

ST MARY'S LOUGHTON

Safeguarding Policy 2026/27

Parish Safeguarding Officer:	Hin Cheung
Deputy Safeguarding Officer:	Amanda Hart

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Next approval:	July 2027

Contact details to report any safeguarding concerns

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Additional Needs Support

Access Coordinators

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St Mary's Church Loughton Children, Young Person and Adults

A. Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy statement

In all aspects of St Mary's governance and activity, we commit to and will champion the protection of all children, young people and any adult with care and support needs (within the meaning of the 2014 Care Act). We fully accept, endorse and undertake to implement the principles described in relevant legislation and diocesan guidance. We commit to fostering and encouraging best practice within our activities by setting high standards for working with children and young people and undertake to work with statutory and other agencies to ensure their safety and well-being.

We are committed to immediate action whenever concerns are raised about the welfare of those under the age of 18 and any adult with care and support needs, or about the behaviour of adults in contact with them, whether staff, volunteers, members of the church or wider community.

Duty to have "due regard" to House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance:

The Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 imposes a legal duty on all authorised clergy, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and PCCs (parochial church councils) to have 'due regard' to safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults (this will include both policy and practice guidance).

The legal duty to have 'due regard' means that, as a matter of law, the guidance should be given great weight and must be followed unless there are 'cogent reasons' for not doing so. A person who is required to have due regard to the guidance should not simply take it upon themselves to decide that there are cogent reasons for departing from the guidance. Such a decision should be taken – if at all – *only* after case-specific advice has been obtained from both the DSA (Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser) and the Diocesan Registrar.

2. Interpretation and application

St Mary's Church Loughton adopts and takes account of the House of Bishops' safeguarding policy statement, [Promoting a Safer Church](#) (2017), together with all subsequent safeguarding policy and practice guidance issued by the House of Bishops. This policy should be read and applied in accordance with those national safeguarding policies and guidance and will be reviewed whenever the House of Bishops updates its safeguarding policy statement.

This policy is informed by relevant statutory legislation and is directed by and operates within the governance of the Church of England, [Promoting a Safer Church](#) safeguarding policy statement (2017), the [Code of Safer Working Practice](#) (2021) and [Safer Environment and Activities](#) (2019). This policy also adheres to the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR), St Mary's Equal Opportunities Statement (2019) and St Mary's Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy (2026). In addition, St Mary's accepts the duty of care placed upon it by offering services for people under the age of 18 and adults with care and support needs in the community.

In support of this policy, St Mary's has adopted additional guidance to help maintain appropriate boundaries in ministry with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable. These include the St Mary's [Appropriate Boundaries Guidance](#) (2026), [Friends Home Visiting Checklist](#) (2026) and [Church Pastoring Team Home Visiting Checklist](#) (2026). All clergy, staff and volunteers are expected to be familiar with and follow this guidance alongside the House of Bishops' safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

Definition of child:

The law defines children as those under the age of 18 and this policy relates in the main, to them. However, as per guidance such as 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2023) St Mary's acknowledges that where individuals have specific / severe additional needs including certain learning and physical disabilities, then they can continue to receive support up to the age of 25 years.

Definition of Adult under the 2014 Care Act:

The principles of this policy can, indeed, be applied to any adult needing extra care and support, regardless of age. As stated in the 2014 Care Act this can apply to any adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) **and**
- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect **and**
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

The principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 have been incorporated into the policy and procedures.

3. Responsibilities

- a. The church has a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) appointed by St Mary's PCC with responsibility for ensuring that those undertaking Safeguarding activities are compliant with the procedures. The PSO reports to the Vicar and all cases of concern are shared between the PSO and the Vicar. The PSO is responsible for liaising promptly with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser regarding

safeguarding concerns and allegations, in accordance with House of Bishops policy and diocesan procedures.

- b. The PSO practically administers the procedures along with the Deputy Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
- c. It is acknowledged that everyone within the church family has a role to play in safeguarding children.
- d. If the PSO is unavailable, safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer or the Vicar. If neither the PSO, DSO nor Vicar is contactable and it is an emergency, contact the Police or Social Services.

4. Commitment to Safeguarding

- a. The safeguarding procedure will be followed whenever one or more warning signs of potential maltreatment or abuse are identified by a worker or other concerned individual, or when a disclosure about abuse is made. A disclosure is any occasion where an individual communicates that abuse has occurred or is occurring.
- b. Appropriate training will be completed by all workers on safeguarding issues, including what constitutes a disclosure.
- c. Appropriate health and safety policies and procedures will be drafted and adhered to.
- d. Appropriate insurance cover will be taken out for all activities.
- e. Whenever working in partnership with other organisations or statutory agencies, St Mary's will ensure that the other bodies have Safeguarding policies and procedures at least as robust as its own.
- f. The contact information for ChildLine and the NSPCC will be prominently displayed, along with other support agencies for adults.
- g. The name and contact details for the PSO, the DSA, will be prominently displayed within St Mary's buildings.
- h. All records of workers and those under 18 will be kept in locked and secure places. All electronic records must be equally secure and backed up as per St Mary's Data Protection policy under GDPRP.
- i. Any person with additional needs will be supported on an individual basis to the best of our ability after discussion with one of our Access Coordinators.

