

**Safe Haven**  
**Child Protection**

**Policy into Practice**

Guidelines and Good Practice  
within the Yare Valley Churches

Date of Next Review: June 2019

## **Introduction:**

As a parish, we take the protection of children and young people and are committed to ensure the safety of the children in our care, as well as the volunteers working with them. We endeavour to ensure that we have policies and procedures in place that ensure the wellbeing of the children and young people and regularly review them.

We work closely with the Diocese and all our children and youth work operates under their Safeguarding policy entitled 'Safe Haven' and the supporting guidelines 'Social Media and Engaging with Young People'. This document does not replace that policy or supporting guidelines, but rather it is designed to complement them. The PCC of The Yare Valley Churches endorse this document, alongside Safe Haven, as a means of setting out how the Diocesan policy will be implemented within the context of this parish. It outlines procedures which we have implemented as a response to the requirements of the Diocesan policy. This document should not be read alone but rather in conjunction with the Diocesan policy.

## **The responsibilities of the Parish:**

We all have a responsibility to ensure the protection of children and young people.

### *The responsibility of the PCC:*

The PCC annually reviews and agrees the Child Protection Policy. A policy statement is then signed. A copy of the statement is displayed on each of the church premises and a copy sent to the Children, Youth and Families Administrator at Diocesan House.

The PCC will appoint a 'Named Person' who have responsibility for policy implementation. Given the nature of the work, we appoint a named person for the whole benefice, there is also a 'point of contact' on the PCC of The Yare Valley Churches. We recognise also that it is impossible to work in isolation given the nature of the activities within the benefice, therefore these two people, the named person for vulnerable adults and the incumbent have formed a Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Team and together they work on child protection issues and policy implementation.

The named person for the Benefice is:

**Helen Casson**

The PCC has a responsibility to ensure that the building itself is safe and well maintained, that adequate insurance cover is provided and that all children and youth work operates within the child protection policy.

### *The responsibility of the Child Protection Team:*

It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Team to implement and monitor the Safe Guarding Policy, encouraging good practice.

The team will ensure the suitability of all volunteers working with children and young people. They will obtain the necessary checks and renew these as appropriate.

The team will encourage volunteers to access training offered by the Diocese.

They will be the first point of contact if there is a child protection concern or an allegation of abuse. They will receive the information and will immediately inform and liaise with the Bishop's Advisor for Safeguarding.

The named person will obtain an enhanced DBS and complete a Confidential Declaration Form.

*Responsibility of the Group Leaders:*

Ensure the group operates within the Safeguarding policy, informing the Named Person of any suspicions or accusations of child abuse.

Ensure the team of volunteers have had the appropriate checks completed prior to them starting to work with the children

Ensure that any young leaders have adequate support and guidance.

Carry out appropriate risk assessments on a regular basis (and each time the group leaves the premises). These risk assessments should be copied and a copy lodged with the Child Protection Team. The group leader has a responsibility to highlight to the Rector any health and safety issues that the PCC need to be made aware of (e.g. issues with the building).

To maintain adequate records for the children: contact details, emergency contact details, permission to take photographs, travel consent forms, medical information form and a register of attendance. All this information should be completed in pen and must be kept in a secure place and be archived even when the child leaves the group.

The group leader will be responsible for maintaining a register of the adults present at each session. This information will also be archived.

The group leader must ensure that the PCC have been notified of any 'off-site' activities and that their approval have been minuted.

The group leader must ensure that they access appropriate training from the Diocese and ensure that at all times they are promoting and demonstrating best practice.

*Responsibility of the workers:*

It is the responsibility of the worker to report any abuse discovered or suspected. They should know about and agree to follow the church's Policy for Protecting Children and Young People.

**The worker should:**

Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age, watch verbal language, tone of voice and body language.

