

# The Community of Saint Stephen's Bristol City Parish Church



## Safeguarding Policy

Saint Stephen's PCC supports the wish of the Diocese of Bristol to reflect that, in developing the safeguarding children and adults policy, we are all in need of protection from harm and that as a Christian community it is the responsibility of every one of us to protect those less able to protect themselves.

Saint Stephen's PCC is committed to working in line with the Diocese of Bristol and within the Principles of the House of Bishop's Policy for Safeguarding (contained within 'Protecting All God's Children 2010'), the requirements of Working Together 2013, the Safeguarding Principles published by the Department of Health for Safeguarding Adults in 2011 and No Secrets, 2000.

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

We are committed to:

- **The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with all adults and children.**  
This includes paying due regard to the beliefs and wishes of adults and children both when a safeguarding concern arises and in the development and delivery of church led activities including worship.
- **The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable, and**
- **The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse.**

The safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk is everyone's responsibility, not just parents, guardians and carers. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults at risk. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and prepared to report concerns and take actions if necessary.

Saint Stephen's PCC has appointed a Parish Safeguarding Officer and follows the guidance in the Diocese of Bristol document 'Parish Safeguarding Responsibilities'.

The child's welfare is the paramount consideration in matters of private and public law affecting children which come before the family courts. Saint Stephen's PCC in line with the Diocese of Bristol accepts and extends this principle in all areas of its work with children. Where conflicts of interest arise between the welfare of children and that of adults, it is the welfare of children that will be given priority.

- **We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of Disclosure and Barring Service disclosures.**

Saint Stephen's PCC in line with the Diocese of Bristol is committed to implementing safer recruitment practice in the recruitment of all ministers, volunteers and employees. The relevant vetting scheme is that of the Disclosure and Barring Service. The suitability of an applicant to work with children or adults at risk is never solely dependent on the outcome of a DBS check and the full safer recruitment process will be used to determine suitability of the candidate for the role.

Those who work with children and/or adults, and those who supervise those workers, who are eligible for a DBS check will be required to undertake that check prior to starting in any role whether employed or voluntary within the Diocese of Bristol.

Those who are not eligible for a DBS check will be recruited in line with safer recruitment practice including the use of applications forms, references and interview where applicable.

Suitable induction, training and supervision will be provided to all those working with children and vulnerable adults.

(Please refer to Diocese of Bristol policies: 'Safer Recruitment Guidelines', 'Fair Recruitment of Ex-Offenders' and 'Handling of Disclosure Information'.)

- **We will respond without delay to every concern raised which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.**

Saint Stephen's PCC in line with the Diocese of Bristol accepts that it has responsibilities, through its workers, to take all reasonable steps to safeguard children and adults at risk when on church grounds, taking part in church led activities off site and when traveling between sites when organised by the Church. Saint Stephen's PCC in line with the Diocese of Bristol cannot be responsible for incidents or concerns arising outside of church or church led activities but will never the less endeavour to provide appropriate advice and to refer any concern raised to the appropriate authorities in order to ensure that the community as a whole is safeguarded appropriately.

The term 'concern' covers allegations, disclosures, complaints of a safeguarding nature; whether made in writing or verbally.

Saint Stephen's PCC is committed to working in line with the Diocese of Bristol and the published process, which details how concerns should be reported and managed (please refer to Diocese of Bristol policies: 'How to Make an Alert' and 'Allegations Management Procedure').

Saint Stephen's PCC is committed to working in line with the Diocese of Bristol, where there is a clear line of accountability and structure for safeguarding which attributes roles and responsibilities to everyone within the life of the church. This includes the Diocesan Secretary holding lead responsibility for Safeguarding within the Bishops Staff group, having a suitably qualified Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser in post and the presence and work of the Diocesan Safeguarding Steering Group. (Please refer to Diocese of Bristol's accountability framework and 'DSSG - Terms of Reference')

- **We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with him, or her, an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.**

Saint Stephen's PCC in line with the Diocese of Bristol does not (and should not) investigate current allegations of abuse or harm of children itself but refers them to the appropriate statutory authorities for investigation in line with multi agency safeguarding children procedures. The Community of Saint Stephen's will comply with any internal investigations carried out by the Diocese once statutory authorities have completed their own investigations.

Saint Stephen's PCC in line with the Diocese of Bristol will only investigate allegations of harm or abuse of a vulnerable adult where a statutory authority requests that this action is undertaken or where the allegation does not meet the criteria for a referral to police or Local Authority. The Community of Saint Stephen's in

line with the Diocese of Bristol may make information gathering inquiries in order to be able to present accurate information to the statutory authorities.

If it comes to the attention of Saint Stephen's PCC that a child has experienced abuse in the past that information will be passed to the statutory authorities for their records and consideration.

If it comes to the attention of Saint Stephen's PCC that an adult has experienced abuse in their past, the adult's wishes will be taken into consideration and that adult encouraged to report the matter to the statutory authorities. Where there is a reasonable belief that others may be at risk of harm Saint Stephen's PCC will refer the matter to the statutory authorities within the guidance provided by the Data Protection Act 1998.

- **We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.**

The Community of Saint Stephen's in line with the Diocese of Bristol is aware that those in positions of trust and responsibility, in the Church, as elsewhere, may be subject to temptation to abuse their power and exploit or harm others. We seek to take action to deal with any abuse.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to children (under 18) by church officers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), as well as other statutory bodies as appropriate, and investigated in accordance with his/her advice.

Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to adults (18 and over) by church officers will be referred to the police and/or Local Authority where appropriate and investigated in accordance with their advice.

- **We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.**

If a member of a church community comes to notice as having a conviction or caution for offenses against children or vulnerable adults, or has been barred from working with children or vulnerable adults, or is considered a potential present risk to either group (for example if an allegation has been made but the outcome is as yet unknown) we will seek to implement a written agreement, where it is safe to do so in line with advice from the local Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements group (MAPPA) . The agreement will contain safeguards for the individual and children and/or adults at risk.

The Community of Saint Stephen's in line with the Diocese of Bristol will work with statutory authorities where appropriate to ensure adequate risk assessment and management of any agreement.

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

Consequently this policy and all following procedures and guidance will be regularly updated in order to reflect current legislation, guidance and best practice.

The Community of Saint Stephen's in line with the Diocese of Bristol is committed to positive information sharing practice including appropriate seeking of consent to share, confidentiality, sharing of information internally and with statutory bodies. The Community of Saint Stephen's in line with the Diocese of Bristol also undertakes to retain, store and destroy records in line with current best practice.

**Saint Stephens PCC**  
**Policy Reviewed January 2017**