

# **St. Martin's Church and St. Thomas's Hall Cambridge**

## **Safeguarding Guidelines and Procedures** *Children and Young people (aged 0-18)*

June 2023

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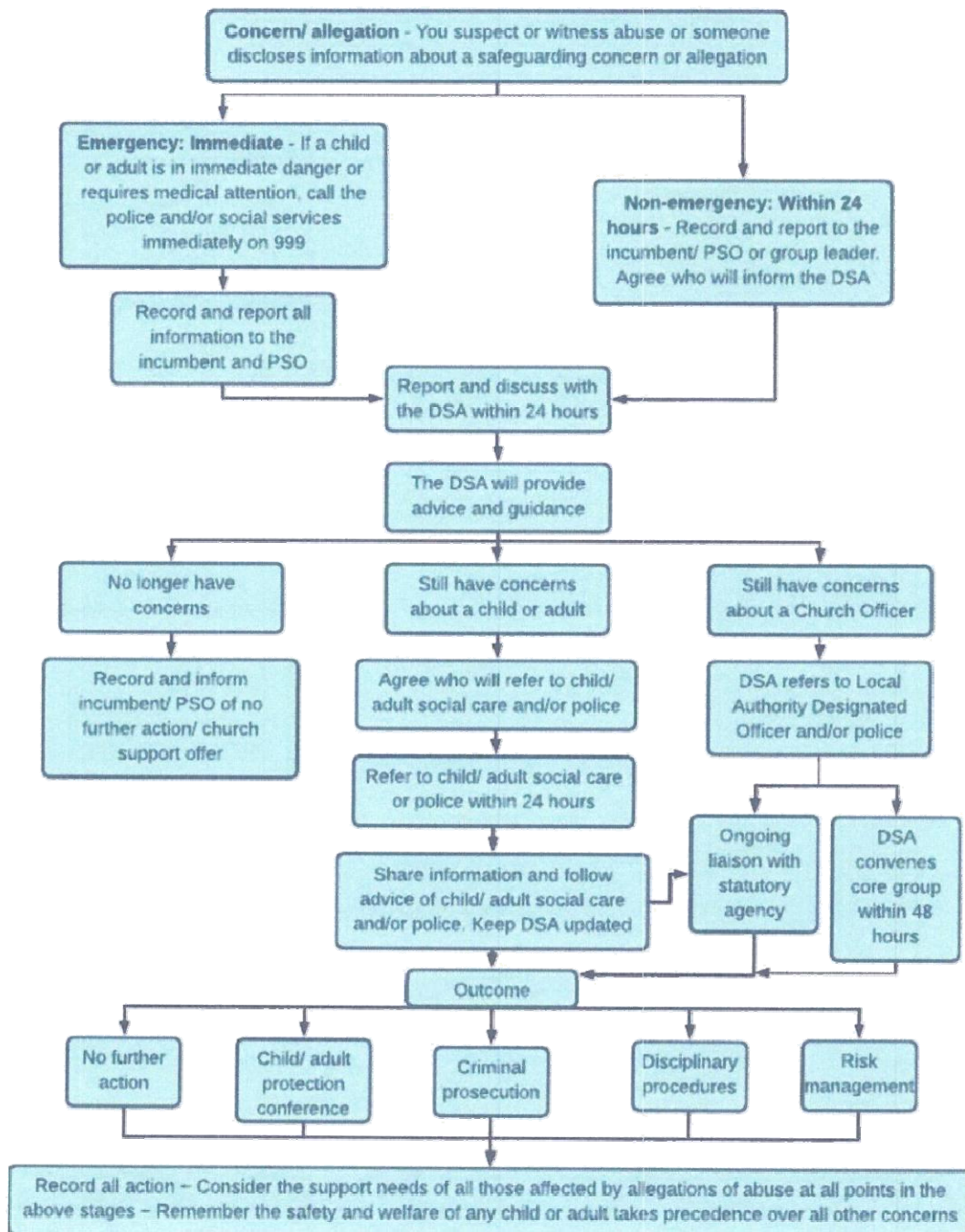
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# Responding Promptly to Every Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

## Quick Guide



**St. Martin's Church and St. Thomas's Hall**  
are pleased to welcome all families and seek to ensure children are kept safe.

*'.... the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him' Romans 10 vs 12 (NIV Bible)*

As a church, we desire to bring glory to God by knowing Jesus and making him known.