- j. When working with another organisation the PSO to agree which organisation's safeguarding policy to follow, including where to seek advice in urgent situations in line with the safeguarding policy adopted in this scenario. In the event of a specific safeguarding concern, it should be ensured that all the partners are notified.
- k. This policy will be reviewed annually and updated whenever relevant legislation is enacted, or key guidance is issued by the Government or the Church of England.

5. All members of St Mary's Church

- a. It is important to recognise that concerns about a child's or adult's safety or welfare can come from any source. Regardless of the origin of the concern, it must not be ignored and must be acted upon.
- b. Any member of the St Mary's community, across all ministries and activities (including programmes such as Alpha, Cafe Hope and Connect, etc), may become concerned about a child or adult. The procedures detailed below must be followed in all instances. Where an individual is unsure as to what to do if they are concerned, they must contact the PSO immediately for advice.
- c. The Diocese provides guidelines for churches on how to work with those who may present a risk to children or adults, or who are offenders. Where an individual is concerned about another within the church community from this point of view, they must contact the Vicar or PSO immediately. The Vicar and the PSO will manage and monitor any known offender or person who may pose a safeguarding risk in consultation with the Chelmsford Diocesan Safeguarding Team and in accordance with House of Bishops policy and diocesan guidance
- d. Concerns about adults (those over 18 years old) with care and support needs, should be shared with the Vicar or the PSO in the first instance.

B. Definitions and indicators of abuse

1. Physical

- a. Definition: A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- b. Visual indicators may include:
 - i. Bruising in unusual places (particularly on the face and back)
 - ii. Finger mark bruising / grasp marks on the limbs or chest
 - iii. Bites
 - iv. Burn and scald marks (particularly those that could be caused by a cigarette)
 - v. Fractures to arms, legs or ribs
 - vi. Large numbers of scars
 - vii. Wearing of inappropriate clothes to cover injuries
- c. Behavioural / verbal indicators may include:
 - i. Being fearful of others, particularly adults
 - ii. Flinching or frozen watchfulness
 - iii. Aggression or withdrawal
 - iv. Reluctance to explain injuries

2. Emotional

- a. Definition: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- b. Visual indicators may include:
 - i. Anxious gestures, such as rocking, hair twisting or self-harm

- ii. Frozen watchfulness
- c. Behavioural / verbal indicators may include:
 - i. Excessively clingy or attention seeking
 - ii. Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism
 - iii. Withdrawn, vacant episodes
 - iv. Lack of appropriate boundaries, particularly being too eager to please
 - v. Eating disorders
 - vi. Depression
 - vii. Inability to articulate emotional state to adults

3. Sexual

- a. Definition: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- b. Visual indicators may include:
 - i. Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
 - ii. Sexually transmitted diseases, particularly urinary infections
 - iii. Self-mutilation; suicide attempts (particularly older children and young people)
- c. Behavioural / indicators may include:
 - i. Excessive preoccupation with sex
 - ii. Inappropriately sexualised play, words, drawings or clothing
 - iii. Sexually provocative or seductive overtures towards adults
 - iv. Eating or other obsessive disorders
 - v. Use of inappropriately sexualised vocabulary

4. Neglect

- a. Definition: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and

emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- b. Visual indicators may include:
 - i. Constant hunger, stealing/gorging food
 - ii. Ill-health caused by poor nutrition (including obesity)
 - iii. Persistent wearing of inappropriate clothing for the weather
 - iv. Persistent personal hygiene issues
- c. Behavioural / indicators may include:
 - i. Unwillingness to associate with other children/young people
 - ii. Lack of basic social skills, severe introversion
 - iii. Stealing
 - iv. Inappropriately 'grown up'/parenting behaviours with younger siblings
 - v. Remarks on being left alone by parents/carers for long periods of time
 - vi. Inability to articulate emotional state to adults.

5. Discriminatory Abuse

- a. Definition: Discriminatory abuse is unwanted conduct based on a person's social identity (i.e. age, sex, race, disability, culture, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or any other personal characteristic of the individual), which affects the dignity of the victim. It may be persistent conduct or an isolated incident. The key issue is that the actions or comments are perceived as demeaning and unacceptable by the recipient.
- b. Visual indicators may include:
 - i. Lack of choice;
 - ii. Lack of privacy and dignity;
 - iii. Lack of personal belongings;
 - iv. Use of punishments – for example withholding food and drink;
 - v. Lack of disabled access;
 - vi. Being refused access to services or being excluded inappropriately.
- c. Behavioural / indicators may include:
 - i. tendency for withdrawal and isolation;
 - ii. expression of anger/frustration/ fear/anxiety;

6. Financial or Legal Abuse

- a. Definition: The wilful extortion or manipulation of the vulnerable person's legal or civil rights must be construed as abuse. Such activity may include misappropriation of monies or goods, the misuse of finances, property or possessions, or withholding money, the exploitation of a person's resources or embezzlement. Such abuse may involve the use of a position of authority or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts, to leave legacies or change a will.
- b. Visual indicators may include:
 - i. signatures on cheques or other important documents that do not resemble the adult's signature, or which are signed when the adult cannot write;
 - ii. any sudden changes in bank accounts including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money;
 - iii. the inclusion of additional names on an adult's bank account;
 - iv. abrupt changes to or creation of wills;
 - v. the sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to a vulnerable person's affairs or possessions;
 - vi. the unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family;
 - vii. lack of amenities, such as TV, personal grooming items, appropriate clothing, that the vulnerable person should be able to afford;
 - viii. the unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions such as art, silverware or jewellery;
 - ix. deliberate isolation of a vulnerable person from friends and family resulting in the caregiver alone having total control.

