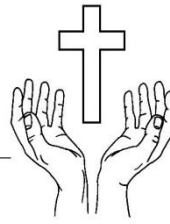


Sharing God's Love
St Luke's, Brislington



St Luke the Evangelist Brislington

A policy statement to ensure the safety and care of children and young people within our church.

Youth Work at St Luke's.

Group	Leader	Location	Day and time
Bell ringers 11+	Linda Hole	Church	Monday 7.30-9pm

Other youth groups that use church premises.

Pre School Group meet in the hall:- Ofsted vetted and hold their own Child protection policy

Rainbows meet in the hall. The Guide Association have their own child Protection Policies that they adhere to. All leaders are interviewed and have to hold a suitable warrant to work with the group.

Contacts

Clergy	In a vacancy.	
Parish Safeguarding Officer:	Rosemary Spada	07443854955
Church Wardens	Gwyn Williams	07598755108
	Malcolm Thorne	07933383463

Working in line with Bristol Diocesan Safeguarding Policies.

www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/policies-and-procedures

Aims.

As members of the church of St Luke the Evangelist Brislington, we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent any form of abuse of children and young people in our care.

We commit ourselves to prevent abuse of children and young people in our care and report any abuse discovered or suspected.

We are dedicated to providing the children in our care with a safe environment in which they can be introduced and grow in the love of Jesus.

How we will achieve these aims.

Procedures for Staff appointments.

Appointment of staff either paid or voluntary will follow Diocesan Guidelines. This PCC accepted the Diocesan policy for Fair Recruitment of Ex Offenders in 2014 and follows the Diocesan Safer Recruitment Guidelines as accepted in October 2017.

1. The vicar with the leader of children's work will draw up a job description and what the job entails.
Candidates will be sought either by advertising and/ or discrete enquires being made among suitable people. They will be given the job details to consider.
2. All people who work with children must complete a DBS disclosure, details of which will be given in the job application pack. There will be no cost involved to the individual.
 - a. The Parish of St Luke's is committed to the fair and sensitive use of Disclosure information and where an applicant feels that this has not happened an appeal process will be available, details of which can be obtained in writing from the Safeguarding Officer; PCC Secretary or from the Diocesan Office (First Floor, Hillside House, 1500 Parkway North, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8YU)
 - b. We are committed to the recognition of each individual's abilities, skills, experience and qualifications and will take every step to ensure that these are given appropriate weight and consideration in the appointment and recruitment process.
 - c. We will ensure that each paid post or volunteer position is assessed from the appropriateness of a DRB disclosure, that any advertisement or other indication of a paid post or volunteer position will indicate the level of Disclosure to be sought and that an offer of paid or volunteer position will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory Disclosure information.
 - d. We will request candidates for a paid or volunteer position to submit in writing any convictions or other disqualifying behaviour that might be revealed in the Disclosure

process in order to assist the recruitment decision process. This information will only be taken into account when relevant to the post in question. It should be submitted in an envelope clearly marked 'Private and confidential' and handed to the person specifically identified for this purpose in the recruitment process.

- e. All Evidence e.g. passport, driving licence etc. must be witnessed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer
- f. We will expect renewal of DBS every five years in line with Diocesan guidelines.

- 3 The PCC should be notified of all appointments of volunteers and paid employees to positions within the church. All positions to be reviewed by PCC regularly.

Appeals and Complaints Procedure

Although every effort is made to ensure that all recruitment decisions involving Disclosures are made sensitively and fairly, should an applicant for a paid post or a volunteer position feel that this has not happened the matter can be referred to the office of the Diocesan Secretary who will instigate an independent assessment of the issue in question.

The applicant should submit the appeal or complaint in writing, stating their name and address, the post or position applied for, the nature of the complaint or appeal, the date of the disclosure document, the identity of the person or appointing body responsible for making the appointment and any other relevant information.

Premises

- 1 We will ensure that meeting rooms used are clean and safe for children.
- 2 A regular Health and Safety check will be made on the premises where children's groups meet and anything found to be unsafe will be noted and rectified.
- 3 Health and Safety rules will be displayed in the hall for all users.

Insurance.

All church activities will be adequately insured, in respect of both the young people and leaders, through the Ecclesiastical Insurance Diocesan Youth Group Insurance Scheme. The Church Hall booking agents will ensure that all those who use the building (including those who hire the premises) know and are prepared to implement the policy.