To that end, the aims of our Safeguarding Policy are:

- ☐ To uphold the honour of God's name
- ☐ To keep the gospel from disrepute

We do this by:

- ☐ Protecting the children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care
- ☐ Protecting the ministry leaders who serve in this ministry

Safeguarding is an important part of our service in the gospel and one which we take seriously, aiming for a standard of excellence as we implement these guidelines.

We adhere to the House of Bishops 'Promoting a Safer Church Policy'.

Ely Diocese has adopted the House of Bishops policies and procedures, adhering to the House of Bishops safeguarding practise guidance as outlined in the 'Parish Safeguarding Handbook (Oct 2018)'.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has adopted the policies and procedures as promoted by Ely Diocese.

These policies may be accessed from our website.

The information in this guidance has been separated into two separate documents, for those working with children and young people 0-18yrs and vulnerable adults.

## Key Safeguarding Roles

### 1. The Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO)

St. Martin's Church and St. Thomas's Hall have two PSO's given responsibility by the PCC for Safeguarding within the church family and all its various ministries

The PSO's will be included in decisions about whether to permit someone to be involved in ministry with children, young people and vulnerable adults where their DBS check is blemished or information is provided about them under the DBS scheme.

### 2. Ministry Leaders

A ministry leader is anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

All ministry leaders share a particular responsibility for:

- ☐ Loving the person as Christ loves them
- ☐ Setting an example of proper Christian conduct
- ☐ Praying for those in their care

Everyone who is involved in providing formal care (as defined by the Diocesan policy) for children must complete a screening process prior to serving. Full information on the screening process can be found in the full policy.

### IMPORTANT

- ☐ All ministry leaders must read **Section A** of these guidelines
- ☐ They must then read any additional information from **Section B** that is relevant to any concerns they may have
- ☐ A list of **Contact Details** can be found on the last two pages of these guidelines

If an existing ministry leader moves to serve in a different ministry area they must read the relevant information for the new area before commencing their role.

All ministry leaders must complete the Diocesan safeguarding training. We are committed towards implementing regular safeguarding training more widely.

## **SECTION A**

### **Guidelines for Recognising and Responding to Potential Child Abuse**

**Child abuse is serious. All Ministry Leaders need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.**

#### ***1. Definitions***

##### **Who is a child?**

Any person under the age of 18 years.

##### **What is abuse?**

*Working Together to Safeguard Children (Published by HM Government, 2018)* states that ‘somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.’ It recognises four areas of potential abuse for children: physical, sexual (including sexual exploitation), emotional and neglect. Abuse can be described under any one of these four categories or a combination of categories, and can be carried out by an adult or another child.

*Physical abuse*: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

*Emotional abuse*: children harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting.

*Sexual abuse*: involvement of 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.

*Neglect*: a failure to meet basic essential needs of a child, or if a child is left unsupervised at a young age.

Although not a formal category of abuse, it is important to be mindful of the danger of a spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices to attempt to ‘force’ religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God’s name.

## 2. *Recognising signs of abuse*

Warning signs: those are not necessarily proof of abuse, but they should signal a warning.

<b>Physical Abuse</b>	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Bruises, black eyes, broken bones Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly Untreated or inadequately treated injuries Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks Cigarette burns, human bites Scalds and burns	Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed Having trouble sleeping Behaving aggressively or being disruptive Showing fear of certain adults Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem Using drugs or alcohol

<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas Genital discharge or urinary tract infections Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting Sexual transmitted infections	A marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically. A young person may refuse to attend school or starts to have difficulty concentrating so their school work is affected. They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities. They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age. The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, 'secret' friendship with an adult or young person.

Neglect	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Abandonment Unattended medical needs Consistent lack of supervision Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene Lice, distended stomach, emaciated inadequate nutrition	Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep during activities Steals food, begs from classmates Reports that there is no carer at home Frequently absent or late Self-destructive School dropout (adolescents) Extreme loneliness and need for affection

Emotional Abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Speech disorders Delayed physical development Substance abuse Ulcers, severe allergies	Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting) antisocial, disruptive Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) Passive and aggressive – behavioural extremes Delinquent behaviour (especially adolescents) Developmentally delayed

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

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

### 3. *Guidelines for when a child tells us they have been abused*

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may be of help:

#### General points:

- ☐ Above all else, listen, listen and listen!
- ☐ Keep calm and show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems
- ☐ Let them know you will need to tell someone else – don't promise confidentiality
- ☐ Be aware the child may have been threatened
- ☐ Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let the child know that you are always ready to listen



- ☐ Avoid leading the child and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said – you might put something into their mind that was not there. If the case were to end up in court, the case could be thrown out if it is thought that the child had been led.

