



# Safe from Harm Policy



June 2015 – October 2015 version

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## The Purpose of This Document

As a parish, we are committed to ensuring the welfare of the children we work with. Throughout this policy, the term 'children' means any under-18 year old. This document will

- Enable staff and volunteers to respond diligently and appropriately to safeguarding concerns
- Provide children, staff and volunteers with appropriate protection while in the care of St Mary Magdalene with Sale West Community Church
- Promote good practice to the benefit of all children

This document draws on key legislation and guidance from the Church of England Diocese of Chester, the government and other experts.

St Mary Magdalene with Sale West Community Church is committed to the protection of children in our community and will champion the cause of children's welfare in the wider society. Our basis is the love of God, through which we want to enable a vibrant and life-giving church community to nurture and empower children to grow to fulfil their potential. The welfare of the child is paramount and this policy sets out the standards of trust we expect from all staff and volunteers who work with children through the church. The P.C.C. and its designated representatives will respond quickly where a concern about a child's welfare is raised, working with other agencies effectively.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, based on guidelines from the Diocese of Chester.

## **Part 1: A-Z Good Practice Standards**

All staff and volunteers should take their position of trust seriously, to safeguard children's welfare and protect themselves from false allegations. The following are a list of key standards we must collectively uphold, with examples to give guidance in specific situations. It is not an exhaustive list, rather it gives a framework for decision-making in a wide number of situations.

### **Administration**

Keep up-to-date records of children, including emergency contact details of parent/guardian and key health information. Keep an attendance register for every regular group or one-off event, and a record sheet for one-to-one mentoring.

### **Ratios**

Observe this ratio of adults to children according to their age:

For 0 to 2 years - 1 adult to every 3 children (1:3)

For 2 to 3 years - 1 adult to every 4 children (1:4)

For 3 to 8 years - 1 adult to every 8 children (1:8)

For over 8s - 1 adult for the first 8 children followed by 1:12

(i.e. 32 children would require 3 adults)

### **Casual Visitors**

Casual visitors i.e. those who have not been authorised by the Church as leaders or helpers, must not have access to children without the presence of an adult who is deemed to be responsible for the group.

### **Communication**

Clergy, the P.C.C. and parents/guardians must be clearly informed of all the activities in which children and young people may take part on church premises or through the church in any way.

### **Facilities**

Toilets - The ideal is 1 toilet and 1 hand basin per 10 children

Warm and Clean - Group areas should be warm, adequately lit and ventilated, with a high standard of cleanliness

Additional Needs - Be able and willing to accommodate children with additional needs, considering appropriate access and toilet facilities

Entrances and Exits - Should be well lit and easily accessible

Registration - Social Services need to register premises where activities take place for more than 2 hours in any one day or if a holiday club runs for more than 6 days a year

## **Finance**

If money is collected, account of this must be given to the P.C.C. via the Parish Finance Officer.

## **Good Practice with Colleagues**

If you see another adult acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your supervisor about your concerns. Staff and volunteers must encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows everyone to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

## **Good Practice of Workers**

Treat all children with respect and dignity befitting their age. Use verbal and body language wisely and appropriately.

## **Health and Safety**

- Adults must be aware of the safety / fire evacuation procedure. A fire drill should be carried out regularly. Fire extinguishers should be available and regularly checked.
- Children with infectious illnesses must not attend.
- No smoking is allowed near the areas children will be in.
- Parents/guardians must submit a health form for their child before a regular activity.

- Parents/guardians must submit an additional health form specific to an off-site or overnight activity, before their child attends that off-site or overnight activity.
- Accidents must be recorded with a note of any action taken and signed by the staff member or volunteer in charge of the group.
- A first aid kit must always be available and its location must be well known.
- Medication must not be administered without written parental consent. One adult should ideally be a first-aider.
- A risk assessment form must be filled out for each activity.
- Staff and volunteers must be in a fit state of health to be able to carry out their duties effectively and safely.

### **Insurance**

Most existing parish insurance covers regular children's activities. Other activities with a higher risk nature must be checked with insurers, and off-site or overnight activities require P.C.C. Approval.

### **Log Sheets**

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child in any way, whether or not the cause of your concern may be abuse, you must complete a log sheet detailing the concern, situation or suspicion. This must be signed and dated and passed to the ministry leader (i.e. Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor or Children and Families Worker).