Staffing and Resources

- 1 Each group will have a minimum of two adults in attendance. **Supervision should be used as a means of protecting children.**
- 2 We will provide suitable teaching resources for our church children's work; the full cost being met by the church with the approval of the PCC.
- 3 Opportunities for training will be provided if approved by the PCC.
- 4 A nominated person or persons will be appointed by the PCC to undertake the role of Overseer of the Child Protection Policy. This will be an independent person who will share the responsibility of child protection with the clergy and the children's group leaders. The nominated person, known as the Parish Safeguarding Officer, should be the person to whom the children, young people and their leaders, may turn when they have concerns. The person should be familiar with the Child Protection Policy and procedures if an allegation or disclosure is made.

The Provision for the Review and Resourcing of the Policy.

1. Provision for the safe upkeep of the premises, for the training of leaders and helpers and for the greater furtherance of this policy will be made by the PCC
2. The policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the PCC on behalf of the Church.

Procedures for the discovery or disclosure of abuse

Purpose of document:

The purpose of this document is to inform those working with children that some children do get abused and to advise them of the procedures to be carried out if abuse is disclosed to them, or if they suspect abuse. This will assist us in providing a secure environment for children.

First and most important – whether it is your first contact with suspected child abuse or not:-

- a. Ensure the welfare of the child
- b. Talk to someone, either another children's leader, the vicar or the PSO

Should you encounter any situation involving a child which gives you cause for concern:-

Make a written note of the conversation including any observations, date, time, name(s) and any other details.

Pass this written record immediately to your vicar, warden or PSO.

Do not be afraid to be wrong.

1. What is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

2. What is abuse?

- a. Physical abuse – includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, administering poisonous substances, suffocating/ drowning, excessive force.
- b. Neglect – a failure to meet the basic essential needs of a child, or if a child is left unsupervised at a young age.
- c. Emotional abuse – children harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting, or ignoring the child.
- d. Sexual abuse – involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children or adolescents in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

N.B. A child may suffer more than one category of abuse.

- e. Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non related children and young people. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

3. Who abuses children?

- a. Very rarely a stranger
- b. Often someone close to the child, e.g. parent, carer, baby sitter, sibling, relative or friend of the family
- c. Sometimes someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker, or (very sadly) a church worker/leader
- d. Sometimes, paedophiles and others who set out to join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children.

4. How might we recognise abuse?

Warning signs: They are only a guide, they are not necessarily proof of abuse but may be an indication of:-

- a. Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- b. Nervousness/watchfulness.
- c. Sudden under achievement or lack of concentration.
- d. Changed or inappropriate relationships with peers and /or adults.
- e. Attention seeking behaviour.
- f. Persistent tiredness.
- g. Running away /stealing/lying.
- h. Self-harm.

Other areas where leaders should be vigilant are:-

- a. Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them. Or where differing explanations have been received.
- b. Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- c. Injuries and illnesses which have not received medical attention.
- d. Instances where children are kept away from the group or school inappropriately.
- e. Reluctance to change for, or participate in games or swimming.
- f. Any signs of neglect, undernourishment or inadequate care.
- g. Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- h. Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play.
- i. Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- j. Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- k. Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements at home.
- l. Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotation.

One or more warning signs may be evident.

Many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This, together with conflicting medical opinion, has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of sexual abuse.

It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be considered far more than in the past. They should make us stop and think – not jump to conclusions inappropriately!

5. What to do if abuse is suspected.

a. We have a responsibility: The Children's Act 1989 was brought out as a means to promote and protect the welfare of all children, and within the working together framework states that:

"The community as a whole has a responsibility for the well being of children. This means that all citizens should remain alert to circumstances in which children may be harmed. Individuals can assist the statutory authorities by bringing cases to their attention. Relatives, friends and neighbours of children are particularly well placed to do so, but they must know what to do if they are concerned, in addition to providing support for the family and child, which may include help caring for the child. They must also be confident, because of the difficult and sensitive nature of the situation, that any information they provide will be treated in a confidential way and used only to protect the interests of the child. They should know too that early action on their part is often the best way of helping a family stay together as well as protecting the child"

b. The local Social Services note the following in their preamble when dealing with voluntary social work agencies involved with child care.

(i) Voluntary agency staff involved with families and children are likely to receive referrals/information/allegations or witness concerns suggestive of the need for child protection investigation under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act. **It is the responsibility of the voluntary agency to refer concerns to the Social Services department.**

(ii) The role of the voluntary agency in these circumstances, except in the case of medical emergency, is essentially to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegations, and provide information to the Social Services department, whose task it is to investigate under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act.

6. Responding to abuse.

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect:

Contact your Vicar or PSO

The PSO will:

a. Contact Social Services (or CCPAS) for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the child's safety. The parents should not be informed in these circumstances.

b. Where the PSO is unsure whether or not to refer the case to Social Services, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.