#### Helpful things you might say or convey

- ☐ I am glad you have told me
- ☐ It's not your fault
- ☐ I will help you

#### Concluding:

- ☐ Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and that you believe them
- ☐ Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent the child returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- ☐ Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what the child said and when they said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times, including when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto the relevant PSO.

### **4. *Responding to Concerns of Abuse***

- ☐ Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctors of any suspicions you may have.
- ☐ You must contact the Ministry Leader or Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) immediately (for contact details see page 19). If the allegation is against your Ministry Leader, contact the PSO.
- ☐ At all stages in the reporting process, you retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the Police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact the PSO (for contact details see pages 19-20)
- ☐ Under no circumstances should a church volunteer or employee investigate concerns of abuse themselves. Our responsibility is (in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team) to refer concerns to statutory authorities who will do the investigating required.
- ☐ Apart from telling your Ministry Leader/Parish Safeguarding Officer this information must be treated as confidential. Do not inform/confront any alleged perpetrator under any circumstances.
- ☐ You should also consider your own feelings and ask your Ministry Leader for pastoral support if needed.

Even if you may feel the child's story is unlikely, this must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that they have been abused by a younger person. In reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or a close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

## **5. *Procedures for Responding to Abuse – Outcomes***

When a safeguarding concern is reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer by a Ministry Leader / Parish Safeguarding Officer:

- ☐ If the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer advises further action, the Ministry Leader / Parish Safeguarding Officer must act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given.
- ☐ If the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer advises no further action required, this is not the end of the process. The Parish Safeguarding Officer or the relevant Ministry Leader must arrange a further meeting in the parish to discuss whether alternative action should be taken or whether to accept that no further action is required.

This meeting should include the Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Vicar and they can involve others as necessary – for example the Churchwardens, the Church Manager and the relevant Ministry Leader.

## **Guidelines for Responding to a Disclosure of Historic Abuse**

In the course of their work ministers and those offering pastoral support may hear disclosures from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children, or from children regarding abuse that happened to them when they were younger. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.

The church is required to take advice from the Diocese and may need to report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the Police.

When someone tells you they have been abused, or have committed abuse, whether recently or many years ago:

### **General points**

- ☐ Above all else, listen
- ☐ Keep calm, and show understanding/acceptance of what is said, however unlikely it seems. Reassure the individual that they were right to tell you
- ☐ Never push for information. Avoid leading questions and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- ☐ Let the individual know what you are going to do next and that you will keep them informed. Let them know that you will need to tell someone else – don't promise confidentiality

### **Action you must then take**

- ☐ You must contact your Ministry Leader and tell them what you know (you do not need to disclose any names at this stage unless told otherwise). If the allegation is against your Ministry Leader, contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) – contact details can be found on the page 19 of this document
- ☐ You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the Police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact either your Ministry Leader or the PSO.
- ☐ Apart from telling your Ministry Leader/PSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with co-leaders, or other church members.
- ☐ Under no circumstances should you investigate concerns of abuse yourself.
- ☐ The contact details for your Ministry Leader and the PSO can be found on the two back pages of this document.

### **Action you must then take cont....**

- ☐ Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what was said and when, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto your Ministry Leader
- ☐ Consider your own feelings and ask your Ministry Leader for pastoral support if needed and consider with your Ministry Leader what pastoral support is needed for the individual involved

## **SECTION B**

### **Supplementary Information for Specific Ministry Areas**

#### **(1) Sunday School**

#### **(a) Safeguarding children as they arrive and depart**

##### **Transition of children from parents/guardians to caregivers**

The St. Martins Church and St. Thomas's Hall Safeguarding Policy is applied during the time period a child is in the care of the leaders of the advertised activity. This time period is clearly marked at the beginning and end by a formal system of hand- over between parents/guardians and the caregivers. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children once they have been collected from their groups or returned to them by caregivers.

##### **Registering**

All children and caregivers present in each group must be registered. Completed registers will be filed and kept secure for an indefinite period. If any allegation of abuse is made in years to come then a church can immediately find who was present on any given date.

A Child Registration Form must be filed for each child in Creche/Sunday School. These forms should be filled out by a parent/guardian and available in registration folders for the leaders to consult. Leaders should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the children in their specific group.

## **(b) Safeguarding children whilst they are in our care**

### **Caregiver Ratios**

***Two caregiver rule: Two caregivers must be present in each room at all times.***

It is not necessary for the two caregivers to be of opposite genders. In an emergency setting the emergency takes priority over the ratios. However, children should not be left unattended in a room. At other times with some planning this scenario need not occur.