Not engage in any of the following:

- Invading the privacy of children or young people
- Sexually provocative games

- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in 'fun'
- Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- Any scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting a child or young person
- Allowing the children or young people involve them in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.
- Inviting a child into their home alone. If a child or group of child are invited into the home, it should be ensured that someone else is in the house. It is important that this is first discussed with the group leader or named person and that the parents know where the child is. In the case of a young person, it is important that parental permission is sought prior to the young person being invited into the home alone.
- Ensure that arrangements for transporting children are in line with the Transport of Children and Young People Guidelines and that it is with the knowledge of the Group Leader and the parents have given their consent.
- Be aware of which children are collected by a parent/carer and only hand them over to the agreed person (this applies especially to children under 5 years of age).

### **Recruitment of volunteers:**

It is the responsibility of the named person to ensure that the names of people appointed to work with children and young people are minuted at a PCC meeting, prior to them starting to work with the children.

In line with the Diocesan policy, all adults who come into contact with children frequently, intensively or overnight will apply for an enhance Disclosure through the Named Person who will then complete the appropriate form online. They must also complete a Confidential Declaration Form.

Those who come into contact with children less frequently (e.g. those who help on an adhoc basis with Place 2B Me) or those whose contact with children is only indirectly (e.g. those serving tea and coffee at the Holiday Club) will be required to complete a Confidential Declaration Form, but will not be required to complete a DBS check. It must be noted, however, that those without a DBS check, must be on the rota with someone who has been through an enhanced check.

Confidential Declaration Forms are securely filed with the Named Person who is responsible for issuing renewal forms every three years.

### **Volunteer Support:**

As a PCC, we recognise the important role that our team of volunteers plays within each of the children/youth groups and believe that we have a responsibility to support them in the work that they undertake. We also take seriously our responsibility for pastoral care of the team.

Support is usually informally through feedback, planning meetings and general opportunities to catch up and opportunities to chat. More formal systems can be set up if required through the Group Leader initially and through the ministry team.

As a benefice, we are working towards supporting our volunteers further through an 'expectations' document. This document will set out the role and responsibilities of the

volunteer within each group and also what support the volunteer can expect from the church.

### **Young Leaders:**

We are committed to growing young leaders and recognise that this requires commitment and an investment both on the part of the young leader and also the church.

We believe that young leaders can be key players in supporting and guiding younger children.

Young people aged 16 and above who are regularly (weekly) in contact with children in an organised context within the Yare Valley Churches will need to have an enhanced DBS check carried out. Those who are supporting the children/youth work 'infrequently' will not be required to complete a DBS check (but must work alongside someone who has been DBS checked).

We believe that any young person wanting to help with the children (in whichever group) becomes an integral part of that team.

Before any person begins to help within a group, they must first have the agreement of the group leaders.

#### *What we expect from young leaders:*

- We expect all leaders and support people within a group to engage the children and enter into the activities that have been planned.
- Young children look up to young people and it is important that they behave in an appropriate way and use appropriate language when working with the children.
- The needs of the children is our priority. All members of the team are expected to work to try and meet the needs of the individuals within our care.
- In line with our Child Protection Policy, if a member of the team is concerned about an individual child, they must contact the Named Person immediately.
- We expect young leaders, as integral members of the team, to notify the group leader of the group they work within if they are unable to attend a session.
- We are all faced with situations from time to time where we are not sure of what to do or how to react. If a young leader is faced with such a situation, we expect them to ask for help.
- The young leader will need to read and sign a 'Working Agreement' and also a confidential declaration. This should be handed to the named person.

#### *What a young leader can expect from the leadership:*

- The leadership will provide the young leader with opportunities to train and develop in leadership.
- The young leader will become an integral part of the team and for that reason; they will be kept informed about what has been planned for each session.
- There will be a support structure for the young leader. The structure will include people they can turn to in order to ask advice if at any time they are not sure how to deal with a particular situation.
- There will be opportunities (should you wish) for you to input ideas of your own.

- The young leader will never be expected to deal with a group of children on their own. There will always be an adult around who will have the overall responsibility.
- There will be opportunities to review, evaluate and discuss the role (especially as there may be other issues that may affect the commitment of the young person: e.g. coursework or exams). We want to support the young leaders as they work with the children and do not want them to feel overburdened, but they will need to let the group leader know if too much is being asked of them.