7. Organisational Abuse

- a. Definition: Organisational Abuse can be defined as abuse or mistreatment by a regime as well as by individuals within any building where care is provided
- b. Visual indicators may include:
 - i. lack of flexibility/choice/options;
 - iii. lack of opportunity for drinks or snacks; lack of choice or consultation over meals;
 - iv. lack of dignity;
 - v. pressure sores; skin tears; dehydration;
 - vi. person is unkempt and smells;
 - vii. inappropriate use of communal items e.g. clothing or toiletries;
 - viii. inappropriate restraint;
 - ix. lack of satisfactory procedures for financial management;
 - x. staff member has a history of moving job; high staff turnover;

- xi. lack of privacy, including intercepting mail, restricting visits, control of phone;
- xii. derogatory remarks overheard;
- xiii. public discussion of personal matters;
- xiv. inadequate or delayed response to medical requests or requests for assistance or support;
- xv. missing documentation;
- xvi. entering rooms without knocking/seeking permission;
- xvii. Staff have an overly controlling relationship with service users and service users' activities;
- xviii. Staff not available;
- xix. Service users are abusive to staff and other service users.

8. Modern Slavery

- a) Definition: Modern slavery encompasses Human trafficking, forced labour, Domestic servitude, Sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution and pornography, Debt bondage –being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to.
- b) Possible indicators of modern slavery:
 - i. Signs of physical or emotional abuse
 - ii. Appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn
 - iii. Isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others
 - iv. Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and or living and working at the same address
 - v. Lack of personal effects or identification documents
 - vi. Always wearing the same clothes
 - vii. Avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
 - viii. Fear of law enforcers

9. Domestic Abuse

- a) Definition: Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse perpetrated by those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
- b) Signs and Symptoms can encompass:
 - ii. Psychological/emotional - for example, shouting; swearing; frightening; blaming; ignoring or humiliating someone; blackmailing them; threatening harm to children or pets if they misbehave; ridiculing every aspect of their appearance and skills; keeping them deliberately short of sleep; being obsessively and irrationally jealous; keeping them isolated from friends and family; threatening suicide or self-harm.

- iii. Physical - for example, hitting; slapping; burning; pushing; restraining; giving too much medication or the wrong medication; assault with everyday implements such as kitchen knives; kicking; biting; punching; shoving; smashing someone's possessions; imprisoning them; or forcing them to use illegal drugs as a way of blackmailing and controlling them.
- iv. Sexual - for example, forcing someone to take part in any sexual activity without consent, e.g. rape or sexual assault; forcing them or blackmailing them into sexual acts with other people; forcing children to watch sexual acts; sexual name calling; imposition of dress codes upon a partner; involvement in the sex trade or pornography; knowingly passing on Sexually Transmitted infections; controlling access to contraception.
- v. Neglect - for example, a failure to provide necessary care, assistance, guidance or attention that causes, or is reasonably likely to cause a person physical, mental or emotional harm or substantial damage to or loss of assets.
- vi. Financial – for example, the illegal or unauthorized use of someone's property, money, pension book or other valuables; forcing them to take out loans; keeping them in poverty; demanding to know every penny they spend; refusing to let them use transport or have money to pay for it.
- vii. Spiritual - for example, telling someone that God hates them; refusing to let them worship (e.g. not allowing a partner to go to church) or compelling them to worship; using faith as a weapon to control and terrorize them for the abuser's personal pleasure or gain; using religious teaching to justify abuse (e.g. 'submit to your husband'), or to compel forgiveness.
- viii. Digital - for example, the use of technology (e.g. texting and social networking) to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Though it is perpetuated online, this type of abuse has a strong impact on a victim's real life. For example, the 'revenge porn' offence i.e. disclosing private sexual photographs via digital media with an intended to cause distress.

10. Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is not covered by the standard statutory definitions of abuse but is of concern both within and outside faith communities including the Church of England.

- a) Definition: Spiritual Abuse - Churches need to be sensitive so that they do not, in their pastoral care, attempt to 'force' religious values or ideas onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices. Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries,

which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm.

- b) Signs and symptoms may include:
- ix. Special relationships, especially where there is an imbalance of power
 - x. Inappropriate or untrained exercise of exorcism and/or deliverance ministry
 - xi. Misuse of authority e.g. by dictating exactly what a person should believe
 - xii. Extreme pastoral interference in personal issues including how someone should express their faith
 - xiii. Telling someone that if they pray harder/believe more they will be healed
 - xiv. Making someone feel inferior in their faith.

