

Parish of St Thomas and St Nicholas, Bedhampton

Safeguarding Policy

Bedhampton Parish recognises that:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount. A young person means any individual(s) aged 14 to 17 years old.
- All children and adults with vulnerabilities, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- Partnership working is essential to good safeguarding practice.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to without delay.
- All church officers have a responsibility to report concerns to their Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).
- Church officers must receive support and training to be aware of and understand best practice, and how to manage any welfare or safeguarding issues that may arise.

1. Promoting a safer environment and culture

We will ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to safeguard vulnerable groups in order that they can participate fully in any pastoral, social and other PCC endorsed or approved activities and events, safe from harm and abuse.

The following activities and events have been identified as PCC-endorsed events and activities which are associated with vulnerable groups and fall under the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy:

Regular (weekly or monthly activities):

- *Sunday School (Kidszone)*
- *Fun Club at St Nicholas*
- *St. Nick's Flicks*
- *Coffee & cakes morning at St Nicholas*

- *Home communion*
- *Home groups*
- *Bubble Church*
- *Care Home Visiting*
- *House Groups*
- *Messy Church*
- *Pastoral Care Visiting*
- *Prayer Ministry*
- *School Assemblies*
- *Transforming Lives for Good (TLG)*
- *Women's Bible Study*
- *Women's ministry*

One-off/yearly activities

- *Live nativity*
- *Christmas Fayre*
- *Bedhampton Summer Show*
- *Holiday club*
- *Light party*
- *Bible studies/groups such as Alpha, Emotionally Healthy Spiritually*

For these activities and events, Bedhampton Parish will:

- Designate a Group Leader, deputy leader and assistants with up-to-date role descriptions.
- Ensure an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to children, taking into account the nature of the activity, the venue and the age, gender and needs of participants. *See Appendix 1*
- Ensure adults do not work alone with children and young people
- Obtain parental/guardian consent for attendance at groups and trips, use of images and transporting children in private cars. *Children will not be allowed to participate unless the leaders receive a completed consent form from the parent/guardian of the child concerned, even if the parent/guardian accompanies the child. A new form is needed for each separate activity.*

- Ensure unaccompanied children are taken care of by a suitably appointed adult and endeavour to establish contact with the parent or carers to gain their consent to their child's attendance
- Ensure no child or young person is invited into the home of a church officer unless the reason for this has been approved and agreed with parents and the PCC
- Ensure pastoral carers do not misuse or abuse the trust that is bestowed upon them.
- Ensure and risk assessments are carried out before the activity/event takes place, and these are reviewed regularly
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC
- Ensure that all activities and events which are not run directly by the church but which take place in church buildings or grounds comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance. *A declaration must be signed annually to show they have read and understand the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and procedures or that they agree to abide by their own organisation's safeguarding procedures.*

2. Safer Recruitment

Bedhampton Parish will select, vet, and train all church officers who work with or volunteer with vulnerable groups in accordance with the House of Bishops' and Diocesan safeguarding policy and practice guidance. Please refer to the link below:

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/safeguarding%20safer_recruitment_practice_guidance_2016.pdf

We will:

- Ensure we have clear role descriptions and/or person specifications for all posts working or volunteering with children and/or adults
- Ensure all church workers and volunteers working with children and adults complete and sign an application form and confidential declaration before appointment

- Ensure we take up written references and carefully check the applicant's right to work in the UK before appointment
- Seek an enhanced DBS check for anyone eligible before appointment
- Ensure that all applicants working with children and adults are interviewed
- Offer support and training after appointment
- Provide a written behaviour code for all workers with children and/or adults
- Ensure all church leaders and those who work with children and/or adults complete appropriate safeguarding training at least every three years.
- *Any person refusing to comply with the recruitment procedure or training requirement will not be allowed to work with or have unsupervised contact with children or adults who may be at risk of harm in the parish*

3. Responding to safeguarding concerns

Bedhampton Parish will ensure that anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with legislation, statutory and national safeguarding policy and procedures.

We will:

- Appoint at least one lay Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) for children and adults
- Ensure there are arrangements in place to cover if the PSO is not available
- Develop a written procedure for dealing with abuse and allegations and make this available to all church officers
- Clearly display contact details of the PSO and the Diocesan Safeguarding team, as well as local and national services available to get help with safeguarding issues
- Store personal information and safeguarding records securely and ensure information needed in an emergency is readily available
- Ensure all church officers are aware of their responsibilities in regard to the recording, storage and sharing of information

4. Care of Survivors of Abuse

Bedhampton Parish will ensure that those who have suffered abuse will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and taken seriously, in accordance with the guidelines set in Section 2 of the Church of England's 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse' statement.

5. Managing risk

When it is known that a member of the church community may pose a risk to children and/or adults, we will consult without delay with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser so that a safe course of action in accordance with national and local safeguarding policy and procedures is followed, in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies.

Monitoring and Review

This safeguarding policy and the following underpinning procedures will be available to all church officers, parents and participants

- *Procedure for dealing with safeguarding concerns and allegations*
- *Health and Safety Policy*
- *E-Safety Policy*
- *Guidance for those who exercise pastoral care*

This policy will be reviewed annually by the PCC and amended as appropriate.

Appendix 1

Church groups that involve children need to ensure good practice standards across a wide range of areas, including recruitment of group leaders, DBS checking, staffing ratios, suitability of premises, health and safety arrangements, and facilities for children with special needs.

The minimum staffing levels for groups should be as follows

0 – 2 years	1 adult to 3 children 1:3
2 – 3 years	1 adult to 4 children 1:4

- 4 – 8 years 1 adult to 6 children 1:6
- 9 – 12 years 1 adult to 8 children 1:8
- 13 – 18 years 1 adult to 10 children 1:10

Each group should have at least two workers, even for smaller groups, and if possible one male and one female. 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.

Reference:

- NSPCC – Recommended adult to child ratios for working with children
1. <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children/#heading-top>

Date reviewed and approved by Parish Church Council:	18 th May 2026
Next Review Date:	May 2027
Name and position of the person responsible for this policy:	Parish Safeguarding Officer – Emily Ashworth (ISC) Rector - Max Cross