As a parish, we take the nurture of our young leaders seriously. We will provide mentoring as well as specific training and support.

## **Off-site activities**

We all have a responsibility to the children, young people and their families to ensure that the children remain as safe as possible when taking part in activities, whether they are on the premises or in places other than the church building.

The church also has a responsibility to protect those that work with the children, young people and their families.

This guidance has been produced to support the planning and implementation of off-site activities.

The activity that is to be carried out off-site needs careful planning and preparation. There needs to be a sufficient period of time to enable the necessary paper work to be completed.

As leader of the group, it is strongly advised that you visit the place in question (even if it is well known to you) as soon as possible to ensure that it is still suitable for use by the particular aged children.

It is the Group Leader's responsibility (through the Named Person) to inform the PCC of any off-site activity to ensure that the group is covered by the insurance held by the church. It must be remembered that the PCC only meet once every two months and failure to inform the PCC will mean that the activity will not be able to take place.

Written parental permission must be sought prior to the activity taking place. Any child who has not received written parental permission must not take part in the off-site activity. It is therefore important that records are kept of such permission. A blank template has been included in this document to show the information that is required from the parents (see Appendix 1)

Prior to the activity, a visit must take place to ensure that the leader is familiar with such areas as: first aid provision, toilet arrangements, safety and security arrangements (e.g. doors, exits etc.). A risk assessment should take place to ensure that the leader(s) have considered all areas of 'risk' and that thought has been given as to how the risk can be reasonably reduced. This risk assessment should be shared with the other adults in the group.

On the day of the visit:

- It is important that enough adults are present for the activity. If the activity is 'outdoors' or involves travelling, it is sensible to ensure that there are more adults present than is required by the ratio.
- The register should be taken as usual and the adults present included on the register. The children should be counted and this number communicated to all other adults within the group.
- A list of all the children taking part in the off-site activity (which could be in the form of a copy of the register) should either be given to a member of the ministry team or the Named Person whilst on the visit.
- The register and all registration forms (which include emergency contact telephone numbers) should be taken on the visit. It is strongly advised (where possible) that the leader also carries a mobile phone which remains switched on at all times.
- The group's accident book should be taken as well as a first aid kit (especially if there is no first aid provision at the venue being used).

- If the group is large, it is advisable to split the group into smaller units and an adult put in charge of each 'unit'.
- When walking near the road, the children should be encouraged to walk away from the road and adults spaced throughout the line, with one adult leading and another at the end of the line.

In the event of any incident taking place, it should be dealt with in the usual way. The child's parents should be notified (and a home-visit should take place if appropriate), the Named Person and the Leadership Team should also be informed.

## **Registers and Registration forms**

It is important that we have up to date information about the children and young people in our care to ensure that we can (as far as possible) meet their needs and ensure their safety.

This information should be written down and always be available when the groups take place. This does not apply for children within the toddler groups where their parents are present for the duration of the session, but does apply for the youth groups and times when children or young people are not supervised by their parent/carer.

The following information must be included on a registration form:

- Child's full name
- Name of parent(s) or carer(s)
- Home address and telephone number
- Date of birth (of the child)
- Emergency contact number (if appropriate)
- Details of any known medical conditions (including allergies, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes etc)
- The name of the adult who will normally collect the child (if appropriate)
- If it is appropriate for the child to walk home alone (only children in year 6 onwards), then written permission must be given.
- Signature of the parents and the current date.

The registration forms should be available for the duration of each session and should be stored securely after the session in order to respect the child's confidentiality.

## **First Aid and Administering Medication**

No medication (unless it is in the case of an emergency) will be administered by the teams leading the children/youth groups.

It is essential that parents provide up to date information with regard to their child's medical conditions (as appropriate) through the use of registration forms.

At each session, a person with relevant first aid experience and qualification should be present. A well stocked first aid kit is available for each of the groups and the group leaders are responsible for ensuring that this remains up to date.