All cases

NB: In all cases of abuse, any significant change in a child or young person's or adult's 'normal' behaviour patterns can be seen as a potential indicator.

If you believe there is an immediate risk in any case, you must call 999 or 101 to seek police advice.

6. Procedures - responding to abuse

1. In the case of a disclosure by a person under the age of 18 or adult with care and support needs:
 - a. Always act.
 - b. At the time of the disclosure, the person hearing the disclosure must:
 - i. Listen carefully and never use leading questions
 - ii. The report should include notes of the conversation with the child, in the words of the child, not adult language
 - iii. Take the person seriously
 - iv. Not keep the information to themselves
 - v. Report the disclosure straight away to the PSO:
 - where the person hearing the disclosure is a worker within a St Mary's children's/youth activity
 - where the person hearing the concern is a member of the wider St Mary's Church community with no children's/youth work involvement
 - vi. Make a report of the concern and the conversation, signing and dating the report.
 - vii. Not promise confidentiality.
 - viii. Do not share this information with another person outside the PSO or the diocese safeguarding officer, or if the disclosure concerns the PSO, the Vicar.

- c. If the disclosure concerns the PSO, the report should be made straight to the vicar or the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- 2. In cases of observations of possible indicators demonstrated by a person under the age of 18:
 - a. Always act.
 - b. Report the signs to the PSO (see 1. above).
 - c. Assist PSO in carefully recording the signs.
 - d. Not directly approach the child/young person to 'find out what happened'.
 - e. If the observations concern the interaction between the PSO and the child/young person, the report should be made to the Vicar or the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- 3. In cases of a disclosure by a person over the age of 18 (an adult) with care and support needs:
 - a. Follow the procedure given for a person under the age of 18.
 - b. Consent must be received from the adult before proceeding unless it is felt that they do not have the mental capacity to understand that they are not safe. Advice will be sought by the PSO from the Diocese on how to proceed in this case. In any regard, the concern should be recorded, even if not acted on.
 - c. Additionally, the PSO should offer the adult support in making a referral to social services themselves. Where this is not possible, the PSO must make the referral.
 - d. If there is any concern that a child or young person may be at risk, through the information given as part of the disclosure, the PSO must be informed immediately.
- 4. In cases of a disclosure of historical abuse:
 - a. Follow the procedure given for a person under the age of 18.
 - b. Additionally, the PSO should offer the adult support in reporting the matter to the relevant agency where this is the wish of the adult.

- c. If there is any possibility that the subject of the allegation is working with children or young people or adult, the worker is obligated to report the concern to the PSO who must refer the disclosure to the relevant agency immediately.
 - d. If there is any concern that a child or young person or adult may be at risk, through the information given as part of the disclosure, the PSO must be informed immediately.
5. In cases of an allegation of abuse about a worker or other adult at St Mary's Church:
- a. It is important to recognise that there can be a number of reasons why allegations can be made against workers/adults:
 - i. Abuse has actually taken place
 - ii. An event occurs that reminds a person of something that happened in the past and in their mind the two events are conflated
 - iii. Children or young people can misinterpret language and actions
 - iv. Children and young people are often aware how powerful an allegation can be and can use it as a weapon against an adult with whom they are angry
 - v. As a way of seeking attention
 - b. Notwithstanding the degree of innocence on the part of the adult in the cases of ii. to v., St Mary's will treat all allegations as if i. were true.
 - c. If any disciplinary action or dismissal takes place as a result of safeguarding related issues, St Mary's will inform the Disclosure and Barring Service.
 - d. Where an allegation is made against the Clergy or Church Officer, the PSO should be informed in the first instance. Where an allegation is made against the PSO, the Clergy should be informed in the first instance. Where an allegation is made against both the Vicar and the PSO, or where there are concerns about the ability of either of those individuals to retain independence in managing an allegation against the other, then the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) should be contacted.
6. In all cases:
- a. At the time of the disclosure / observation and subsequently:
 - i. Immediate medical help should be offered where necessary and hospital staff should be informed of safeguarding concerns.
 - ii. Where a person under the age of 18 is unwilling to return home, emergency social services should be contacted immediately either directly or through the police.
 - iii. No worker must speak directly or indirectly to the person against whom allegations have been made / inferred.
 - iv. No one other than the PSO, DSO or a Pastor delegated by the PSO must attempt to obtain further information of the situation themselves.

- v. A report must be made to the PSO as soon as possible.
 - vi. A decision must be taken between the PSO and the Vicar on further action to be taken. The PSO will consult with and report safeguarding concerns or allegations promptly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST), led by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA), in accordance with House of Bishops policy and diocesan safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, this will be within 24 hours of the concern or allegation being received. Further actions may include:
 - In the case of the observation of warning signs, further observation and sharing of information with other bodies, particularly schools, may be required before a referral is made
 - Referral to either children's social services or the police (contact details are at the back of the document)
 - Informing other organisations involved (e.g. a school where allegations are made against a teacher)
 - Informing the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (DSA) (especially where allegations are made against a member of the clergy, but advisable when any disclosure is made)
 - Suspension of any worker who has had an allegation made against them until such a time as a full investigation has been completed (either internally or externally) and the outcome of that investigation is known
 - Involvement of the Vicar where an allegation or concern about inappropriate behaviour is related to a member of the church community
7. Workers should continue to support the person who has made an allegation or who has displayed possible indicators, keeping the PSO informed.
 8. Records of all actions must be kept in accordance with St Mary's GDPR Policy.
 9. The PSO/DSO will keep the Vicar informed in all instances unless any allegation is made against the Vicar himself.

