recruitment.

4. The Safer Recruitment Process

Each of the following steps is required every time a new volunteer or paid staff member is recruited to work with, or on behalf of, the church or PCC.

4.1. Each recruitment process will have a named responsible person

The named responsible person will:

- Oversee the process of recruitment, involving others where appropriate.
- Ensure that all involved in the recruitment process, including themselves, have undertaken the Diocesan Safer Recruitment training.
- Identify any possible conflicts of interest within the recruitment process, discuss them with the Safer Recruitment Lead, and put into place any steps which are deemed necessary.
- Already be safely recruited into a role within the church under this policy. Where this is not possible they must at least:
  - Hold an up-to-date DBS certificate.
  - Be a member of the PCC, or directly authorised by the PCC.
  - Be up-to-date with all necessary and relevant Diocesan Safeguarding training.

4.2. Each role will have a Role Description and a Person Specification

The person named in step one is responsible for ensuring these are created, and that the Role Description includes responsibilities around safeguarding. These documents help set clear and reasonable expectations, and help the church to put safeguarding principles into practice,

4.3. Advertising the role

Roles may be advertised within the church, or more widely as appropriate. In every instance:

- Advertisements (written or verbal) must include information about the process of applying, including any checks which will be carried out as part of the Safer Recruitment process. This will help potential candidates as they decide whether to apply or not.
- Where a role is only advertised internally, the PCC remains committed to the full Safer Recruitment process. While in such cases a proportionate process might be appropriate, every step will still be implemented.

- This policy contains information on how the process may be made proportionate for internal recruitment processes.

4.4. Application pack

All roles within the church will require candidates to complete an application form. This is the case whether the role is paid or voluntary.

- The form used must be appropriate and sufficient for the task.
  - For internal recruitment into a voluntary role, it is expected that the form will be less complex than for a paid role.
  - The PCC recommends the use of the the Church of England's 'Volunteer Application Form'[iii] for all unpaid roles.
    - A CCFX branded version of this form will be made available to the named Responsible Person from step one of this process.
    - This form can also be used as the basis for an application form for a paid role.
      - Application forms for paid roles **must include:**
        - Present / most recent employment, and reason for leaving.
        - Full history since leaving school (education, employment, voluntary work, and an explanation of any gaps).
- The form will include information and requirements around safeguarding.
- The completed form will be the primary data used in shortlisting, and should be designed to help candidates show how they fit the Person Specification and Role Description, and to highlight any potential areas of unsuitability.

As well as the application form, the following information will be provided to all applicants:

- The Role Description and Person Specification
- A Confidential Declaration form[iv] for all roles requiring an enhanced DBS check.
- The following church policies, which may be provided via online links:
  - The Safeguarding Policy, which includes the church's statement of commitment to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable adults.
  - The Safer Recruitment Policy.
  - The Whistleblowing Policy.
  - The Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.
- Details about the selection procedure for this post
- A privacy notice detailing how the applicant's personal data will be processed during the recruitment process.

4.5. Confidential Declarations

All applicants to positions engaging in regulated activity, or otherwise having substantial opportunities for contact with children or vulnerable adults, which requires an enhanced DBS check, **must complete** a Church of England Confidential Declaration form.

- This form will be sent with the application pack for such roles, and should be completed prior to shortlisting.
- Any applicant who does not wish to complete this form will have their application terminated immediately.

4.6. Shortlisting

All applicants will be considered for the role. The shortlisting process will be led by the named Responsible Person from step one, who should check the application forms against the requirements of the Role Description and Person Specification.

- A written record should be kept of the ways in which the application is suitable and unsuitable for the role as described.
  - This record can be used as the basis for feedback, should the applicant request it.
- If there is only one applicant, this process should still be followed.
- All suitable applicants who make the shortlist should be invited for interview.