Examples of events to log:

- Any suspicions of Abuse
- Any situation where a leader makes a child cry
- Any accidental inappropriate physical contact with a leader and child
- Tantrums or arguments
- Instances of bullying
- If a child appears aroused by a leaders actions

## **More than one adult**

There must always be more than one staff member or volunteer for any group. Best practice is always to have a female staff member or volunteer present.

## **Praying with a child**

Like all work with children, praying directly with an individual child must be age-appropriate and subject to the child's wishes. It must always be same-sex, and ideally with two leaders present. If this is not appropriate for a particular reason, it should take place within sight of another leader or in a public place with the agreement of your ministry leader (Children's Pastor, Children and Families Worker or Youth Pastor). When praying for a child, listen well, accept them and what they say, and keep calm. If you're unsure how to pray for a child, ask for the help of your team leader or ministry leader.

Praying directly for a child is subject to all the other Good Practice Standards too.

## **Residential work**

It is important to ensure residentials are planned and delivered in such a way that they uphold the other Good Practice Standards. For example, the privacy of children must be respected and so leaders should knock before entering dormitory accommodation and must ensure they are not alone with a child. In addition, leaders must only enter accommodation of young people of the same sex. There must be separate accommodation for the sexes. There must be separate accommodation for the leaders.

If an incident of abuse occurs during a residential it must be passed to the local police. If an allegation or suspicion of abuse arises, but the abuse pre-dates the residential, it should be referred using the procedure located later in this policy.

Any leaders who are drivers for an off-site trip or residential must adhere to all legal regulations and must be adequately insured.

## **Time alone**

Minimise time alone with any child. If possible remain in the view of another staff member or volunteer. Try never to be behind a closed door but if absolutely necessary tell the staff member or volunteer with overall responsibility for the session where you are, with whom and why. One-to-one mentoring must be approved by the Youth Pastor and must always take place in a public place, for example a coffee shop. Further

guidance on appropriate places to meet a child for one-to-one mentoring are given in Mentoring Training for Youth Mentors.

## **Touch**

Touch is an important part of human relationships: for example, it can be necessary to stop a young child from hurting herself or himself; it can also be a natural way of responding to someone in distress. However, everyone working with children should be sensitive to what is appropriate and inappropriate physical contact, both in general terms, and in relation to a specific individual. Leaders need to be conscious of situations in which their actions, however well intentioned, could be misconstrued by others or be harmful. If a child needs to be removed from a group, this must be done with verbal encouragement, except for where failing to use physical touch in restraining violence would result in danger to another child or adult. The staff member or volunteer with overall responsibility for the session should be present where this is the case, and the adult(s) involved must complete a log sheet detailing their actions.

Hugging is to be discouraged among the staff and volunteers when young people are present. Although physical contact should not be initiated by the worker it is important that young people if they initiate and choose to have any contact are responded to appropriately, e.g. a side arm hug. Physical contact should be age appropriate. For example, if a child age 3 comes to you distraught because they have lost something dear to them, an arm around them would be an appropriate response. However, if a 14 year old wants to have a hug from you frequently, you could perhaps give them a high-five instead, to direct them away from what may be an unhelpful reliance on touch with you that is not appropriate.

## **Transport**

If at all possible do not give lifts to children and young people on their own. If they must be alone ask them to sit in the back seat. Wherever possible, ensure you take a second leader, and do not allow giving lifts alone to become a regular practice. Check that insurance covers the vehicle and passengers. Seat belts must be worn.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers will be supervised and supported by their line manager. Volunteers under 18 years of age must always be accompanied by an adult volunteer or staff member.