7. Good Practice

The [Code of Safer Working Practice](#) (2021) expresses our commitment to demonstrating God's love by placing the highest priority on the safety of those to whom we minister.

1. Ratios

- a. No worker must ever be left alone with a person under the age of 18 in an enclosed space (e.g. where they cannot be seen by others).
 - i. In a counselling / mentoring situation where a child or young person is having a 'one-to-one' with an adult, the adult must:
 - Wherever possible, carry out the session in public (e.g. a quiet area of a larger space)
 - Inform a senior worker that the session is happening prior to it occurring
 - If it is necessary to have the session away from others, the door to the room must be left open at all times and the worker must not make any physical contact with the child/young person

The following ratios of workers to children/young people are to be applied in all settings. 'Young helpers' who are between 14 and 17 years old DO NOT count as volunteers in these calculations. It is best to designate any young person helping in this way as a 'helper' rather than a leader, and to ensure they are supervised by the adults who have been safely recruited, and who can take overall responsibility for the leadership of the group. (Remembering that the young person is themselves legally a child, and that the adult leaders have safeguarding responsibilities for them too). Young helpers should not be counted as part of the adult/child ratios outlined below; they are additional helpers, not part of the core team. It is particularly important to follow the lone working rule, and not to consider an older child who is helping out to be the equivalent of an adult for the purpose of observing this rule. (For instance, a 17-year-old who is a helper shouldn't be in a planning meeting on their own with the adult leader). Two adults should be present with children at all times.

- b. It is highly advisable that there is a 5-year age gap between the young helpers and the children in the group (this may not always be possible, for instance trainee youth workers but in this instance the group should be led by other adults who are at least 5 years older than the young people in the group).
- c. The ratios used are provided by the Diocese of Chelmsford.

Age	Number of adults to Children	Minimum ratio in group	Additional Ratio in group
0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children - Minimum of 2 adults	2:3 up to 2:6	1:3
2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children - Minimum of 2 adults	2:4 up to 2:8	1:4
4-8 years	1 adult to 6 children - Minimum of 2 adults	2:6 up to 2:12	1:6
9-12 years	1 adult to 8 children - Minimum of 2 adults	2:8 up to 2:16	1:8
13-18 years	1 adult to 10 children - Minimum of 2 adults	2:10 up to 2:20	1:10

- i. These are the absolute minimum ratios.
- ii. All groups should have a minimum of two adults and maintain a gender balance if possible, ensuring that if one adult has to leave the group there is another who remains to take responsibility. It is reasonable to allow a period of approximately 10 minutes where a worker may find themselves alone with a group of children (such as an emergency). It is important that help is sought if the situation is likely to continue for longer than this.
- iii. Staff ratios for all groups should always be based on a risk assessment. For example, staffing numbers would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk, potentially dangerous or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved. The PSO will advise on case-by-case basis.

2. Access

- a. Adults who are not members of the children's and youth ministry team, including parents or carers of children/young people who are members of the group, should not remain in a space occupied by children/young people who are in the care of St Mary's except for the purposes of collecting or dropping off children or where agreed with the ministry leader because a prospective worker is being

introduced to the group or a child with additional needs requires their parent to support them and is supervised at all times or because of exceptional circumstances.

- i. Where a parent or carer remains during a session:
 - they remain responsible only for their own child;
 - they must follow the directions of the ministry leader;
 - they must not supervise other children;
 - they should avoid unnecessary mobile phone use;
 - they must not take photographs or videos of children or young people during the session; and they must respect St Mary's arrangements regarding parental consent for photography..
 - ii. Where the same parent or carer regularly remains within a ministry session, the ministry leader should notify the Parish Safeguarding Officer so that appropriate safeguarding arrangements can be considered, including whether safer recruitment should be undertaken.
- b. All parents/carers must specify to the lead worker or Pastor which adult is authorised to collect their child. In the case of over 7 years old (Blaze), a mandate must be signed by parents/carers in order to allow for their child to leave unaccompanied.
- i. In the case of groups for which children/young people are not pre-registered, they should only be allowed to leave the group with the adult who dropped them off unless other arrangements have been agreed.
 - ii. The ignite team reserve the right to use a system of 'collection cards' for groups attended by those under 7, so that the adult dropping off the child receives a named card that allows them or another adult holding the card to collect the child named on it.
- d. If children/young people need to leave the main room in which a group is taking place (e.g. to use the toilet), they must be accompanied by an adult unless the entire area of the building is secure from unauthorised persons. For groups meeting in the Smith Room over the age of 7, a signed mandate will be requested from parents for them to leave the room to use the toilet unaccompanied.
- d. Workers should be aware of unknown adults who persistently wait outside venues with no apparent purpose and should report them to the ignite team leader, operation manager or staff member or PSO after observing them more than twice. This should then be reported to the PSO. It is the PSO's responsibility to make a statement to the police.
- e. If the adult who is meant to be collecting a child does not arrive more than half an hour after the advertised end time of an activity and they cannot be contacted, the lead worker should first contact the PSO. Under their direction the worker should then contact the police's non-emergency number and request support from the nearest police station.

