

The Parochial Church Council of St Peter's Church, High Harrogate

Parish Policy on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

26th January 2011

"St Peter's Church recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and accepts that this may take the form of physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, discriminatory, financial, neglect or spiritual abuse. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring, where possible that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained."

The PCC accepts this policy, based on the guidelines issued by the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds and adopts this on behalf of St Peter's Church.

This policy recognises the value and contribution of those who work with children and vulnerable adults in our name. The PCC acknowledges the shared responsibility of us all for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

Principles

St Peter's Church is committed to:

- The care and nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults.
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.
- The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide an environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.
- challenging any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

Acceptance

All members of the PCC, all paid staff and volunteers who work on behalf of St. Peters with children or vulnerable adults are expected to accept this policy and acknowledge their understanding of it. (See Policy Acceptance Form). No exceptions will be made to this requirement.

Similarly, any organisation or individual (including external groups) using church premises will be made aware of this policy via a statement on the booking form and will be required to observe the policy and accept their responsibility in implementing this.

Responsibility of the PCC

The PCC will ensure a Coordinator is appointed for this policy (The Taking Care Officer) and will inform the diocesan office of their details. A group will be appointed to support the Taking Care Officer and to oversee the implementation of this policy.

The PCC will ensure that Safeguarding is placed on the agenda of the PCC at least annually to include a report on progress and to review this policy.

Safer Recruitment (Appointment of Workers)

The PCC undertakes to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of all staff and volunteers who will work with or have regular contact with children and adults who may be vulnerable – as laid out in the diocesan guidelines. This should include completion of an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure (CRB), the Diocesan Confidential Declaration Form, and the names and contact details of 2 appropriate referees.

Consideration will be given to developing job descriptions, where appropriate to enable paid staff and volunteers to know what is expected of them.

All paid staff and volunteers should recognise that they are accountable to the PCC for the work they undertake on behalf of St Peter's. Interviews and probationary periods will be used where appropriate.

Safe Working Practices

The PCC will promote safe working practices as laid out in the diocesan guidelines. This will ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected and that workers and volunteers are not wrongly accused of abuse or misconduct. All workers (paid or unpaid) will receive access to appropriate ongoing training opportunities as available to ensure people are clear about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

The Church premises will be assessed for safety for children and vulnerable adults and a risk assessment carried out annually including fire safety procedures. The PCC will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable.

Supporting people to talk to someone independent

The Church will display the telephone numbers of Childline and other similar organisations which provide specialist support to young people and vulnerable adults.

Responding to a Safeguarding issue – Process and Confidentiality

Any individual should respond without delay to any allegation, suspicion or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm or abuse, whether in the church or in another context.

Respond by referring to and discussing with the Vicar and/or Taking Care Officer (and where appropriate, the Diocesan Child Protection Advisor).

In an emergency (where a person is in imminent danger), take action yourself by dialling 999 and referring to Social Care at North Yorkshire County Council. The number can be found in the phone book or on the internet and will be published in the Safe Working Practices Guidance, which will be issued to those working with children and vulnerable adults. Inform the Vicar and Taking Care Officer as soon as possible.

PCC Adoption

This policy was agreed and adopted at a Parochial Church Council meeting held on (Date) and will be reviewed thereafter annually.

Signed: Name: (PCC Secretary)