If it is known that a child or young person may require emergency medical treatment (e.g. due to an allergy or asthma attack), there will be a designated adult who will administer the treatment. Prior to the child being accepted into the group, it is expected that the designated adult will meet with the parent to discuss the treatment and to ensure that they know how it must be administered. If treatment is administered in this way, it must be recorded (including date and time) and the parents informed.

All medication must be clearly labelled with the child's name. With the younger groups, the medication should be handed in at the beginning of each session for secure storage whilst it is not required and then returned at the end of the session to the parents.

For other types of emergency medical treatment, it will be the responsibility of the qualified first aider to assess the injury and to administer appropriate treatment. It is expected that it will be this person who will also contact the emergency services if they consider it necessary. All treatment must be recorded in the group's accident book and the parents informed. If hospital treatment is necessary, the parents should be contacted immediately. If they are not available, at least one adult, and where ever possible a second, from the group will accompany the child to hospital whilst another adult from the group continues to try and contact the parents.

## Health and Safety

### *Accident Books:*

Each children's and youth group has their own accident book which must be completed in the event of any injury being sustained. Each entry must be completed fully and the parents asked to sign the entry. It must be realised that the accident book may be considered if a legal dispute takes place. Once an accident book is completed, it must be archived for at least two years before being disposed of. If (as is often the case with the youth groups) the parents do not collect the children, a home visit must be carried out in order for the entry to be signed by the parent or carer.

### *Risk Assessment:*

The church room and the church itself are 'multi-purpose' in so far as they are used by a number of different groups on a weekly and daily basis. It is essential (and good practice) to check the venue before each session begins. There are a number of areas that need to be considered:

- The floor (especially for the groups who will have 'crawlers'). It is important to ensure there are no objects on the floor that may provide a choking hazard to young children. These hazards (if they are present) will need to be removed and the room may need hoovering.
- Furniture: there is always 'spare' furniture within the rooms that we use. Unfortunately it cannot be completely removed, but it is important to ensure it is stored in such a way as it does not pose a safety hazard. For example, adult chairs should not be stacked more than 5 high. Tables should be stacked and not one upturned on another.
- Fire exits: these should be left clear (and the space around them)
- Plugs: these should be covered by safety covers
- Furniture: that the furniture is safe and in a good state of repair.
- Trailing wires: there should not be any trailing wires when using electrical equipment. If wires must cut across the venue, then they should be secured with Gaffa tape.

A risk assessment sheet is a useful way of considering the safety of the venue. Some items can be rectified, others require the group leader to think through the implications and consider the management and organisation of the group. Any venue that poses an immediate risk to the well being of the children should not be used, and the Church Warden in charge of fabric should be notified straight away. A blank risk assessment sheet is located in the back of the guidelines [See Appendix 6].

### *Fire:*

We do not need to complete a fire practice; however we must ensure that the adults within the group are aware of the procedure in the event of a fire. The fire assembly point is just inside the wall of the church yard. The group leader is responsible for collecting the register and ensuring that all the children are accounted for. In the case of a child or adult being reported missing, no one must re-enter the building.

### *Collecting children:*

It is important that each group has considered procedures for the collection of children and that these procedures have been communicated to the other members of the team, the children and the parents.

For children's groups, we require information as to who will collect them at the end of a session, and if they are to make their own way home, we require the written consent of the parent/carer. [Appendix 4]

*Hygiene:*

All toilets and nappy changing areas need to be checked for cleanliness. All cleaning products should be locked away.

*Equipment and toys:*

When buying toys and other equipment, the age and developmental stage of the children within the group will be considered. Toys and equipment will only be purchased from a reputable company and they should carry the relevant symbols for safety and quality.

*Craft:*

All craft activities must be adequately supervised. Consideration should be given to the materials and equipment used to ensure that the children remain as safe as possible at all times. Group sizes will not be too large, thus ensuring adequate supervision can take place. Non-toxic materials will always be used and where possible, all materials should be washable. Any 'messy mats' should be adequately secured to the floor (e.g. through the use of gaffa tape).

*Electrical equipment:*

All electrical equipment should be PAT tested for safety.

## **Leader to Child Ratio**

At least two adults (18+) will be present with a child or group of children or young people.