3. Off-site activities / transport

- a. Contact details and health consent forms must be taken for every child when undertaking any off-site activity and also in line with GDPR.
- b. All drivers should travel with at least one worker (minimum 2 adults per vehicle) in adherence with ratios above. Volunteer drivers must be subject to the same recruitment procedures as any other volunteer. All drivers, whether paid or unpaid should hold business insurance when driving as a leader or helper capacity to or from church organised activities or events. Drivers employed by private hire companies must hold a relevant DBS check.
- c. St Mary's is only responsible for transport that has been co-ordinated by their workers and accepts no liability for ad-hoc arrangements between parents/carers. Parents/carers are to be advised to arrange lifts with other adults they know well and trust.
- d. All vehicles hired or used for transporting children and young people must have comprehensive business insurance, be roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts where they are required by law so to be.
- e. Roll call will be taken at the start of a journey and again before commencing the return journey. If travelling in more than one vehicle, children/young people will be encouraged to travel in the same vehicle there and back.
- f. Workers accompanying trips will carry the contact numbers for St Mary's and emergency services as well as medical records and parental permission forms for all children and youth under the age of 18 in the event of an alert being necessary, also in line with GDPR.
- g. If a child/young person goes missing while on a trip:
 - i. Workers should instigate an immediate search and the PSO should be contacted.
 - ii. If the child/young person cannot be found within half an hour, appropriate security staff and the police should be notified
 - iii. Once this has happened, parents/carers will be notified immediately
 - iv. All remaining children/young people are to be returned to St Mary's buildings as soon as possible, with the lead worker present remaining to co-ordinate contact between the police and the parents/carers of the child/young person.
- h. On a residential visit:
 - i. Single sex access to sleeping accommodation is mandatory at all times of the day and night.

- ii. Sleeping accommodation will be arranged following an appropriate safeguarding risk assessment, taking account of the needs and welfare of all participants and in accordance with current Church of England guidance and applicable law.
- iii. Workers must not share rooms/tents with children/young people.
- iv. Workers must be aware that children/young people can be abused by other children/young people, and that this can happen when together in an overnight context. It is part of our duty of care to ensure to the best of our abilities that this does not happen.
- v. All other aspects of this policy and these procedures should be enacted as rigorously as in normal activities.

4. Record keeping

- a. The following records relating to children/young people must be kept safely and securely on paper and/or electronically:
 - i. Name, address, emergency contact details
 - ii. Additional needs
 - iii. Relevant medical information (e.g. allergies)
 - iv. Attendance registers for all groups
 - v. Consent forms for all appropriate activities. NB an annual 'Complete Consent' form is now used for those in school year seven and above.
- b. The following records relating to paid workers or volunteers with unsupervised access to children and young people must be kept safely and securely on paper and/or electronically:
 - i. Application forms
 - ii. References
 - iii. DBS information
- c. All records regarding safeguarding concerns are to be kept by the PSO and/or the Vicar only.
- d. All record keeping must be in accordance with St Mary's GDPR.

5. Physical contact

- a. It is our opinion that it is unrealistic and unhelpful to state that there should be no physical contact between children/young people and workers as contact is an essential element of proper human development.
- b. Workers should be aware that any contact between themselves and a child/young person puts them at risk of prosecution.

- c. No worker should feel that they have to have physical contact with a child/young person, and indeed, some contact initiated by a child/young person towards a worker might be unwelcome/unwanted. In such circumstances, the PSO should be informed.
- d. Physical contact should not be initiated or solicited by the worker, it should be as brief as possible and should meet the needs of the child/young person rather than the adult:
 - i. Contact should be kept to the 'safe zones': hands, forearms, shoulders and upper back.
 - ii. Workers should avoid playing 'rough' games (e.g. playfighting or wrestling) with children/young people as inappropriate touching could easily result.
 - iii. In the case of children under the age of four, workers are advised that extreme care should be exercised when picking up a child and that contact should still be kept to the 'safe zones' wherever possible.
 - iv. In the case of children who are not yet toilet trained, workers will call parents to change nappies.
 - ix. In the care of younger children who need to be accompanied to the toilet, workers may not enter the cubicle with them unless written consent is given by the child's parent/carer.
 - x. Where a worker accompanies a child to the toilet, another worker must first be informed and remain aware of the situation until the child returns.
- e. Where it is necessary to break up a fight, workers must:
 - i. Not put themselves in danger
 - ii. Ensure the safety of all other children/young people in the area first
 - iii. Attempt to stop the fight verbally
 - iv. Make sure other workers are aware of the situation
 - v. Only attempt to separate two combatants if absolutely necessary and only use physical restraint or force where they believe someone's life is in danger
 - vi. Make a full report to the PSO and to any law enforcement officials as necessary
 - vii. Consider additionally informing the police where it is suspected that one or more combatants may have been carrying an offensive weapon
 - viii. Complete a Record of Safeguarding Concern with the PSO.