In addition to always having two caregivers present, we endorse the OfSTED minimum requirement which are:

Age of children	Number of Adults	Number of Children
0-2 Years old	1	3
2-3 Years old	1	4
3-8 Years old	1	8
8+	1 +1	For the first 8 children For every further 12

Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, the total number of adults to children within the room should be within the ratio suggested, but the individual group may have fewer adults.

If not enough caregivers turn up on the day, the caregivers must either:

- (i) Recruit another DBS-screened individual to help
- (ii) Meet in the same venue as other screened caregivers, in full view of those caregivers.

### **Discipline**

All caregivers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating them from the group for a brief time (particularly if his behaviour is endangering or upsetting other children).

Caregivers should never spank or hit a child. If behaviour is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents/guardians will be contacted. Caregivers should never shout at a young person except in circumstances where the young person is in danger or is at risk of causing danger to others.

### **Appropriate contact and conversation**

Caregivers need to be above reproach in all that they do and wisdom is often required to know what that looks like in different situations. Two good questions to ask in any situation are ‘What is the worst that could happen?’ and ‘What is the worst way this could be perceived?’ Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should feel free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misconstrued. Concerns about abuse should always be reported. Conversations should be appropriate for the age of the child.

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and young people as part of their coming to understand human relationships. However, there are reports of some people who have decided to avoid having anything to do with children and who avoid all occasions for touching or encouraging children. This is an understandable, but regrettable, response. It also conveys unhelpful messages to children. Caregivers should follow the following guidelines:

#### ***Can I have a child sit on my lap when we’re all sitting on the floor?***

Yes you may – as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. For younger children this may be the best way of keeping them from running amok. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

#### ***Can I play rough and tumble games with children?***

Yes you may – as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Bear in mind that the chummier you are with children in this way, the less likely you are to have any authority in their eyes. Remember too that they are not as strong as you.

#### ***Can I hold hands with a child?***

Yes you may if there is a clear reason to do so – as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Reason could include walking a child across a road, or to the bathroom, playing a game requiring hands held. For younger children this might happen frequently. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

#### ***Can I ever hug a child?***

Yes you may if a child is clearly distressed – as long as you are in public and there is no likelihood it will make the child feel uncomfortable or be misconstrued by a third party. There may be other occasions when this might be appropriate, like congratulating them.

Bear in mind your normal character – if you rarely hug anyone you should probably not ever hug a child in your care. If hugging is one way you interact with all kinds of people you might need to rein yourself in a bit, but not necessarily completely. Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's, and should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker. Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.

### ***Can I ever tickle a child?***

It is difficult to see why a child would need to be tickled by a caregiver. It is best avoided when acting as a caregiver. This is not to say that a child should not be tickled, but there is a time and a place.

### ***Can I ever physically restrain a child?***

Yes. If a child is being a danger to themselves or to another person restraint, used in proportion to the situation, may be necessary. Outside these scenarios physical restraint should be required rarely.

### **Toileting**

A caregiver may change the nappy for any baby if required.

If a pre-school or school-aged child requires assistance in going to the toilet, it is best for assistance to be given by a caregiver of the same gender where possible. The caregiver should wait outside the closed cubicle door unless the child requires assistance. The cubical door must not be closed with the caregiver and child inside. The child and caregiver must wash their hands with soap before returning to the class group. School-aged children should be able to take themselves to the toilet without assistance.

### **Risk Management / Illness / Accidents**

Caregivers should consider the health and safety of all children and caregivers when organising activities or planning games.

Children with infectious illnesses must be kept at home and not join the children's groups. If a child appears ill whilst in the church's care, caregivers will use their discretion to determine whether the young person should be isolated from other children by a caregiver, (who will remain with them) and whether parents/guardians should be contacted to collect their child.

A basic first aid kit is kept in both kitchens. All caregivers should be familiar with its location. Any incidents must be reported. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, emergency medical services will be called first and the parents will be located and informed immediately. Caregivers will report all injuries, whether major or minor, in the incident book kept with the first aid kits, and to the child's parents.

Caregivers should be familiar with evacuation procedures, including where the fire exits are located and where the meeting point is, should the fire alarm sound.

### Specific guidelines for different services

#### **Sunday School**

Children gather in the main church with their parent/guardian at the beginning of the service.

At the point indicated in the service children gather with their caregivers and are walked to the hall where their classes/activities will take place. Once the registered children are gathered, this marks the official start of the caregiver's responsibilities.

