MARSHFIELD BENEFICE
Policy Statement: Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults

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POLICY STATEMENT

The Church of St Mary the Virgin Marshfield: (hereinafter referred to as 'the church' in the Policy Statement)

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.
- 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 and references.
- 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.
- We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with him, or her, an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- 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.
- 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.

Policy and procedures

- A copy of this policy statement will be displayed permanently within the church and available on the Parish website.
- Each worker with children and young people whether paid or voluntary will be a given access to a full copy of the policy and associated Good Practice Guidance and will be required to follow them.
- A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any member of the church, the parents or carers of any child or young person from the church or any other person associated with the church or community.
- The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually by the PCC.

This policy must be read alongside the Good Practice Guidance relevant to the group a worker is involved with and with the Code of Conduct for church members.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHURCH MEMBERS

This code of behaviour should not only be seen as an important safeguarding measure but should also be about modelling positive patterns of Christian behaviour.
The following guidelines should be followed at all times, irrespective of circumstance:

- Follow the Church Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and associated Good Practice Guidelines at all times.
- Treat all children, young people and adults with respect and dignity. Acts of aggression, bullying or harassment are not acceptable.

- Physical Contact: Remember that not all children and adults will receive or express friendship in the same way. Encourage handshaking rather than hugging as a greeting with children, remembering that any physical contact with children should be child led. A handshake or hand on the shoulder may give comfort, making a hug unnecessary. Be careful about what physical contact you have with adults and check whether they are happy with the contact.
- All control and discipline of children should only be given by parents and carers and without using physical punishment or any form of aggression, unless those parents or carers have asked or agreed to an individual assisting them with this. Speak to the Churchwarden if you are concerned about a child's behaviour. The Churchwarden, and/or member of the Ministry Team or Parish Safeguarding Officer will speak with a parent to agree how a child can be supported with their behaviour if needed.
- A child's own parent or carer should undertake any personal care that a child needs.
- Do not respond to or encourage excessive attention seeking from children, but do inform your Parish Safeguarding Officer if you are concerned about a child's behaviour towards you.
- Children and young people are expected to be accompanied to church by their parents and carers. The exception being designated youth activities.
- Where children and young people attend church or church events without a parent or carer they will need to be made known to the relevant children and young people's workers who will follow the Good Practice guidance for working with children and young people.
- Adults who have not been authorised to work with children and young people should not approach lone children except in the case of emergency, instead going to find a children's or young people's worker.
- We do not engage in any of the following:
    - Invading the privacy of children, young people or adults when they are using the toilet.
    - Rough games involving physical contact between an adult and a child.
    - Discriminatory activities or games focused on sexual behaviour, body image or sexuality.
    - Making any comment which could be sexually suggestive about or to another person.
    - Scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing or rejecting a child or adult.
    - Giving personal gifts directly to children or young people- if you wish to give a gift check with the parent/carer first and give only if they agree.
    - Inappropriate use of social media, text or mobiles. Please do not contact children and young people using these methods unless their parents/carers are aware of this and the reason for it. This includes becoming 'friends' with children on Facebook.
    - Taking pictures of children or young people at church events unless you have been authorised to do so and have parental/carer consent or the picture is of your own child only.
    - Drink alcohol (other than communion wine) or otherwise be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when responsible for children or young people on church premises.
    - Arrange to see a child outside of church unless this is with their parents/carers express permission and, if you are a church volunteer, officer, staff member or minister, where this is in line with the Good Practice guidance.
    - Enter the space in which a children's or youth group is happening. Only authorised staff and volunteers should be involved.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or in accordance with any changes to employment legislation within that time

Policy reviewed by all PCCs in Marshfield Benefice

on date: Autumn 2026

Signed by Linda Lamb (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

Date for Review: September 2027