## **Practice never to be allowed**

Never engage in any of the following:

- invading the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting or doing things for a child of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even as a joke
- inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting a child
- Never discipline children using physical punishment
- Do not let a child involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature
- Do not invite a child to your home alone: invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the home. Make sure the parents know where the child is. Don't visit a child at home, except for clergy and ministry leaders (Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor or Children and Families Worker) in exceptional circumstances, with the parent or guardian present.
- Do not share sleeping accommodation with children
- Do not reduce a child to tears as a form of control

## Part 2: Steps to Volunteering

To safeguard the wellbeing of children, it is essential that volunteers who are to work with children are appointed wisely and trained effectively. The process a potential new volunteer would go through before beginning volunteering with children is as follows:

**Step 1** Complete a Volunteer Information Form, distributed by the ministry leader (Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor, Children and Families Worker)

References will be taken by the ministry leader

**Step 2** Meet up with the ministry leader to discuss the role and responsibilities, receive a copy of this policy, and discuss any queries either party has, and agree to the terms of the Volunteer Agreement

**Step 3** Complete a DBS Check as directed by the ministry leader

This simple three step process is overseen by the ministry leader, whose responsibility is to determine the suitability of the potential volunteer for a particular role. At any step, the ministry leader is free to end the process and decline the opportunity for a person to volunteer in that particular role, by talking it through with the person concerned and if appropriate, guiding them towards another better suited role.

If a person is accepted for a volunteer role, that role will run for a maximum of 5 years before going through this process again to redetermine the suitability of the role for the volunteer.

For those accepted for a volunteer role, there are two further steps to continue with once their volunteering has begun:

**Step 4** Attend regular training (at least twice a year) relating to their role or wider youth or children's ministry

**Step 5** Meet with their line manager (group leader or ministry leader) periodically to review their volunteering

There are two versions of the Volunteer Information Form depending on what type of volunteering role the potential volunteer is looking to be involved in. This is connected to the two types of DBS check that may be required.

The references will be taken from a person in one of the following roles: Vicar, Small Group Pastor, Small Group Leader, Baptism Buddy, Congregation Leadership Team member, P.C.C. member, but not the ministry leader who is overseeing the Steps to Volunteering. If a volunteer has been part of St Mary Magdalene with Sale West Community Church for less than 3 months a reference will be taken from a church leader in their previous church.

The DBS check may or may not include a barred list check depending on the frequency of their volunteering with a group, the level of responsibility, the type of ministry and whether there is an overnight element to the ministry at any point. DBS checks are processed by CCPAS on behalf of Chester Diocese and are completed online. Ministry leaders will be responsible for ensuring the appropriate type of DBS check is completed. Data relating to DBS checks and volunteers is held securely according to the Data Protection Policy of St Mary Magdalene with Sale West Community Church.

If a volunteer is unwilling to abide by anything in this Safe from Harm policy, or to attend training at least twice a year, they may be asked to leave their volunteer role.

## Part 3: What is child abuse?

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

There are four categories of child abuse that are used by every local authority in England and Wales.

Type of Abuse	Description	Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where adults physically hurt or injure children</li> <li>• Giving young people alcohol or drugs</li> <li>• Physical abuse can occur when the nature and intensity of activities exceeds the capacity of the child’s immature and growing body or predisposes the child to injury resulting from fatigue or exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexpected bruising or injury</li> <li>• Bruises with reflect hand marks</li> <li>• Cigarette burns</li> <li>• Bite marks</li> <li>• Broken bones</li> <li>• Scalds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of parent being contacted</li> <li>• Aggression or anger</li> <li>• Fear of going home</li> <li>• Keeping body covered</li> <li>• Flinching</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Withdrawn behaviour</li> </ul>
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual abuse can take the form of sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, fondling, photography and inappropriate sexual conversation</li> <li>• Refers to actual and intended abuse</li> <li>• Showing children pornographic material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain or itching in the genital area</li> <li>• Sexually transmitted disease</li> <li>• Vaginal discharge</li> <li>• Stomach pains</li> <li>• Discomfort when walking or sitting</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden changes in behaviour</li> <li>• Advanced sexual knowledge</li> <li>• Self harm</li> <li>• Keeping ‘secrets’</li> <li>• Fear of certain people</li> </ul>
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This can include emotional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmentally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurotic or</li> </ul>