The children or young people will be adequately supervised for the number of children/ young people and the activities which they are undertaking.

Whilst currently none of our activities are regulated by OFSTED, we recognise that the adult to child ratios suggested by them are 'good practice' and we endeavour to ensure that our activities are staffed in line with their guidelines.

Children 0-2 years: 1 adult to 3 children

Children 2-3 years: 1 adult to 4 children

Children 3-8 years: 1 adult to 8 children

Children 8-18 years: 1 adult to 10 children

No adult should work with groups alone. Each group will have a minimum of two adults and we will, whenever possible, ensure a gender balance is maintained.

When transporting children and young people to and from activities, we will attempt to ensure that two adults are present in each car. We recognise that this may not always be possible, but will do all we can to protect our children and volunteers.

*Parental Involvement:*

Due to the nature of our role within the church, we recognise the need to work closely with the parents/carers of the children within our care.

To this end we ensure that:

- Parents are informed of the programme of activities planned for each group.
- Parents are welcomed and that they are informed of any incidents/areas for concern that may have arisen within a particular session.
- Parents feel able to stay with their child if, for example, their child is not settling well in the group.
- If a child makes a significant step in their spiritual journey, we will support that child by informing the parent/carer.

Information is communicated in a number of different ways as appropriate, through the use of:

- Letters to the parents
- Face-to-face meeting
- Telephone conversations
- Regular newsletters
- Email to parents

## **Transporting Children and Young People**

As members of the church, we commit ourselves to transporting children and young people in the safest way possible.

To ensure that this is carried out, the following is a list of guidelines for anyone driving children or young people to or from a church organised event or activity:

- The driver must be over the age of 21 have a valid driving licence with at least one years driving experience. The driver must be qualified to drive the type of vehicle.
- Written permission must be obtained from the parents (travel consent form)
- The vehicle being used to transport young people must be roadworthy (hold a current MOT certificate) and taxed.
- The driver must be insured under the owner's policy.
- The car should only carry the number of passengers that fitted fully functional seatbelts will allow.
- If a child is shorter than 135cm (4'5") and less than 12 years old, a child seat or a booster seat must be used when transporting them in the car.
- It is the driver's legal responsibility to ensure the child is correctly restrained. Legally, children over 14 years are responsible themselves for wearing a seatbelt but it is good practice for the driver to ensure that seatbelts are worn at all times.
- Whenever possible arrange that the gender of the adults is appropriate to the passengers. Ideally, two adults will be in the car and passengers seated in the back.
- Where more than one car is being used, the cars will travel in convoy wherever this is practicable to do so.
- All drivers will have mobile phone contact with the group leaders and other drivers transporting the children/youth in order to relay delays/breakdowns/other issues. The driver will not use the mobile phone whilst they are driving.
- It is the responsibility of the group leader to know which children/young people are being transported in each car.

If a young person requests a lift home after an event or activity, parental permission should be sought prior to the lift being agreed.

Additional recommendations have also been made:

- All speed limits should be kept to.
- It is advised that you carry at least two passengers in your car at one time.
- It is advised that a person of the same gender should sit in the front with the driver.
- Mobile phones should be switched off and not used for the duration of the journey.
- Under no circumstances should anyone drive whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication with any side effects that may affect your ability to drive safely.

**Dealing With Complaints:**

There may be times when a parent (or child/young person) has a complaint with regard programme or group which their child attends. It is important that the agreed procedure is followed when dealing with the complaint.

The parent should, in the first instance, address their complaint to the adult in charge of the group. This person should inform the Ministry Team as appropriate and take necessary action (if appropriate). It is important that, if any action is taken, this is communicated to the parent.

If the parent/carer is not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they should be referred to the Incumbent.

If the complaint involves the adult in charge of the group, the complaint should be made directly to the Named Person.

## **Behaviour Plan**

We aim to promote an environment that is safe, in which children, young people and adults can feel secure.

We expect every child/young person to treat adults, other children/young people, the environment and resources with respect and will not tolerate aggressive, destructive or abusive behaviour. We therefore reserve the right to exclude children/young people from access to the particular group and its programme in cases of unacceptable behaviour.

