



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

## The Code of Safer Working Practice

*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 in all we do.*

### Upholding the Code

*All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Staff and volunteers who breach this code may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral made to the relevant statutory agency.*

This document should be read alongside: The Safeguarding Policy, Volunteer Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Electronic Communication Policy, and Drivers Bank.

### All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity;
- Respect people's rights to personal privacy;
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful;
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to about a personal concern;
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker with their activity leader and/or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. All written records should be signed and dated;
- Obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.

### In addition, those working with children and young people must:

- Always aim to work with or within sight of another adult;
- Ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet;
- Respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around;
- Ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and of its nature before the activity takes place.

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

- Use any form of physical punishment;
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual;
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group;
- 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 vulnerable adults. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person. \*1
- Allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people and vulnerable adults in the group;
- Befriend children, young people and vulnerable adults on social media. \*2
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices. \*3

## In addition, for children and young people, must not:

- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity); \*4
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people, except when this is a social situation with family members/carers present, e.g. a parish party<sup>1</sup>
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include family members/carers) 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);
- Avoid 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 worker's needs. Touch should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the worker.

---

<sup>1</sup> For the avoidance of doubt this document does not apply to church services, including Holy Communion.

## The Code of Safer Working Practice Addendum

We have looked at the above document with the staff team and it has raised a few questions. Further guidance can be found below:

**\*1** Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and vulnerable adults. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person.

The responsibility to ensure this rests with church workers/volunteers only whilst children/youth groups are occurring without their parents. At other times the whole church bears responsibility to safeguard young people and children and vulnerable adults, but the primary responsibility rests with parents. Visitors attending services where parents and children/young people/vulnerable adults are present will not be accompanied unless there is a good reason to do so.

**\*2** Befriend children, young people and vulnerable adults on social media.

Those working in children's and youth ministry will adhere to this. Those serving in adult ministries will not be required to abstain from friending youth and vulnerable adults. Befriending children should not happen by any adult on social media. Where it is suspected social media is being used to groom a young person or vulnerable adult, the PSO/Incumbent will approach the parent of the young person/vulnerable adult, and the adult who is thought to be grooming and take appropriate action to address the risk and if possible remove it. If a member of the youth or children's teams feels it would be appropriate for them to be a friend of a young person on social media, they must approach the PSO or Incumbent to explain the situation and decisions will be made on a case by case basis and if permission is granted, it will be on the condition that written consent from the parent of the young person is sought.

**\*3** Take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices:

We have agreed that there can be ministry leader identified photographers for groups and events who can take photos using their own phones, but these must be uploaded to All Saints' FB page/group or website or an All Saints' employee laptop/device within 24 hours and immediately after deleted. Laptops owned by All Saints' employees but used for work must be password protected. Where the device is used by other people that must not be on the staff member password protected profile and must not give them access to work documents/data/photos. For equality and transparency all identified photographers will wear a separate-coloured lanyard. We will at all times adhere to the privacy policy so that photographs will not be used for those who have not given permission who are under 18 or vulnerable adults.

**\*4** Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child, and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity);

Ministry Leads are all on the Driver's Bank and therefore checked to give lifts as necessary following Driver's Bank agreement. Other team members can be on the Driver's Bank and then able to give lifts otherwise they should refrain from doing so. Consent will need to be sort from parents to give regular lifts unless it is in an emergency.