	<p>ill-treatment, bullying, deliberate rejection, and lack of love and affection, constantly shouting at a child, threats and taunts, constant overprotection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to challenge racism</li> <li>• Emotional abuse may refer to constant criticism and applying unrealistic pressure</li> </ul>	<p>delayed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden speech disorder</li> </ul>	<p>paranoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unable to take part or play</li> <li>• Fear of making mistakes</li> <li>• Self-harm or mutilation</li> <li>• Fear of parents being contacted</li> </ul>
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neglect occurs when a person fails to meet a child's basic needs such as warm clothing and food provision</li> <li>• Children are constantly left alone or unsupervised</li> <li>• Lack of love, attention and affection</li> <li>• Neglect includes failure to ensure a child's safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant hunger</li> <li>• Unkempt state</li> <li>• Weight loss or underweight state</li> <li>• Inappropriate dress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing appropriate appointments at doctors/hospitals</li> <li>• Truancy/late for school</li> <li>• Tiredness or fatigue</li> <li>• Few friends</li> <li>• Regularly alone and unsupervised</li> </ul>

## Spiritual Harm

In addition to these four categories of abuse that are recognised by government, spiritual harm involves the inappropriate use of any religious belief or practice which may harm somebody spiritually, emotionally or physically. This may include elements of the other four categories of abuse but with a particular focus on damaging the child's relationship to God by using God as a threat, by using shame to control a child's behaviour, or by suppressing a child's natural and spiritual development by coercing them to adopt particular beliefs or behaviours against their readiness. This has a detrimental impact on their trust in God, in church, and in staff members or volunteers who are their leaders. St Mary Magdalene with Sale West Community Church is committed to ensuring children's trust in God, church and their leaders is preserved, through treating them with honour, love, gentleness and patience.

## **Bullying**

Bullying refers to a situation where a child's wellbeing is compromised through the behaviour of another child, or an adult's wellbeing is compromised through the behaviour of a child or another adult.

### **Action to help the child who is being bullied and prevent bullying:**

- Take all signs of bullying seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns
- Ask the ministry leader to assist if the child needs help telling the person in authority in the setting where the bullying is taking place (e.g. at school)
- Take appropriate action to ensure the child's safety (e.g. walk them out to the car park if someone has threatened to 'get them' coming out of the building)
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, but will need to pass it on to someone else who will be able to help further
- Complete a Log Sheet and hand in to the ministry leader
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer or the person in authority where the bullying is taking place (e.g. school)
- Speak to the child who is being bullied separately from the child who is bullying

### **Action towards the child who is bullying:**

- Explain the situation to the child who is bullying, and encourage him or her to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the child who has been bullied
- Inform the child's parents
- Insist on the return of any borrowed items and that the child compensates the child they bullied (e.g. repays stolen tuck shop money)
- Impose appropriate sanctions as necessary (e.g. not attending a particular group for a time)
- Help the child to develop more positive patterns of behaviour
- Review the child's progress periodically and where appropriate, report back to his or her parents, and the parents of the child who was bullied

If a volunteer or staff member has been bullied by a child or another adult, the ministry leader should meet with them to offer support and put an appropriate plan in place to bring reconciliation if possible, and prevent the bullying from occurring again.

## **Part 4: What to do if you are concerned a child may be being abused**

Any child who is or has been exposed to danger of abuse must be protected without delay.

### **Action for dealing with reports of abuse**

This procedure outlines the action staff or volunteers need to take if a child discloses that they are being or have been abused. A child may disclose verbally, or in written or drawing form, especially if they are very young.

#### **DO**

- Make it clear that you cannot be asked to keep a secret
- Listen to the child attentively, letting them express their views and feelings without interruption
- Accept what the child is saying as true
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling someone
- Explain that you must pass this information on
- Make notes of what was said using the child's words whenever possible on a Log Sheet, and sign and date it
- Speak to the Vicar or your ministry leader (Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor or Children and Families Worker) or the Parish Child Protection Officer. If the child is in immediate danger and contacting one of these people would cause a delay that would increase the danger to the child, you should contact the Police
- If the subject of the allegation is a member of the clergy contact the Archdeacon or Diocesan Child Protection Adviser

#### **DO NOT**

- Show shock or disbelief
- Agree to keep the disclosure a secret
- Make a promise or suggestion that you can stop the abuse
- Ask questions seeking further detail – you risk contaminating evidence
- Investigate any allegation - specially trained professionals undertake this role
- Contact the alleged perpetrator

- Make any statement or comment to the press – all press enquiries must be referred to the Diocesan Communications Department at Chester Diocese Church House

## **Action for dealing with suspected abuse**

This procedure outlines the action staff or volunteers need to take if they are concerned that a child may be being or may have been abused.