8. Communications

- a. No images or recordings of persons under the age of 18 are to be published without the consent of a parent/carer.

- b. Where images/recordings are published, they should not specifically identify the children/young people they depict.
- c. Workers must use electronic communication and social media in accordance with the Church of England's safeguarding guidance and any local guidance adopted by St Mary's Church, as they blur the boundaries between workers and children/young people. The following guidelines lay out proper usage of those available at the time of this document's last revision:
 - i. General principles: workers should only contact children/young people with a specific purpose in mind or with a specific mandate from the PSO. Workers should only use electronic communication where another leader or the PSO can be copied into. It is inappropriate for workers to treat children/young people as friends to engage with on a purely social basis.
 - ii. If workers wish to arrange to meet with a young person/s for mentoring purposes they must not coordinate this through contacting the young person directly but by contacting the parent or carer of the young person.
 - iii. Social networking websites (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Bebo, Twitter): Communications should, wherever possible, be carried out in the public areas of the site. Where this is not appropriate, authorisation should be sought from the PSO prior to the communication and the entire content of the communication must be copied and forwarded to the PSO to keep on record. Where possible, workers should give children/young people the minimum access possible to their personal pages and areas, including denying access to view photographs, view their conversations with other adults, etc. In accordance with Department for Education guidelines, workers should not 'friend' young people on social networking sites, except via accounts that are accessible by the PSO.
 - iv. Email: All communications, including group messages, must be copied to the PSO to keep on record. Workers are encouraged not to communicate through individual messages through this medium without the express permission of the PSO.
 - v. Live chat (e.g. Facebook Chat, WhatsApp, Skype etc): Workers must not engage with children/young people through this medium unless it has been authorised by the PSO and only if using a chat client where the entire conversation can be copied and forwarded to the PSO to keep on record. As such, Facebook Chat is not an acceptable means of communication.
 - vi. Phone numbers: Workers must not give out their personal phone numbers
(either landline or mobile) to children/young people without the express permission of the PSO.
 - vii. Text messaging: All text messages to/from children/young people must be copied to email, forwarded or written up and sent to the PSO to be kept on record, or in an online text storage service used to

- produce activity reports (such as the 'BlueRoom' facility on the O2 network).
- viii. Picture messaging: workers should not send picture messages to children/young people. If they receive such a message, they should record the fact, describe the image and then delete it, asking the child/young person not to contact them in this way again.
- ix. Telephone conversations: These should be kept brief and where possible happen in an environment where both the worker and the child/young person can be overheard by adults. A report must be written and passed to the PSO after any contact by this method.
- x. Platforms such as Zoom for online meetings: a risk assessment should be carried out and meetings will be hosted by PSO (or nominated deputy) plus 2 other safer recruited Ignite team members, a code of conduct will be communicated with all participants, Child line number given to all those participating to report any mis use of the online meeting. All meeting details to remain private and shared with parents.

9. Recruitment, training and support

For the purposes of this document, the word 'worker' is used to describe employees and volunteers with significant or unsupervised contact with children, or who serve at St Mary's in any capacity on a regular basis. St Mary's undertakes to ensure that all those who work with children and young people are appropriately recruited, appointed, trained and supported. All workers must be provided with and have read this policy and must sign to say that they have read it and will comply with it. They must also complete the Church of England online safeguarding training to a level suitable for their role. This is, in part, to help create a culture of informed vigilance amongst all workers. Recruitment will be undertaken with the knowledge and agreement of the PCC, which will delegate all recruitment processes for employed roles to the interview team. Recruitment for voluntary roles will be overseen by the PSO and DSO.

- i. The Parish Safeguarding Handbook must be adhered to when planning recruitment processes.
- ii. Any activity to recruit new staff or volunteers must be based on the Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance: to deter unsuitable individuals gaining access to work with children or young people; to prevent opportunities for abuse in the workplace and to assess risk and create clear expectations; to detect inappropriate behaviour or abuse at the earliest opportunity. The Safer Recruitment practice includes:
 - Sending applicant role description and application form
 - Completion of an application form with two referees (2 references for paid worker. If the paid worker is a leader in ministry, then 3 references should be obtained (unless

references have been obtained by St Mary's within last 3 years).

