



Safeguarding Policy

The parish and congregation of St Bene't's is committed to safeguarding all those who attend worship and the other activities that we offer. We have particular regard for the most vulnerable and accept the prime duty of care for children and vulnerable adults.

We seek to create a culture where everyone is included, respected, listened to, and taken seriously. We also endeavour to create an environment that is physically safe, emotionally nurturing, intellectually open, spiritually healthy and socially inclusive.

We follow the [Church of England safeguarding policy Promoting a Safer Church](#). Whilst responsibility for safeguarding belongs to the whole church community, we have appointed a Parish Safeguarding Officer to support the clergy and Parochial Church Council (PCC) with ensuring that what we do is informed by up-to-date policies and procedures from local and national authorities. We endeavour to make training and information available to everyone to foster and encourage a culture of congregational care. We have also appointed an independent Children's Advocate, who can be contacted for advice and support if children are in difficulty. We will ensure children know who this is, and how to contact them. The contact details of our Parish Safeguarding Officer and Children's Advocate can be found on our [website](#).

We follow recommended safeguarding practice in recruiting, training, and supporting our ordained and lay ministers, our employees and our volunteers. Recruitment includes Disclosure and Barring Service checks, where appropriate, including for those working regularly or substantially with children and/or vulnerable adults. We have a [policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders](#) and how applications will be handled. In short, whilst we need to ensure that those in positions of responsibility at St. Bene't's have been appropriately vetted, having a criminal record does not necessarily mean that candidates cannot be considered for a voluntary or paid role with us. Applications will be treated objectively and fairly, proportionate to the role. We also have a statement on identifying and reporting domestic abuse, including our support for victims of the same. Health and safety policies are in place and we have provided adequate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish. All those working on behalf of the parish have agreed to comply with the safeguarding policy and with the good practice guidelines for their work. We recognise that both our formal teaching and pastoral work and our church social events should be covered by the same safeguarding guidelines.

We respond without delay to any complaint that a child or vulnerable adult in our care may have been harmed by the behaviour of an employee or volunteer working on behalf of the church. We always seek advice on such matters from outside the parish, and we will co-operate with statutory agencies during any enquiries they need to make into allegations against a member of the church community. During those enquiries we will do our best to

ensure that those making an allegation, and those against whom an allegation is made, are supported appropriately.

We seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to any child or adult whose life has been affected by abuse, whether the abuse was recent or long ago. Where there is a current risk to vulnerable people that has not yet been brought to light, we support the person who has suffered abuse in taking information to the relevant agencies. We also have a [policy on responding to domestic abuse](#), including our support for victims of the same.

This church wishes to welcome and support all members of its community. Those who have a history of offences against children or vulnerable adults, and/or who may pose a risk to them are offered a supportive agreement to help them take part in church life; they are supported pastorally, and boundaries are set to protect those who might be vulnerable within the church. Confidential safeguarding agreements are the responsibility of the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and the incumbent, who work together.

We regularly review and update our safeguarding policy, and we welcome comments from those joining our community or taking part in our activities on how we could improve our awareness and safeguarding practices.

The next review of this policy is due in: July 2022.

The Reverend Anna Matthews, Vicar
Signed on behalf of St Bene't's PCC

July 2021