### **DO**

- Make notes of your suspicions on a Log Sheet, using the child's words whenever possible, and sign and date it
- Speak to the Vicar or your ministry leader (Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor or Children and Families Worker) or the Parish Child Protection Officer. If the child is in immediate danger and contacting one of these people would cause a delay that would increase the danger to the child, you should contact the Police
- If a member of the clergy is implicated in your suspicions, contact the Archdeacon or Diocesan Child Protection Adviser

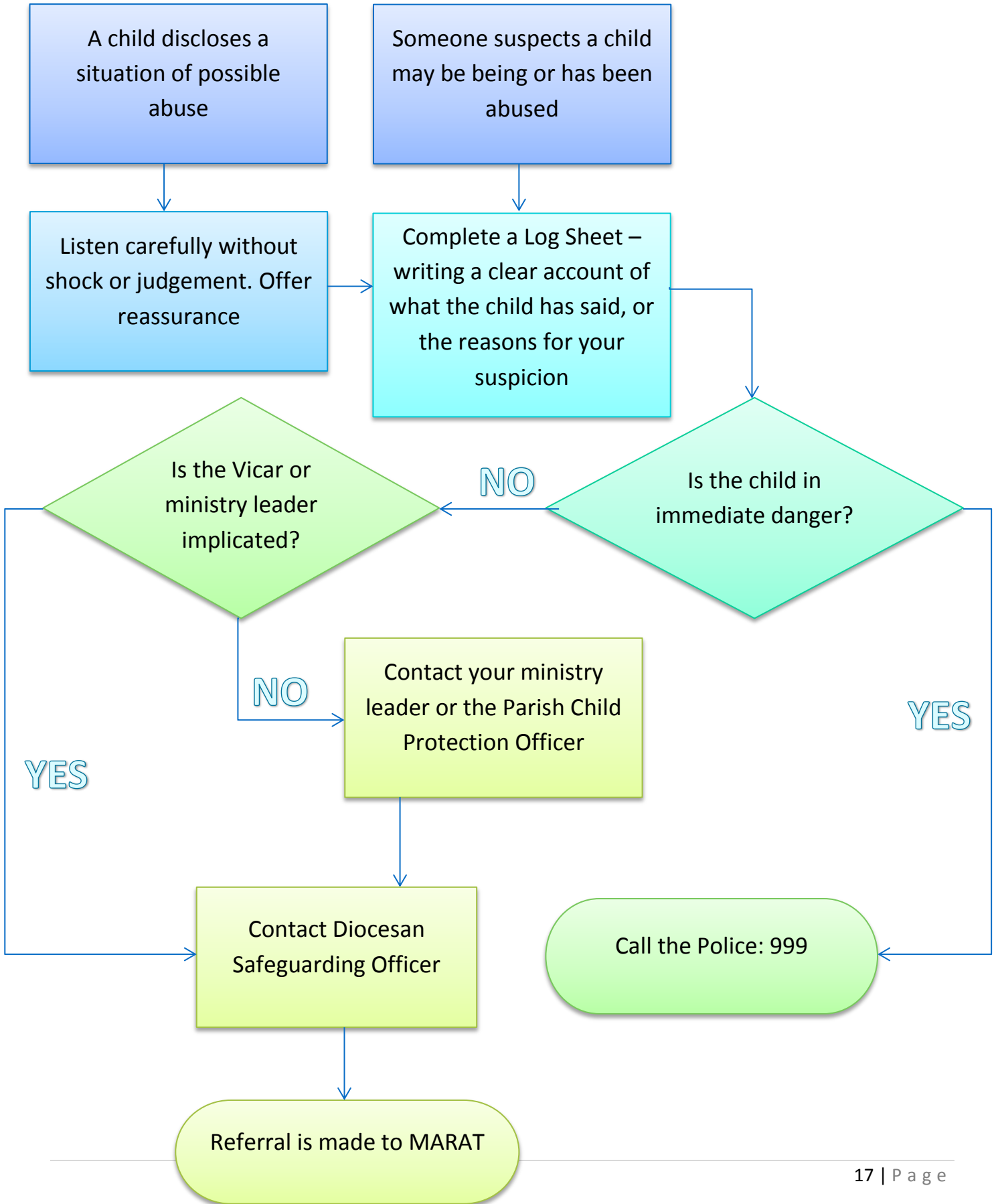
### **DO NOT**

- Investigate any of your suspicions
- Contact anyone who is implicated by your suspicions
- Make any statement or comment to the press – all press enquiries must be referred to the Diocesan Communications Department at Chester Diocese Church House

