

# St Michael's Parochial Church Council, Boldmere

## Policy for the protection of children

### 1. Policy statement

The PCC recognises our responsibility to guard against the possibility of physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and towards those who work with children in this church.

### **Ensuring Children's safety**

We will make sure our children are safe. We will:

- Identify the roles where a disclosure is required through the Disclosure & Barring Scheme (DBS - previously CRB). Shown at **Appendix 1**
- Provide every worker (post holder – paid or voluntary) with a copy of this policy
- Ensure every person undertaking one of these roles has a DBS check every 5 years.
- Identify a Safeguarding Officer(s) who will be available for any concerned person to contact if they wish to report behaviour likely to harm a child.
- Provide training for all workers, working with children, so that they understand best practice in relation to working with children in a church environment. This training should take place within 12 months of the signing of this policy
- Not allow untrained workers to be left in sole charge of a group of children
- Ask parents to complete a consent form before they take part in Church activities where parents or guardians are not present.
- Arrange for children to be returned safely to parents/carers following the Sunday Groups up to Key Stage 2.

### **Named Office Holders**

We require our named office holders (**Appendix 2**) to

- Read and understand this policy
- Undertake an appropriate level check from the Disclosure & Barring Service
- Read the Diocese of Birmingham Child Protection pack
- Undertake appropriate training

### **Known perpetrators**

The church will respond to offenders or perpetrators, recognising their needs, however our priority will be to keep children safe. In particular, we shall act to keep children safe from harm in the event of a known abuser attending church. Anyone who has knowledge of such an offender must make this information known to the **Parish Safeguarding Officer(s)**

### **This policy covers...**

All groups and activities under the control of St Michael's Boldmere are covered by this policy. These include:

- Sunday Children's groups
- Mother and toddler groups
- Young person's groups
- Children's activities connected to the Church.
- Music groups
- Bell ringing
- Choir

Organisations that use the Church premises or hire the Church hall will be made aware of this policy and will be informed of their duty to abide by the Children Act 1989 and Safe from Harm Code of Practice 1993. Each organisation will be asked to confirm in writing

that they understand this duty and will abide by it. Anyone offering private tuition on church premises will be asked to sign a disclaimer.

## 2. Recruitment policy

### **Paid workers:**

All potential workers applying for a paid position must complete the prescribed application form, provide two referees (one must be a recent employer) and be interviewed.

Interviews - At least 3 people must attend the interview; one would normally be the vicar and one a Churchwarden or Deputy Churchwarden. The third person should be chosen by the Vicar, or in his/her absence, from a panel of 6 people nominated by the PCC.

References - The worker will be required to state their relationship with the referee. All references will be followed up by sending a reference form and a stamped addressed envelope to each referee. Any concerns identified through the Disclosure and Barring scheme or through references will be referred to the Bishop's Safeguarding Officer for Children or Adults (as appropriate) for advice. The application and references will be held confidentially by the Vicar.

### **Volunteer workers:**

- Leaders of the group need to refer potential volunteers to the Vicar.
- The Vicar will meet with the volunteer and go through the role description with them.
- The volunteer will read and sign the role description
- The volunteer will be approved by the Vicar and at least one Churchwarden following the taking up of references.
- The volunteer will be presented with a copy of the St Michael's Safeguarding Children Policy to keep and read.
- The volunteer will attend appropriate Diocesan led Safeguarding training as soon as possible and within a year.

## 3. Statement of practices

### **Accidents**

An accident book will be kept in the Church and the Church hall. The PCC will organise an annual Health and Safety Inspection of the Church premises annually.

### **Adult to Child ratios**

At least two workers should be present with each group of children and if not possible, at least within sight or hearing of another group. Efforts will be made to provide mixed gender leadership where there is a mixed gender group of children. The number of workers required in proportion to the number of children is as follows –

- 0 – 2 years – 1 adult to 3 children
- 2-3 years – 1 adult to 4 children
- 3 – 7 years – 1 adult to 8 children
- 8 – 17 years – 1 adult to 10 children.

### **Transportation**

If children are to be transported; we will ensure that there are two adults in each vehicle unless circumstances are exceptional. Parental consent will be required in every circumstance.