At the centre of any behaviour plan must be praise, and an understanding that all children are accepted and loved by God and that we are called to be 'Christ-like' in our response to children.

That said, children thrive in environments where there are boundaries which are shared with the children and within which they know they must operate. These boundaries are in place for their safety and wellbeing and that of all the children within the group.

We are all responsible for our own behaviour and we understand that the way we act and react has consequences.

*What the leaders can expect of the children in the session:*

- that everyone is allowed to join in the activities/sessions that are planned.
- that everyone is treated with respect and consideration at all times (including the adults)
- that resources are treated with respect.
- that the child or young person will actively participate in the session. If someone chooses not to participate, then they are expected not to disturb what is happening

*What the children can expect of the leaders within the session:*

- that they will be treated with respect at all times
- that the session is well planned and adequately resourced
- that a consistent approach across all the children's work
- that there is appropriate communication with parents/guardians
- for pastoral care to be shown towards the children within the group (outside of the group session)

Communication and partnerships with parents is essential if we are to effectively tackle any behavioural issue.

We recognise that we need to set out clearly the consequences of when the boundaries are overstepped:

**Step 1:** If unacceptable behaviour is being shown, the child/children will be asked to stop. If they choose not to change their behaviour, then step 2 will be implemented.

**Step 2:** If the unacceptable behaviour is still evident. The child will be taken to one side and it will be explained why the behaviour is found to be unacceptable. Questions may be asked of the child such as "is there a problem?" "Is everything OK at home/school?" "I'm concerned about you, is there something going on that is making you feel this way?" The child will be allowed to rejoin the group. Other strategies may be employed at this point such as: moving the child away from others, sitting an adult next to the child, refocusing

the activity, working to engage the child. If the child chooses not to change their behaviour, then step 3 will be implemented.

**Step 3:** The child will once again receive a verbal warning and if they choose not to change their behaviour, then the group leader will talk to the parents at the end of the session. If the behaviour persists, the children will be excluded from the group for one session. They will then be allowed back, but if the behaviour persists, permanent exclusion will be considered (in consultation with the parents)

## **Mobile & Social Networking as a Means of Communicating with Young People.**

These guidelines relate to internet, email, mobile phone and social networking. For many young people this is their preferred means of communication and we recognise that it can be a very useful tool to support youth work. However, we want to ensure the protection of our team when using it.

If a group leader expects to regularly communicate with young people via email, messenger, social networking site or mobile phone texting, written parental permission must be given.

One-to-one personal messaging between a worker and a young person should be avoided. All communication should be public (i.e. using Facebook 'wall' posts, 'Pages' and 'Groups' rather than personal messaging).

If it is necessary for a worker to communicate with a young person individually, it should be saved or printed, shared and discussed with the group leader or Named Person. Young people must be made aware that any one-to-one communication could be shared in this way.

Communication should be from a specific work account/address known to the young people, children, parents and group supervisor

Clear and unambiguous language should be used in all communications. Avoid any abbreviations that could be mis-interpreted.

Do not use any comment or picture of a young person without permission.

### *Mobile Phones:*

Mobile phones have become a popular way of communicating, and are also very difficult to monitor, therefore particular care needs to be taken when using this method to communicate with children and young people.

Texts that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to a supervisor within the organisation. Conversations raising concerns should be discussed as soon as possible.

Workers should keep a log of significant conversations and texts.

Text messages must be sent in general terms and be written in plural (Hi Guys), so the recipient knows that they are not the only recipient.

Many Mobile phones have digital cameras. Workers should ensure that they only take photographs of children and young people in accordance with the policy of the Church. It is unwise to keep photos stored on the mobile phone, and they should be downloaded and stored securely.

### *Email and Instant Messenger:*

Be aware of who has access to computers/devices used for communication between workers and young people.

There should be a 'curfew' on communication (i.e. no messaging after 9pm). Log and save all individual conversations. Make sure that young people know that a leader has access to the conversations.

Video or Voice messenger should be done in public so that other people are aware of what you are doing and to whom you are speaking.