In the event that a Log Sheet is completed because a staff member or volunteer is concerned that a child may be being or have been abused, a Concern Sheet should then be completed by the ministry leader and discussed with the Parish Child Protection Officer. The Concern Sheet will detail the outcome of their conversation and outline the action to be taken next. If a referral to MARAT Trafford is made, the response will be recorded on the Concern Sheet. If MARAT recommend a course of action to the ministry leader, this will also be recorded, along with details of how the course of action has been implemented, and any outcomes from it.



# Referral Flow Chart



## **Part 5: Roles within the Church**

### **The Role of the Parish Priest and Parochial Church Council**

- The Parochial Church Council (PCC), with the Vicar, shares the responsibility for the duty of care of children involved in church activities.
- The PCC must appoint a Child Protection Officer and support them in implementing this policy across the parish.
- The PCC must ensure that people who are authorized to work with children within the parish or who hold a position of responsibility are properly appointed, trained and supported.
- The PCC must be aware that there is a responsibility to ensure that people who pose a threat to children are effectively managed and monitored in the church context.
- If the PCC fails to comply with the Diocesan Guidelines, it will leave itself open to the charge of negligence if any child in its care (or in the charge of its officers or organisation) comes to any harm.

### **The role of the Parish Child Protection Officer**

The Parish Child Protection Officer is appointed by the PCC annually and will be responsible for the following tasks:

- To ensure that the Safe from Harm Policy is reviewed, updated and adopted by the PCC on an annual basis together with a brief report on the current implementation within the parish.
- To ensure that the Safe from Harm Policy is widely available and given to all existing and new staff and volunteers working with children within the parish.
- To ensure that the Safe from Harm Policy is shared with all organisations using the facilities of the church.
- To ensure that all who volunteer with children go through the Steps to Volunteering in conjunction with the ministry leaders.

- To ensure that each volunteer has a role description and a volunteer agreement in respect of their work with children.
- To ensure that there is a poster identifying sources of help for children and young people displayed wherever they meet i.e. Childline, NSPCC.

## **Part 6: Glossary**

Child/ren	Anyone under the age of 18
MARAT	Multi-agency Referral and Assessment Team – the team within Trafford Council who respond to safeguarding concerns and co-ordinate responses to children requiring protection or support
Ministry leader	Children’s Pastor, Youth Pastor or Children and Families Worker

## Part 7: Contact details

**Parish Child Protection Officer, Maureen Cain**

m. 07917 835 569

e. [maureencain2001@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:maureencain2001@yahoo.co.uk)

**Youth Pastor, Jonny Davies**

m. 07875 977 103

e. [distinctivepastor@gmail.com](mailto:distinctivepastor@gmail.com)

**Children's Pastor, Becky Courtney**

e. [beckymcourtney@gmail.com](mailto:beckymcourtney@gmail.com)

**Children and Families Worker, Sale West, Hazel Boston**

e. [childandfam@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:childandfam@hotmail.co.uk)

**Diocesan Child Protection Adviser**

p. 01928 718834 Ext 221

e. [pauline.butterfield@chester.anglican.org](mailto:pauline.butterfield@chester.anglican.org)

**Diocesan Communications Director**

p. 01928 718834 Ext 233

**MARAT (Multi-Agency Referral and Assessment Team) –**

**who to pass on concerns about a child to**

p. 0161 912 5125

e. [MARAT@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:MARAT@trafford.gov.uk)

Emergency out of hours: 0161 912 2020

### EXTRA RESOURCES

**British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapists - 01788 550899**

**Childline - 0800 1111**

**Churches Child Protection Advisory Service - 0845 1204550**

**Lucy Faithfull Foundation - 01527 591924**

**NSPCC - 0808 800 5000**

**Samaritans - 0845 7909090**