

## **ST PAUL'S CHICHESTER SAFER WORKING PRACTICE (BEHAVIOUR CODE POLICY)**

The Code of Safer Working Practice expresses our commitment to demonstrating God's love by placing the highest priority on the safety of those to whom we minister. It sets out what we expect from anyone who ministers in our church, in both paid or voluntary roles, and is one of the ways we ensure high standards of safeguarding practice in all we do.

Following this code will help to protect both adults and children from abuse and inappropriate behaviour. It will help children learn how safe adults behave around them - thus equipping them to better recognise if an adult is behaving unsafely around them, and to know that this behaviour is wrong. It will also help staff and volunteers maintain the standards of behaviour expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

### **Upholding the Code**

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to our Safeguarding Officer under the benefice whistle-blowing procedure, or, if necessary, under the parish safeguarding policy.

Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police or the local authority children's social care department.

## **Responsibility of Staff and Volunteers**

All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults are acting in a position of trust. When working with children and young people in particular, it is important that all staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by them and their parents. They therefore must always act in an appropriate manner.

When working with children and young people and adults, it is important to:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful.
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern.
- Administer any necessary First Aid with others around.
- Obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored
- Record any concerning incidents and give the information to your group leader. Sign and date the record.
- Always record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker with their group leader and/or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. All written records should be signed and dated

In addition, those working with children and young people must.

- Value the contribution of children and young people, and take their views seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible.
- Always aim to work within sight of another adult.
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around.
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet; toilet breaks should be organised for young children.
- If any activity requires physical contact, ensure that the child and parents are aware of this and its nature beforehand.

All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must not:

- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual, or group.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual;
- Permit abusive peer activities, e.g. Initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Show favouritism to any one individual or group.
- Allow an individual to involve them in excessive attention seeking;
- Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person;
- Allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the group;
- Befriend children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable on social media;

In addition, those working with children and young people on behalf of the parish must not:

- Initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact (e.g. for comfort, see above, also refer to the section on Acceptable Touch p4) should be initiated by the child.
- Play rough physical games with children or allow games with a potentially physical element (such as 'British Bulldog') to be played between children without careful thought, planning, and prior notification to parents and children.
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively. (See Acceptable Touch p4)
- Invade a child's privacy while washing or going to the toilet.
- Allow a child or young person to involve you in excessive attention seeking, including that which is overtly physical or sexual in nature. It is always your responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries in your work with children and young people.
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own or on your own.
- Smoke tobacco in the presence of children.
- Drink alcohol when responsible for young children or offer to give or buy them alcohol.
- Share sleeping accommodation with children.
- Invite a child to your home alone.
- Arrange social occasions with children (other than family members or close family friends) outside organised group occasions.

## **Acceptable Touch**

Sympathetic attention, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, can be wholly appropriate. However, abusers can use touch that appears safe to 'normalise' physical contact which then becomes abusive. As a general rule, the use of touch between adults in positions of responsibility and those with whom they are working, or volunteering should be initiated by the person themselves and kept to the minimum.

In addition to this, always follow the guidelines below:

- Ask permission before you touch someone;
- Allow the other person to determine the degree of touch except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention);
- Never act, speak or initiate any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual, abusive or offensive;
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors;
- Touch should be in response to a person's needs and not related to the employee or volunteer's needs. Touch should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the volunteer or worker.

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Agreed by the PCC September 2024