Emails may be used to remind Children and young people about meetings (times, dates, themes and potential changes to program) If email is used it is suggested that

All emails should be sent out on mass, not to individuals in a personal way.

That you ensure messages are kept in a public domain and copied to third parties, other leaders would fulfil this obligation as part of the communication process.

It is, however, understood that some children/young people will reply to these as individuals, sometimes asking trivial questions or clarifications. If any email comes back discussing a personal or controversial situation in a person's life, the email and your reply should be forwarded to the Named Person, where they will be stored for future reference.

#### *Social Networking Sites:*

Adults should not, as a rule, be added as friends on young person's site, instead use Facebook Pages or Groups

Where a Facebook or similar account is set up in the name of the church or group, a leader should be a member of it to oversee, monitor and moderate its content.

Networking Groups should not be open to the public. Volunteers with personal social networking accounts should customise their privacy settings in order to maintain the boundaries between their personal and professional lives. They should avoid uploading inappropriate information.

Content that raises concerns should be saved or printed, shared and discussed with the Named Person.

#### *Publishing Information on the Internet or Website*

Great care is vital whenever consideration is given to publishing information or displaying images electronically, in order to avoid the possibility that young children might be identified, contacted and targeted for abuse.

Safety is paramount and all content is carefully checked to ensure that it is suitable, appropriate and meets the following principals, before being uploaded/published:

- Images of young people will not be labeled with any personal details to ensure that no individual can be identified or contacted by those viewing the information
- No close up images of individual young people will be made available on line - only general group photographs with three or more will be published; with additional consideration being given to camera angles, distance and obscuring facilities
- Young people will only be shown in photographs where they are suitably dressed
- Photographs of young people will only be published with the minimum possible resolution (photographs appear sharp on screen but are blurred if copied or enlarged)

- Written permission of parents/carers must be obtained - ensuring that they understand the implications before giving permission
- Photographs are not downloadable from the website
- Young people who do not wish to have their photograph taken will have their wishes respected

Wherever possible, alternatives to photographs of young people - e.g. displays, art work, materials/equipment, places - will be used.

## **The Safer Recruitment Process**

Finding and recruiting the right people to work with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect can be difficult.

What follows is a safer recruitment checklist to help ensure we appoint safely the most appropriate people as employees or volunteers. It is a criminal offence for an individual who is barred from working with vulnerable groups to apply for a regulated activity role and it is a criminal offence for an organisation to appoint a barred person to a regulated activity role.

The responsibility for appointments and approval of paid officers and volunteers rests with the PCC.

In practice, this responsibility is delegated to team leaders who are trained in safer recruitment.

The PCC receives regular updates concerning who has been appointed to different teams.

### *The Recruitment Process:*

All roles within the church have a clear job description, which not only sets out the tasks the person will carry out, but also who they are directly accountable to.

Any vacant role within the church will be advertised verbally or via the Enotices. It will be made clear that anyone interested will need to engage in a period of exploration and discernment with the team leader.

As a parish, we are prioritising vocational conversations: helping people to hear and respond to God's call to serve. The safer recruitment process links well to this discernment process, ensuring that the right people are in the right places.

Under normal circumstances, a person new to church will not be allowed to volunteer for a role (particularly working with children and vulnerable adults) until they have been attending church regularly for 6 months or more. It is usual that the rector will meet with each new person to talk about where God may be calling them to serve.

When someone is responding to an advertised need, they will be asked to complete an application form which will include a request for a referee.

Once the application has been received, the team leader will have a conversation with the applicant and will call for references and ask the applicant to complete a Confidential Declaration form. During the conversation, questions must be asked that assess the values, motives, behaviours and attitudes of those applying for roles, particularly those which involve working with vulnerable groups. If the team leader is minded to recommend approval then the applicant must be asked to complete an appropriate criminal record check (if appropriate). All those who work regularly with children and / or adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, including those on a rota, must have, where appropriate, an enhanced criminal record check (with / without a check of the barred list, as appropriate). In addition, those who work only occasionally with vulnerable groups will

also be asked to apply for enhanced checks, provided they are eligible. Those who manage or supervise those who work with vulnerable groups and those in a leadership capacity who carry responsibility for safeguarding, will also be required to obtain enhanced check, provided they are eligible.