In cases where there is immediate concern for the safety of the child the PSO will call the police on 101.

If there are allegations of sexual abuse

Contact your Vicar or PSO

The PSO will:

a. Contact Social Services or the police for advice. Do not speak to the parent (or anyone else) if there is a possibility that they could be involved. The fact that you may feel the child's story is unlikely must not prevent appropriate action being taken. *For example a child may say that he/she has been abused by an older*

young person. In reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

b. It is the responsibility of the church worker to pass on the possibility of abuse to the Social Services Department. The role of the church is essentially collecting and clarifying the precise details of the allegation and providing the information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the allegation.

Further guidance in responding to abuse:

Whilst the church worker will normally consult with the church leader before reporting incidents/suspensions of child abuse to the Social Services Department, the absence of the church leaders should not delay the referral. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the worker and the church leader as to the appropriateness of such a referral, the church worker nevertheless retains the right as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department.

All children's workers should be aware that any allegations or suspicions are covered by pastoral confidentiality, and that therefore church members have no rights to this information. The sharing of information is therefore limited to a need to know basis. This will protect the interests of all the parties concerned.

7. Third party/ anonymous referrals/allegations:

Families not known to the church

- a. In cases where allegations are made by a third party. The role of the church worker is to elicit as much information as possible from the referrer. Unless the person wishes to remain anonymous this should include the referrer's details (name, address, telephone number) and as much factual detail as possible about the child and family concerned (names of family members, address, name / date of birth of subject child, ethnic origin, etc). Information as to the cause of concern/nature of injuries/observations should be included.
- b. The church worker must inform the referrer that information relating to any child at risk, will be shared with their church leader and may result in referral to the Social Services Department. And in this event the Social Services Department may wish to interview the referrer (if known) as part of the child protection investigation.
- c. The church worker can then report the above information to the church leader and the latter will then seek the advice from the PCCA and then if there are sufficient concerns to make a referral to the social Services Department.

8. How should we react if a child tells us he/she has been abused?

Children's workers are in a unique position and your relationship with children cannot be underestimated. Your group may be providing a safe haven and perhaps the only place where a child feels comfortable and able to talk to adults. It is therefore possible that a child may approach you to talk about abuse.

If a child discloses to you, you should make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what happened immediately beforehand (eg a description of activity). Record dates and times of these events of

your recording. Keep all hand written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safe for an indefinite period of time.

Once a child has talked about abuse the worker or leader has to consider whether or not it is safe for the child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact social services and or police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

The following guidance may be of help

- a. General points.
 - (i) Accept what the child says
 - (ii) Keep calm, do not appear to be shocked
 - (iii) Look at the child directly
 - (iv) Be honest
 - (v) Tell the child that you will have to tell someone else - do not promise confidentiality.
 - (vi) Even when a child has broken a rule , they are not to blame for the abuse.
 - (vii) Be aware the child may have been threatened.
 - (viii) Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what the child said, including the child's name, age, address, relevant family information, and details of the situation and the activity that preceded the disclosure.
 - (ix) Never push for information or question the child.

- b. Helpful things to say
 - (i) I believe you
 - (ii) I am glad that you have told me
 - (iii) It's not your fault
 - (iv) I will try to help you.

- c. Avoid saying
 - (i) Why didn't you tell anyone before?
 - (ii) I can't believe it.
 - (iii) Are you sure this is true.
 - (iv) Why? How? When? Where?
 - (v) Never make false promises.
 - (vi) Never make statements such as "I'm shocked, don't tell anyone else."

- d. Concluding
 - (i) Again reassure the child they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
 - (ii) Let the child know what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens.
 - (iii) Immediately refer to the PSO person or the vicar.

Even if abuse is no longer happening it is still important to report the matter as the adult may be abusing other children. Also it may be that the child will need guidance and help in overcoming the effects of the abuse, plus the police may wish to prosecute.

Practicalities for mutual protection of leaders and children involved in children's work

1. Guidance.

- a. Avoid being on your own with any child. This may mean groups working in one large room, or adjoining rooms.
- b. Never take a child home on your own – preferably have another helper with you. Or else ensure that the last two children are dropped off together.
(Remember an allegation could also be made against you)
- c. Be wise in your physical contact with children do not be over friendly with some at the expense of others. No favourites.
- d. Male helpers need to be particularly careful in what they say, and in being around forward young females. Female helpers similarly need to be careful with forward male children.
- e. Never smack, hit or physically discipline a child except by holding which may be used if there is an immediate danger of personal injury to the child or another person.
- f. If you feel that a child may have a crush on you, pray about it and talk to the PSO or the vicar for advice and guidance.
- g. In order to help children we need to develop healthy relationships by listening to them and respecting them.
- h. We must be mindful of the safety of children at all times and in all circumstances.
- i. Whenever possible have two adults present with each group particularly when it is the only activity taking place in the building and do not take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults.
- j. Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling a young person) ensure that others know that the interview is taking place and that someone else is around the building.
- k. Prayer works and helps in each circumstance.
- l. When contacting a child by email or social media copy in the parents, or PSO.