- Completion of a Confidential Declaration, if a DBS is required, which will include The Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy (a copy of the Privacy Notice for the Confidential Declaration form will be given with these documents). If a declaration is made on this form, advice will be sought from Safeguarding at Chelmsford Diocese Office by the PSO.
- Confirmation of having read the St Mary's Church Safeguarding Policy
- Interview/conversation with worker regarding their new role
- PSO to apply for DBS if appropriate for the role
- If applicant already holds a DBS at the required level from another organisation and is registered on the DBS update service, this will be viewed by Chelmsford Diocese Safeguarding Team to confirm if it is acceptable or if a new DBS should be applied for.

iii. On the appointment of a new paid worker:

- An interview must be completed
- a decision will be made by the interview panel and if Vicar not on the panel, will be discussed with him prior to deciding if they are suitable for the role
- References from at least two people who have knowledge of the person's experience must be taken up
- Completion of the Confidential Declaration, if a DBS is required, which will include The Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy. If a declaration is made on this form, advice will be sought from Safeguarding at Chelmsford Diocese Office by the PSO. In addition, there may be those who do not have convictions or cautions but where there are sound reasons for considering that they still might pose a risk to others
- Confirmation of having read and understood the contents of St Mary's Staff Handbook
- An appropriate DBS check may be completed dependent on the role being taken up.

iv. On the appointment of an unpaid worker (Volunteer)

- Send role description and application form
- Completion of an application form with two referees (unless references have been obtained by St Mary's within last 3 years)
- Completion of a Confidential Declaration, if a DBS is required, which will include The Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy. If a declaration is made on this form, advice will be sought from Safeguarding at Chelmsford Diocese Office by the PSO.

- Confirmation of having read the St Mary's Church Safeguarding Policy
 - Interview/conversation with worker regarding their new role
 - PSO to apply for DBS if appropriate for the role
 - If applicant already holds a DBS at the required level from another organisation and is registered on the DBS update service, this will be viewed by Chelmsford Diocese Safeguarding Team to confirm if it is acceptable or if a new DBS should be applied for.
- v. No-one can begin work until a DBS check has been completed, if this is a requirement of your role, and a certificate returned, through Thirtyone:eight, along with references to St Mary's satisfaction. At the discretion of Chelmsford Diocese Safeguarding Team, a DBS certificate from another recognised organisation may be accepted if it can be viewed on the DBS Update service and is of the same level required. A DBS will be checked if it is registered with the DBS Update Service or renewed if not, every 3 years.
 - vi. A probationary period where the individual is regularly observed by an experienced worker/volunteer must be completed.
 - vii. Where a worker is appointed who will not have unsupervised access, a shortened version of the above procedure will apply, the nature of which will be decided in discussion with the PSO.

b. Training

- i. All workers will be required to complete the Church of England online safeguarding training which will give them an understanding of the recognition and prevention of abuse.
- ii. Basic Level, which is available online – Anyone in St Mary's or anyone who volunteers in a ministry/team
- iii. Basic and Foundation level training which is available online must take place before the worker begins having any involvement with children & young people and/or vulnerable adults
- iv. Leadership (compressed) level training is available online for Churchwardens and anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities/is leading activities involving children and/or vulnerable adults
- v. Leadership level training is for those holding a Bishop's licence (i.e. Clergy)
- vi. Safeguarding training will be refreshed every three years at the highest level already completed.
- vii. Other safeguarding training is available and the PSO will inform workers if they need to complete further training for their role.

c. Support

- i. All workers will report causes for concern to the PSO or DSO straight away.
- ii. All workers will be actively encouraged on a regular basis to refresh their understanding of abuse and to remain vigilant.
- iii. All workers are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times in accordance with the House of Bishops' [Code of Safer Working Practice](#) and St Mary's [Appropriate Boundaries Guidance](#).

10. Pandemic or Emergency Situations

- a. The Safeguarding Officer will keep up to date with the latest information from the government and Church of England.
- b. The Safeguarding Officer will follow government and Church of England advice to ensure the safety of everyone
- c. Safeguarding Policies and practice guidance remain in place
- d. Church volunteers who were previously safely recruited for other roles within the last 3 years, may be 're-deployed' into new voluntary roles to help in the community and new role descriptions will be supplied along with application forms to be completed (but no references would be required).
- e. We will continue to follow Safer Recruitment practice if welcoming new volunteers
- f. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) renewals must still take place when required. DBS site will be checked for updates regarding identity checks.

11. Contact details

Vicar

Malcolm Macdonald
07821 011435
malcolm@stmarysloughton.com

Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

Hin Cheung
07782 550 612

safeguarding@stmarysloughton.com

Deputy Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Amanda Hart
07780 992325
amanda@stmarysloughton.com

Part-Time Assistant Case Worker

Michelle Stanesby
01245 982 614
mstancesby@chelmsford.anglican.org

Part-Time Safeguarding Case Worker

Nelson Morgan
01245 294 474
nmorgan@chelmsford.anglican.org

Essex Social Services 0345 603 7634 / out of hours 0345 606 1212

Essex Police 999 (emergency assistance) / 101 (to make a report)

Reviewed annually by the PSO
Approved annually by the PCC:

Approved 16 July 2025 – next approval July 2026

Appendix

Abbreviation	Definition
DSA	Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor Amanda Knight - Safeguarding Manager & DSA (Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor) Tel: 01245 294457 (Weekdays, Office hours) Email: aknight@chelmsford.anglican.org Danielle Law (Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor) Tel: 01245 294472 (Weekdays, Office hours) Email: dlaw@chelmsford.anglican.org
DSO	Deputy Safeguarding Officer Amanda Hart 07780 992325 dbs@stmarysloughton.com
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
NSPCC	National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children 0808 800 5000
PSO	Parish Safeguarding Officer Hin Cheung 07782 550 612 safeguarding@stmarysloughton.com