#### 4. Reporting abuse

##### **What to do if there are signs of abuse**

The following are possible signs of abuse although it is important that workers do not jump to conclusions as the behaviour may be as the result of other reasons.

- Unexplained injuries or signs of neglect
- An aggressive attitude, 'don't care attitude or severe tantrums
- Sexually explicit behaviour inappropriate for a child of that age
- Child is happier away from home or running away from home
- Child does not join in and ignores friends and suddenly does not trust adults
- Relationships between an adult and child that are secretive and exclude others
- Child complains of tummy pains with no medical cause
- Child reverts to younger behaviour
- Self inflicted injuries or eating problems
- Depression or Severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias.

If a worker identifies possible abuse he/she should, without delay, consult the person to whom they are responsible or the Parish Safeguarding officer(s). No unauthorised person should be told of the concerns. If these people are not available, the worker should report directly to Social Services as it is important there is no delay. The worker should not investigate the abuse – this is the responsibility of Social Services.

The worker should keep contemporaneous notes of their concerns using the actual language used by the child. See **Appendix 3** for reporting lines. Forms are available in church and with the contact forms for each group.

If a child wishes to talk about abuse it is important to keep calm and not to look shocked. The child needs to be reassured that they were right to report the abuse and no judgement should be offered. Do not ask 'leading' questions and keep notes of what the child has said. The notes will form part of the investigation by the Social Services or the Police. Advice will be requested from the Bishop's office.

#### 5. Confession - Advice for clergy

A perpetrator may make confession; either in formal confessional or in a pastoral setting, to a member of the clergy. If this happens, the member of the clergy will urge the person to report the abuse to the Social Services or the Police. The confidentiality of the person making the confession will be respected as far as is possible, however if a child is at risk from the person making the disclosure, a report must be made to Social Services or the Police. The Priest will make this clear to the person making the disclosure and seek professional advice from the Bishop's representative on how the abuser can best be helped

#### 6. Context

This policy should be read alongside the Children's Act 1989 and the Diocese of Birmingham's Safeguarding of Children policy – **Gods Children: Our Diocese**. The policy has been agreed and ratified by the Parochial Church Council and will be reviewed annually. It is displayed in the South Aisle on the notice board for easy reference. All records will be kept confidential – available only to the named office holders (**App 2**)

Adopted on November 2015

Signed by Gary Birchall

Reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_

**n.b. Worker – should be understood to cover post holder both voluntary or paid**

## **Appendix 1 – Office holders and Volunteers requiring a DBS check**

- Clergy – Responsibility of the Bishop's Office
- Children & Families Minister
- Readers – Responsibility of the Bishop's Office
- Pastoral team
- Tower Captain (bell ringing)
- Holiday Club leader & helper
- The Bridge leader & helper
- The Flok leader & helper
- Little Lambs leader & helper
- Creche leader & helper
- SWE:ETS leader & helper
- Little Lights – Leader

n.b. Choir and Band Leaders – required if children join without parents.

## **Appendix 2 – Named office Holders (August 2012)**

- Vicar – Gary Birchall
- Children's and Families' Missioner– Jeanette Nicholls
- Curate– Not in post at November 2015
- Associate Missioner to St Michael's – self supporting – Emma Sykes
- Parish Safeguarding Officers
  - Gary Birchall – Telephone Number 354 4501
  - Gail Adams – Telephone Number 384 6489,
  - [Email: safeguarding@stmichaels.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stmichaels.org.uk)

### Appendix 3 –

#### Taking Action when you have concerns about the welfare of a child or when an allegation has been made:

If the child is at risk of harm or an allegation of abuse has been made, refer to Children's Social Care Services as soon as possible. Inform Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser within 24 hours.

Share your concerns with the incumbent and/or Parish Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator. Make a record of the discussion and any decisions reached.

Seek advice from the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser. Make a record of the discussion and any decisions reached.

#### Possible Decisions:

No further action

Continue to observe

If safe, speak to parent(s)/ carer(s)

Refer to Children's Social Care Services

Review within agreed timescales with Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser

**NOTE:** If the concern is urgent or the child is in danger contact the emergency services and/or Out of Hours Children's Social Care Team immediately. Contact your incumbent and/or Parish Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator as soon as possible. Inform Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser within 24 hours.