2 Boundaries

- a The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) appropriate and related to the age of the child – accepting that some children have special needs.
- b Guidance on touch. For example, physical contact between adults and children can be quite healthy and to be encouraged in public places but discouraged in circumstances where an adult/ child is on their own
- c Workers should treat all children/ young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.
- d Respect the privacy of children, avoid questionable activities (e.g. rough/sexually provocative games and comments)
- e If you invite a child to your home, ensure another adult is present and the parent is aware.
- f If transporting a child on their own then it is better for the child to sit in the back seat.

3 Feedback

- a It should be accepted that anyone seeing another worker acting in a way that could be misinterpreted should be able to speak to the individual or the PSO about the concern.
- b Regular workers to review procedures to ensure common approach, sharing concerns and identifying other matters which may need clarification and guidance.

- c Encourage report back to such a meeting when departure from the guidelines becomes necessary – this provides protection to the individual and draws the attention of the leadership to shortcomings and problem areas.
- d Keep brief records of issues/decisions discussed at worker's meetings.

4. Helping children to protect themselves by:

- a Teaching safety generally, strangers, good and bad secrets and touches etc.
- b Help Children develop common sense rules
- c Talk about suspicions or situations where they feel uncomfortable.
- d Examine a way in which we present Christian truths e.g. children obey parents. This can be a real problem for a child who is being abused – are we telling the child to accept the abuse? Tell children that if they feel uncomfortable or that something is wrong, they can always check things out with another adult. This will need to be explained for example - if someone asks you to steal sweets from a shop - it doesn't include complaints about bed time.

Confidentiality

No children's worker is permitted to divulge any information concerning a child, or his/her family or anything a child may tell them to anyone other than the designated people previously mentioned. This is in order to protect the interests of the child. This confidentiality is a continuing requirement at all times and is required when workers are 'off duty' or no longer involved in the work.

Working with Offenders.

When someone attending church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the Vicar and or PSO in its commitment to the protection of all children will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. i.e. not being alone with a child in the church, declining offers of hospitality from church members where there are children present in the home.

Helping victims of Abuse

As a church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse and encouraging them in their faith.

Contacts.

- **NSPCC** - For adults concerned about a child **0808 800 5000**
 - **ChildLine** - For children and young people on **0800 1111**
 - Action on **Elder Abuse** helpline **0808 808 8141**
 - 24-hour National **Domestic Violence** Helpline **0808 2000 247**
 - **NAPAC** – Offer support and advice to adult survivors of childhood abuse **0808 801 0331**
- Stop It Now** – preventing child sexual abuse

PCCA Child Care telephone 01322 667207 or 01322 660011
P.O.Box 133; Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ

Social Services

Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5pm TEL: 0117 9558231
Emergency Duty Team: out of hours TEL: 01454 615165

Police

Child Protection Team . Lockleaze TEL: or 101 in an emergency.
NSPCC
Child Protection Helpline 24 hrs tel 0800800500 Bristol Office 0117 9664283

Acknowledgments

This document is based mainly on a model child Protection Policy supplied by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service – a project of the PCCA Child Care and the Draft Child Protection Policy for Parishes included in the Safe and Sound Document of the Diocese of Bristol.

A copy of the policy and all amendments will be filed with the CCPAS. This policy must not be copied by other churches without the written agreement of CCPAS.

First Update August 2010.

(further minor personnel details and addresses updated November 2012)

(Policy reviewed and updated personnel details July 2014)

(Policy reviewed and updated January 2018)

The PCC attended Safeguarding Training 1 in September 2015 with updating since

The Church Wardens have attended Safeguard Training 2

In line with renewed Diocesan Safeguarding Policy all PCC members are now DBS checked with new members Ben Mason and Ilse Ladermann having been checked.

Updated Acts have been passed since the Children's ACT OF 1989.

Church Policy.

Protecting All God's Children 2010.

Promoting a Safer Church 2006

Safer Recruitment 2015

Responding to domestic abuse 2006

Responding well: to those who have been sexually abused 2011.

Diocesan Policy.

Diocese of Bristol policy and guidance: www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/policies-and-procedures.