

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, CHARD

Parish Safeguarding Policy

Ratified by the PCC on

Author: Liz Jones

02/09/2025

The Parish of St.Mary's commitment to encouraging an environment in our church community where all people, and especially those who are vulnerable, are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and safety.



Parish Safeguarding Policy

The Parish of **St Mary's, Chard**, is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of the children and adults within our church community, and also to encouraging an environment where all people and especially those who may be vulnerable are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety.

A person (adult or child) who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Have their privacy respected.
- Be able to lead as independent a life as possible.
- Be able to choose how to lead their life.
- Have the protection of the law.
- Have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.
- Be able to use their chosen language or method of communication.
- Be heard.

In any situations where there may be a difference of opinion about priorities, the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult should be the paramount concern.

St. Mary's Parish, Chard accepts that, through its workers and volunteers, it is responsible for children, young people and vulnerable adults when in a church building, on church property and other premises being used by the church and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organized by the church. However, St. Mary's Church, Chard is not responsible for private arrangements.

St. Mary's Parish, Chard will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding team, statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child, young person or vulnerable adult or about the behaviour of an adult in a position of trust, and will work with the Diocesan Team, and the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation is necessary. We are also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the church learn lessons from the past.

This statement of principles applies to children, young people and adults.

We are committed to:

- The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- The safeguarding and protection of all children and adults
- The establishment of a safe, caring community which provides an environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse, and where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and find support.
- The promotion of best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, not just parents or those who have formal leadership or caring responsibilities. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

As part of the Safer Recruitment process, it is the policy of St. Mary's Parish that:

- Every year St. Mary's PCC, Chard, will agree the Parish Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy Statement, displaying a copy in the Church and forwarding a copy to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office for their records.
- All those who regularly work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced DBS checks if they reach the criteria.
- Those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will be required to be DBS plus Barred List checked if they reach the criteria.

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The term 'complaint' can cover an allegation, disclosure or statement, something seen or something heard. The complaint need not be made in writing but once received it must be recorded and acted upon. Complaints can be taken from alleged victims and third parties.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church officers will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and appropriate authorities to ensure

that the matter is on record. Support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse, who will also be encouraged to make a statement to the Police if they have not done so before.

We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and / or isolation. We recognise that anyone can be a victim of abuse in any setting, including in their own home, and in a church environment, and will work hard to make our church a safe place for people to disclose any concerns they have and receive appropriate support. We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or adult who is vulnerable. We will support them in continuing to attend church services whilst supervising their attendance to reduce the risk of further harm.

This parish agrees to follow the Practice Guidance from the House of Bishops on safeguarding matters, and to adopt the Diocese of Bath and Wells Safeguarding Policies.

Parish Safeguarding Representatives

The PCC will appoint a minimum of one Safeguarding Officer who will be responsible, on behalf of the incumbent and PCC, for implementing the Diocesan policy in respect of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Parish Safeguarding Officer agrees to undertake the key responsibilities of the role as outlined in the Diocesan Safeguarding Guide.

Paid Workers and/or Volunteers

All those who undertake work in a regulated activity authorised by the PCC with children and/or vulnerable adults in the parish on a voluntary or paid basis will be required to:

Complete a Confidential Self Declaration Form. To complete the necessary vetting application (DBS: Disclosure and Barring Service Checks)

The Parish of **St Mary, Chard**, will seek to ensure that a DBS check is only requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position (paid or voluntary) concerned and in line with Diocesan advice. All persons both paid and volunteers who require DBS checks must also attend a Safeguarding course relevant to their role. This is a mandatory requirement of the Church Of England.

All those who work with children and/or vulnerable adults on a regular basis will be made aware of and should familiarise themselves with the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures which can be found on [Safeguarding - Bath and Wells Diocese](#), and must attend Diocesan Safeguarding training that is relevant to their role. A refresher course is to be attended every three years.

Children's Activities, Groups and Events

Children who wish to take part in events such as church outings, holidays or sleepovers will not be allowed to participate in such activities unless the leaders of such event(s) receive a completed consent form from the parents or guardians of the child concerned, even if the parent or guardian accompanies the child on any such trip or activity. A new form must be completed for each separate activity.

Consideration will be given at all times for the health, safety and welfare of each child and young person, including supervision ratios, transport, first aid, premises and children with special needs.

Vulnerable Adults Activities, Groups and Events

Consideration will be given at all times for the health, safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult, including transport, first aid, premises and adults with special needs.

Hire of Church Premises

All those who book or use the church on either a regular or one off basis shall be required to sign a copy of the parish booking agreement and a declaration that they have read and understand the Parish Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

SIGNED AND AGREED:

Rector Rev. Nick Jerret

Churchwarden/s: Terry Hackling and Geoff Wilson

Safeguarding Representative/s: Liz Jones

Date: Parochial Church Council Meeting held on 02/09/2025