4.7. Interview and assessment

All short-listed people from step six should be interviewed. This interview may be a formal occasion, with an interview panel (in the case of paid roles), or a more relaxed conversation (in the case of a voluntary role). Either way, the process should be followed, and the applicant should be asked about:

- Their skills, abilities, and motivation.
- Any experience they have with similar people to those they're applying to work with.
- Their ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and boundaries, and their attitudes about authority.
- Their emotional resilience.
- Their awareness of the importance of safeguarding, and of church policy and practice.
- Whether they are aware of any issues which may affect their ability to carry out the role safely and correctly.

For people applying for paid positions, they should also be asked about:

- Their reasons for moving on from their previous role.
  - Where they have previously worked with similar people to those they're applying to work with, this is especially important.

It may be appropriate, at the discretion of the named Responsible Person from step one, to invite the applicant to engage with an assessed activity involving the people they will be working amongst. For example, they could be asked to deliver a five-minute teaching session to a youth group. In such cases, accurate written notes should be kept by the interviewer(s), and feedback from the group involved can also be sought after the interview.

4.8. Pre-appointment checks

Before appointment is confirmed, the following checks must be satisfactorily completed:

- The candidate should provide proof of identity (it may be appropriate to see this during the interview stage).
- At least two **references** should be obtained:
  - They must be written, and from people over 18 who are not family members or relatives of the candidate.
  - **For volunteers:**
    - At least one reference must be from outside the current church body.
    - At least one reference must comment on the candidate's ability to work with the group with which they'll be volunteering.

        - If the applicant is already working / volunteering with children or vulnerable adults (or has done within the past two years), a reference must be sought from that organisation.
        - If the applicant has joined the church from another church in the past two years, a reference must be sought from the previous church.
    - **For employees:**
        - At least one reference must be from the applicant's current / most recent employer and / or voluntary position.
        - A minimum referencing period of two years must be applied, meaning more references may be needed depending on the applicant's work history.
- If a **DBS check** is required, this should be completed before the appointment is made.
    - If an applicant does not wish to complete a Confidential Declaration Form, or allow the results of their DBS check to be seen, the application must be terminated.
- **Other checks may be required** (following the advice on the Church of England's safeguarding e-manual site[v]).

4.9. Pre-appointment checks

The named Responsible Person from step one will work alongside the PSO to ensure that DBS checks and other checks (such as completing a Confidential Declaration where appropriate) are carried out on the successful candidate prior to appointment into the role.

- DBS checks are conducted in collaboration with Due Diligence Checking Ltd, or any other agency appointed by the PCC to act as our Criminal Record Checking partner, to ensure that applicants are DBS checked at the correct level.
- If discrepancies arise between the DBS check and the candidate's application, this should be discussed with the candidate before appointment.
    - If the discrepancy can be adequately explained, along with further checks if necessary, than a note should be kept and the appointment may continue. Otherwise the apointment process should terminate.

4.10. Criminal Record checks / response

The PCC recognises that an individual with a criminal record may still be eligible to work in roles, even where these roles include contact with children or vulnerable adults. It all depends on the exact nature of the role applied for, and the details of the offence(s). Criminal records must be considered fairly and robustly, with a focus on the need to safeguard those who are vulnerable.

- Where a candidate has a criminal record, the named Responsible Person from step one should ensure that the church's Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy is followed.
- The PSO and Diocesan Safeguarding Officer should be consulted as part of this process.
- A risk assessment would normally be carried out.[vi]

4.11. Appointment

- Once the named Responsible Person from step one is satisfied with all pre-appointment processes and checks, a start date can be set for the appointment.
- A letter of appointment, with either a contract of employment or a volunteer agreement, should be sent to the candidate.

4.12. Induction

It is expected that everyone who takes on any role at Christ Church, whether voluntary or paid, will be given an induction into that role.

- This induction will be proportionate to the nature of the role, with more significant or complex roles expected to have a more in-depth induction that lighter roles.
- All induction processes should be planned, and must include an introduction to the church Safeguarding Policy and other related policies.
- Clear expectations of behaviour and boundaries should be set out.
- Training in the safe usage of equipment and other necessary safety training should be given as appropriate.
- All candidates must undertake relevant Diocesan safeguarding training prior to appointment, and regularly thereafter (according to the schedule laid out by the Diocese; currently every three years).