The decision to appoint to a voluntary or paid work must be made only by the PCC (usually delegated to team leaders for voluntary positions). The start date or appointment cannot be confirmed until the relevant criminal record check is received and examined. Further advice may need to be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. We endeavour to ensure that volunteers to receive a letter of appointment, which sets out both the parish's commitment to its volunteers and what it hopes from its volunteers.

#### *Induction.*

Employees or volunteers whose roles involve working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect will receive relevant safeguarding training from the Diocese after starting their role, regardless of previous experience. They must also attend regular updates every three years.

#### *Settling in Period.*

A paid appointment will have a period of probation (usually 6 months) and there will be a settling in period for volunteers (usually 3 months) when the volunteer and the group to which they have been assigned can see whether the volunteer is suited to the particular role. During these periods relevant training will be planned and support will be arranged. In addition, regular meetings with the team leader will be organised to discuss any issues etc. that arise. For paid roles, at the end of the probationary period a person must be confirmed in his / her role in writing.

#### *Supervision and regular review*

All paid posts will be subject to management, supervision and appraisal. For all volunteer posts, working with children and adults experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, there will be regular supervision and a review will be conducted annually, or as the role requires. This is to ensure that volunteers feel supported and issues can be discussed and/or resolved.

#### *Overseas applicants.*

If a candidate/applicant etc. for a position that is eligible for a DBS check is coming from overseas who, either has never lived in the UK or spent a period of time (i.e. lived abroad), the person making the appointment should request an additional check and ask the applicant to obtain criminality information (also known as a certificate of good conduct/ character) from his/her relevant embassy/high commission (or police force). This means that in addition to the DBS check, the candidate/applicant must seek this additional check to cover the time he/she spent abroad. (Further advice can be found on the Home Office website).

If such information is not available from the embassy/high commission etc. or if there are concerns about the reliability of the information provided, the person(s) making the appointment should take extra care when taking up references and checking any previous employment record. In such cases, additional references should be sought and at least one reference from a previous employer should be contacted by telephone as well as by letter.

### *The recruitment of ex-offenders.*

- as an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), The Yare Valley Churches complies fully with the code of practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly
- The Yare Valley Churches undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed
- The Yare Valley Churches can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that The Yare Valley Churches are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended)
- The Yare Valley Churches can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
- [The Yare Valley Churches is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background
- The written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process
- The Yare Valley Churches actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records
- The Yare Valley Churches select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience
- an application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position
- The Yare Valley Churches ensures that all those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences
- The Yare Valley Churches also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- at interview, or in a separate discussion, The Yare Valley Churches ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment
- The Yare Valley Churches undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- The Yare Valley Churches works closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and will implement any course of action they advise.



*Appendix 1:*

## **Contact Sheet**

**Name of Child:**

**Date of Birth:**

**Address:**

**Email:**

**Contact Number:**

**Information that we should be made aware of  
(e.g. food allergies, Specific Needs, etc.)?**

**From time to time, we take photographs of the activities that the children are engaged in. These are only ever used internally and are not published on the website. Do you agree to our taking photographs of your child? YES / NO**

**Signed:**

*Appendix 2:*

Appendix 3:

**Sample Travel Consent Form**

Young Person's Name:

**I give consent for my son/daughter to be transported by any of the youth group leaders when necessary to get to an activity:**

Signed: .....Parent/Guardian Date:  
.....

**If required I would be able and happy to assist with transporting the young people to group activities:**

YES / NO

Signed: .....Parent/Guardian Date:  
.....

Contact No/s:  
.....

*Appendix 4:*

***Sample Medical form***

Young Person's Name:
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Doctor's Name:
Surgery Address:

Date of last Tetanus:
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Please advise of any known medical ailments and regular medication taken i.e. Asthma, allergies etc. that we need to be aware off.
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*Appendix 6:*