At the end of the service, or when indicated by a member of the church fellowship, the children will return to the main church where they will return to their parent/guardian.

This marks the official end to the caregiver's responsibility for the child.

#### **Shared lunches following services**

For the duration of fellowship lunches children are in the care of their parents/guardians. The children may mingle freely with any adults in the building at the discretion of their parents/guardians.

<b>(2) Weekends Away</b>
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#### **(i) Weekends Away**

If any weekend away advertises childcare, or if provision is made for volunteers to help in addition to parents or designated guardians, then the childcare for that weekend must be treated in the same way as other weekends that provide childcare. It comes under our Safeguarding Policy and must be run accordingly, following the same procedures as Sunday Crèche and Sunday School (**read page 12-16**). All caregivers must be screened as outlined in the main policy, and the same regulations concerning ratios, registration, discipline, toileting, food and accidents must be followed as in Sunday Crèche/Sunday School, with the following alterations/additions:

#### **Registering**

Children are registered for the weekend when initially signed up so no further registration is needed when their specific groups meet. However, parents must drop off and collect their children at the beginning and end of the advertised children's programme slots. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.



## **Night Patrol**

Parents/guardians are responsible for putting their children to bed. Once children are in bed, their parents/guardians may leave them at their own discretion.

### **During night patrol parents/guardians are still responsible for their children**

Between the advertised times pairs of volunteers will patrol the corridors of sleeping areas listening for any children who are disturbed. If volunteers hear of a child who is disturbed they will contact a parent/guardian immediately to ask them to return to their child.

Volunteer pairs must always stick together. Volunteers must not at any time enter a child's bedroom. Volunteers are merely providing a listening service to be the first point of contact if a child needs their parent/guardian. Volunteers do not need to be DBS screened as volunteers should not come into direct contact with children.

All night patrol volunteers and parents must be given a copy of this guidance before night patrol can begin.

Any excursion offsite or any activity onsite organised outside the advertised times for the children or youth programmes are not part of the Safeguarding arrangements. Throughout such activities children and young people remain in the care of their parents or designated guardians. Caregivers are free to join in with these excursions or activities, but do not do so as caregivers.

## **(2) Other Events/Activities**

From time to time the Sunday congregations will organise extra events which include children.

### **(i) Occasional Seminars/Training Days**

*(For example Marriage Enrichment, Parenting Day, Central Focus Training)*

If childcare is required for children then it must be requested in advance. All caregivers must be screened in accordance with the Church Safeguarding Policy. Caregiver ratios must be maintained.

A parent/guardian must drop off and collect their children at the pre-arranged venue. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

**(ii) Evening Service**

No provision is made for children during an evening service. Children are welcome in our midst, but remain in the care of their parents/guardians. The children may mingle freely with any adults in the building at the discretion of their parents/guardians.

**(iii) Midweek Small Groups**

Crèche-aged children are welcome to the small group evenings at the discretion of the small group evening leader, but remain in the care of their parents/guardians throughout.

**(iv) Babysitting**

Babysitting is an area in which we are unable to provide formal provision. Families can make informal arrangements within the congregation and must take full responsibility for assessing the suitability of the volunteer.

## Contact Names and Details

### **St. Martin's Church and St. Thomas's Hall Safeguarding Team**

Vicar

Rev. Johannes Roth

[vicar@stm.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stm.org.uk)

Parish Safeguarding Officers

Hazel Trocian and Janet Mathole

[safeguarding@stm.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stm.org.uk)

Churchwarden (Safeguarding link)

David Lanham

[warden-lanham@stm.org.uk](mailto:warden-lanham@stm.org.uk)

Churchwarden

David Baker

[warden-baker@stm.org.uk](mailto:warden-baker@stm.org.uk)

### **Diocesan Contacts**

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

Rebecca Boswell

Rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org

Tel: 01353 652731

Out of hours: 07904 487912

Archdeacon of Cambridge

The Ven Dr. Alex Hughes

archdeacon.cambridge@elydiocese.org

Tel: 01353 652719

Ely Diocesan Office

Bishop Woodford House

Barton Road

Ely CB7 4DX

Tel: 01353 652701

### **National Contacts**

**CCPAS** (Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service) 0845

120 4550 (24 Hour Helpline) for any query [www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)

#### **Child Line**

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR

Tel 0800 1111

(full number is just these 8 digits)

**Family Lives** (previous Parentline) 0800 800 222 **Domestic**

**Violence Helpline** (for females) 0808 2000 247 **Mankind** (for males) 01823 334244

**NSPCC** Child Protection Helpline, 0808 800 5000