

St. Michael's and All Angels Church Bramcote.

SAFEGUARDING ADVICE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of everyone in society. This is acknowledged widely in education and health services, but less so in the community at large.

There is nowhere where safeguarding issues do not occur, it is not only in areas of poverty where abuse of children and vulnerable adults occurs.

Abuse is classed as Physical, Emotional or Sexual and Neglect. These are the 4 areas recognised which safeguarding covers. Everyone will have a different view of what this entails in the community at large, but there are professional understandings of all 4.

As a volunteer in Church Activities, you are more likely to have a child or vulnerable adult disclose a safeguarding issue to you, than to a member of staff at Church.

This is because as a volunteer you will be seen as a safe person to confide in. Therefore, it is important for you all that you have the same advice to support you should this arise.

Also, as a volunteer you need to be aware of the expectations the Church family has of you in your voluntary role. These expectations will help support and guide you when volunteering. This is important to say as when you volunteer in your local area, lines can seem blurred sometimes.

Expectations of you as a volunteer.

- Remember that children and vulnerable adults see you as a person of authority when you are volunteering, even if you do not see that yourself.
- Do not divulge personal information about yourself other than your name etc. Never give your phone number to a child or vulnerable adult when volunteering, if you know them socially outside you may well have been given their number, but not in your role as volunteer. Keep conversations general and do not broach sensitive areas of discussion.

- If a child is ill or has had a toilet accident and needs cleaning up, only volunteers with a current DBS should take them to clean them up. When doing so make sure another person knows you are doing this and wherever you take them, make sure you leave the door ajar. All this is to protect you as a volunteer and the child concerned.
- If any bad behaviour or strange happening occurs it is important that this is kept confidential and not spoken about to people outside the event. This is an essential courtesy to other families.

What to do if a child or vulnerable adult discloses something to you.

- Often people worry about this and think, “How will I know if a child or vulnerable adult is telling me something I should report?” The answer to this is this, that if the child or vulnerable adult says anything to you which makes you feel uneasy, slightly sick or worried, then you should report this.
- It is not your role as the volunteer to investigate or judge the disclosure, just to report what you saw or heard to someone in authority, e.g. the organiser you are volunteering for.
- You should report it as soon as you can safely do and in private. The privacy of this disclosure is paramount, to protect the victim, yourself and the person accused. If this is hard for you the person you can talk to again is the person you reported it to or the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- What happens next is that a report of what you witnessed is sent to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Tina Newton. She will discuss it with the organiser and may ask for advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Usually, but not always, no further action is taken, but all evidence is of importance.

Thank you for reading this advice and I hope it is of some help to you.

Donna and I hope to provide face to face training too.

Tina Newton

Parish Safeguarding Officer

August 2022