

Christ Church-Biddulph Moor

Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Policy

The PCC will take all reasonable care to ensure the safety of the children and young people for whom it bears responsibility.

Procedures

1. **Janette Mountford Lees** is our approved Safeguarding officer. She is the point of contact through which concerns about child protection will be channelled and is responsible to the PCC for ensuring that these procedures are implemented.
2. The PCC has appointed **Anne Gadsden** as Children's advocate, someone children know they could talk to about any problems, if they so wish.
3. The PCC shall be directly responsible for any groups which involve working with groups of children and young people.
 - The appointment and validation of all leaders over 18 working with children and young people:
Before appointment two-character references will be taken up, and leaders will be asked to complete the Diocese of Lichfield declaration forms. On appointment, and every 3 years subsequently, those who have formal contact with children will be asked to provide a disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau confirming that they have not been convicted of any offences against children. The vicar is responsible for administering this, and for secure storage of confidential information.

Notes

- The appointment of Churchwardens will also be validated in the same way, before 31st July each year
 - The current Vicar is happy to be responsible for operating the appointment procedures.
 - Before leaving the parish for a new post, the Vicar will entrust the file of confidential references to a suitable person (probably the warden) to look after during the interregnum. These records will be sealed, but the name of each person that they relate to will be marked on the outside so that they can be accessed if necessary.
 - A person who is not on the list of approved workers may be permitted to help with a children's activity on an occasional basis provided that an approved worker is present. Typically, this might be a parent or another adult who agrees to cover for a sudden absence. This would also permit an adult who has not yet been formally approved to help to look after the children for a session during a weekend away.
4. We commit Christ Church to the Lichfield Diocese Child Protection Good Practice Guidelines which includes
 - guidance system for leaders and workers in child protection and the understanding of child abuse (contained in section 4 & 5)
 - a diocesan flow chart, showing how to act and who to contact if a child protection issue arises. This will be displayed on church & hall notice boards
 - clear guidelines for avoiding situations where children or young people could be in danger.
 5. Any groups which hire the Church Hall will be expected to satisfy the PCC that they have a suitable child protection policy.
 6. Only suitable and responsible people will be permitted to have keys to church property. The PCC will need to agree to anyone being given a key permanently; and the vicar, churchwardens or hall manager to agree to temporary key loans.

7. The PCC will ensure that children's activities are adequately insured. At present Christ Church's 'Parishguard' policy with Ecclesiastical Insurance provides public liability insurance and personal accident insurance for staff and volunteers. Note that any new activities and leaders need to be minuted as accepted by the PCC to be covered.
8. Staffing levels.
- Christ Church PCC has decided to adopt the minimum staffing ratios for any children or young people's clubs or activities,
 - 0-2 years: 1 adult to 3 children
 - 2-3 years: 1 adult to 4 children
 - 3-8 years: 1 adult to 8 children
 - 8-17 years: 1 adult to 10 children.
 - For these ratios, an adult must be 18 years or over. Nonetheless Christ Church affirms the potential value of junior leaders (aged under 18). However we feel that it is important that they are not made to bear undue responsibility; and would not in general recommend that they be given sole responsibility for the teaching of a Sunday school, especially where they are themselves not much older than the group members.
 - *Children in the churches care 2* says: 'It is a fundamental Parish responsibility that no-one works with children unsupervised or unsupported. Ideally the worker should not be alone'.
 - This is partly for practical reasons: if one adult needs to deal with an accident, there should always be another present to take charge of the rest of the group. It is also considered that if an adult is alone with a group of children (or especially with a single child); this situation could either be exploited by a potential abuser or could make it hard for an innocent leader to defend themselves against a false allegation.
 - The PCC endorses the practice: that any children or young people's club or activity should not take place unless there are 2 adults present.
 - However if the overall leader and the vicar agree, it may under some circumstances be acceptable for a small group to operate under the leadership of a single adult, *providing that there are other suitable adults present in the building who would be available to provide further support if necessary, and who can and did exercise the right to 'drop in' unannounced on the group.*
9. Ministry to all.
Protecting all God's children also endorses the importance of the church's ministry to those who have abused children in the past. Christ Church affirms in principle the need to offer this ministry, whilst endorsing the guidelines' expectations that any in this position would be expected to adhere to very strict rules in order to ensure that they do not present any risk to the children in our care.
10. This policy will be available to all interested parties, and will if requested be presented at the Archdeacon's visitation
11. This policy and its procedures will be monitored by the Child Protection Co-Ordinator, who will report to the PCC annually. Following this the policy will be reviewed each year.

Agreed PCC Christ Church, Biddulph Moor

Signed Rev'd Darren Fraser, Vicar, Christ Church

Date 21st January 2025