4.13. Probation period

All roles at Christ Church will have a probation period, which will be proportionate to the nature of the role being taken on, and will be decided in each case by the named Responsible Person from step one. In most cases a period of three to six months would be appropriate.

- The period should be long enough for support, guidance, and training to be offered, and for the candidate to learn the role sufficiently to be able to make an assessment of their ongoing suitability.
- The period should be long enough to make a proper assessment of their work, and their ability to operate safely and within all safeguarding requirements.
- During probation, regular meetings should be held between the candidate and the named Responsible Person. These are to discuss progress, offer support, and give feedback in constructive ways.
- If, at the end of the probation period, the candidate is deemed unsuitable to continue, or if they wish to stop even if they are seen as suitable, then pastoral support should be offered to them as appropriate.

4.14. Ongoing support

Once someone has gone through the probation period in a role, it is important that they continue to feel supported in that role. Therefore it is expected that most roles will involve regular meetings with the named Responsible Person, or their delegate, after the appointment and probation have been completed.

- Supervision meetings should focus on reflecting on, learning from, and building upon a person's ability to carry out the role, and their character and attributes demonstrated within it.
- It should be built on trust, and collaborative.
- In some roles, it may be more appropriate to offer ongoing support in a team-wide setting rather than holding one-to-one meetings after probation. In such cases, it is important that all in the team know how they can receive one-to-one support if they need it. Often this would be through contact with their wider team leader or equivalent, or in some cases with the vicar.
- Ongoing support should include conversations and reminders around the importance and practice of safeguarding within the role.

4.15. Safeguarding development and training

The PCC recognises that safeguarding is an ongoing responsibility for all those who work in, or on behalf of, the church. We want to encourage a robust safeguarding culture, where everyone feels safe, and where clear lines of communication are available for those who have concerns.

- It is expected that anyone who carries out a role on behalf of Christ Church will undergo regular safeguarding training, as delivered by the Diocese or national church.
- The church's Safeguarding Policy will be made available to all who work on behalf of the church, and the ongoing support conversations will create a space for discussions around this policy and other safeguarding issues.
- The named Responsible Person should make the PSO aware of the new appointment as soon as it is made (or before), and the PSO will be responsible to ensure the person appointed into the role completes their training regularly and in good time.

4.16. Record keeping

Accurate records of all appointments must be made, and can be kept (in physical form) in the church office files, or (in digital form) on a secure cloud-based server (such as the church DropBox account). The records must include the following, where relevant:

- A record of all pre-appointment checks made
- Role details
- Personal details of the individual, as necessary (e.g. name, address, date of birth)
- Proof of identity checks performed
- Evidence of qualifications
- DBS details, including certificate number, date, and the level of DBS check obtained.
- Checks carried out on those who have lived, worked, or volunteered outside of the UK.
- Details of references requested and obtained.
- Record of interview (the level of detail will depend on the nature of the role.
- For employees, details of checks carried out on their right to work in the UK, and their previous employment history / gaps.
- Other records as required, and listed on the Church of England's Safeguarding e-Manual.[vii]

All details / records should be dated, and signed by the named Responsible Person.

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[i] https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/promoting-a-safer-church.pdf, accessed 4th August 2025.

[ii] https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance, accessed 4th August 2025.

[iii] https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/section_4_volunteer_application_form.docx, accessed 5th August 2025.

[iv] https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/cofe-cdf-e-manual-may-2025.docx, accessed 5th August 2025.

[v] https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/section-8-pre-appointment-checks, accessed 5th August 2025.

[vi] A template is available here: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/section_10_dbs_risk_assessment_template_.docx, accessed 13th August 2025.

[vii] https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/section-16-record-keeping, accessed 14th August 2025.