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**SOUTH TAMAR MISSION COMMUNITY - SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**For the parishes of Coryton, Lamerton, Milton Abbot with Dunterton, Marystowe and Sydenham Damerel**

**January 2016**

*(revised March 2018)*

**SOUTH TAMAR MISSION COMMUNITY - SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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**SOUTH TAMAR MISSION COMMUNITY - SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

The following policy statement was agreed at the APCM meeting held on ………………….

***An overarching policy document has been agreed between the parishes of Lamerton, Sydenham Damerel, Milton Abbot, Dunterton, Coryton and Marystowe. Issues common to all parishes are described below, followed by practical plans which are applicable to every parish.***

Everyone has their role to play in the Benefice by acting in the best interests of all vulnerable adults and children – whether or not they attend church. Safeguarding is an opportunity to show Christian principles in practice. Good advertising of this policy will allow all parishioners to voice their concerns in a safe and caring environment, knowing that they will be listened to by the Church and that appropriate action will be taken.

**1. Mission Statement**

As members of the joint PCC we commit our church community to the support, nurture, protection and safeguarding of all, especially the young and vulnerable. We recognise that our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole church community. We are fully committed to acting within current legislation, guidance, national frameworks and the Diocesan Safeguarding procedures. We will also act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory team, Children and Adult Social Care Services, the Police, Probation Services and other agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. We welcome staff and volunteers who are recruited in accordance with the ‘Practice Guidance: safer recruitment’ June 2015 policy document produced by Church of England. This means we will ensure that those who are employed or who volunteer to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are suitable for the role, that they know what the role entails and that they are supported in carrying it out.

*This policy was compiled following the Exeter ‘Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Guidance for Parishes’ document, published May 2014.*

**XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX dioces document**

**2. What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding is the action taken by others to promote welfare and prevent harm to all children and vulnerable adults in our society. As well as being reactive, safeguarding should also be proactive. A good safeguarding policy encourages vigilance and includes measures that promote a safe environment, in order to lessen the risk of abuse and harm.

**2.1 Safeguarding children and young people**

A child is defined as anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Young people are generally considered to be aged 11 – 17, but are legally children. The Children’s Act 1989 provides statutory powers to the Local Authority to investigate and intervene where there is significant harm to a child. Harm can be physical or mental violence, injury, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation. Maltreatment occurs where their health or physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual, social or spiritual development is damaged by other people. Children with learning difficulties or physical disabilities are particularly vulnerable.

Children can be harmed in the home, at school, at friends’ or relatives’ houses, during sport or leisure activities and at Church. Signs of abuse can include injuries (especially those that cannot be explained or occur on unlikely parts of the body), bites, burns, scalds. The child may show signs of depression or unusual aggression or begin using drugs or alcohol. The signs are varied and many – but those with frequent contact with a child should bring common-sense to bear. Any change in the normal, sunny disposition of a child warrants investigation, especially if it occurs frequently.

**2.2.Safeguarding vulnerable adults**

Unlike children (who are always considered to be vulnerable), adults can experience periods of vulnerabilty, depending upon circumstances. Adults with a permanent mental disability may always be vulnerable, but physical illness, mental ill health, addiction or unresolved emotional issues can render anyone temporarily vulnerable. Therefor any adult aged 18 or over is vulnerable, who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness, or other situation is permanently or temporarily unable to take care of themselves, or protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

People can be at risk from members of their own family, neighbours, ‘friends’, people in authority and from those giving care in residential homes. Domestic abuse by a spouse is widespread and common. Vulnerable adults can be physically, psychologically and sexually abused, neglected, denied health care and taken advantage of financially. Spiritual abuse can also occur in the form of manipulation of thought and emotions e.g preaching that sinfulness will result in dire consequences unless the person repents. Abuse in the form of texts, emails, Twitter and other malicious internet avenues cannot be ignored either.

As for children, the signs of adult abuse are varied and many – ranging from injuries, malnutrition, addiction and emotional disturbance. Robust communication and a policy of inclusion may help to identify those at risk in the parishes.

**3. When to act – whistle-blowing and reporting**

In the case of children, where abuse is suspected, it is better to speak-up, even if the abuse is proved to be unfounded. Reasons for not acting if child abuse is suspected can include:

* disbelief, particularly if the person is well known and liked
* fear of getting it wrong and maligning an innocent person
* making things worse for the child
* making excuses, such as ‘I don’t know who to contact’

Some of these reasons are placing more emphasis upon the well-being of the adult, rather than the child and are therefore unacceptable.

Vulnerable adults need to be treated with respect and dignity. Questions must be asked regarding the extent of the harm or exploitation - and what the adult feels about the situation. Nevertheless, if there is a risk of repeated, serious acts against the individual and they lack mental capacity, then the abuse should be reported.

When in doubt, the general rule is to speak-out, rather than risk harm.

Even if the whistle-blower does not wish to be involved with the mission community safeguarding procedure, they should, at the very least, be given details of agencies that can help, and ensure that the child or vulnerable adult has the ability to contact these agencies themselves.

**3.1 How to report suspected abuse**

Parishioners are more likely to be encouraged to report incidences if they know that they can do so in a safe, caring environment and that the person they confide in is non-judgemental, does not gossip and maintains appropriate confidentiality. In some circumstances, where a child or adult is in immediate, significant danger the Police, Social Services or Health services may be called, regardless of confidentiality. In this event the informant would always be told.

As a Benefice we also have a duty to inform the Vicar, Diocese Safeguarding Adviser and Archdeacon – unless they are implicated in the abuse.

Parishioners are encouraged to report to their Benefice Safeguarding Representative, but may prefer to speak to the Vicar any other person in the Church that they feel comfortable talking to. The Benefice Safeguarding Representative will always be ready to take your call and offer a quiet space for you to report your concerns at a suitable place and time. In practice, anyone can listen to a child or vulnerable adult and then report to the Benefice Safeguarding Representative or Vicar.

 **If the problem is urgent and involves immediate danger then call 999.**

***The Benefice Safeguarding Representative for the South Tamar Mission Community is:***

* ***Julie Hibbert Tel: 01822 618221***

***Email: safeguarding@southtamar.church***

***Vicar of the South Tamar Mission Community is:***

* ***Rev. Andy Atkins Tel: 01822 870298; Email: vicar@southtamar.church***

***Address: The Vicarage, The Parade, Milton Abbot, PL19 0NZ***

**Contact details for parish safeguarding representatives and church wardens for the individual parishes can be found in Appendix 2, on the church website:** [**www.southtamar.church**](http://www.southtamar.church) **and in the Parish magazine.**

**3.2 What happens then?**

The person who receives the information must either complete an incident form (see appendix) or ask the Benefice Safeguarding Representative to do so.

Such documentation could be used in evidence in any criminal investigation, therefore it is important to be accurate and try to record what is said verbatim. The form records details of the abuse, including - where possible – the date(s)/time(s) of the event, what happened (in their own words) and person(s) affected/perpetrator.

A paper copy of the disclosure report will be held by the Vicar and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet. No electronic copies will be held by either the Vicar or the Benefice Safeguarding Representative.

The Benefice Safeguarding Representative has a duty to report the matter to the relevant statutory agency and also inform the Archdeacon and the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor in Exeter- who will investigate the incident and take action. It is important that the incident is followed-up and the Benefice Safeguarding Representative has a duty to do this.

**It is NOT the role of the Benefice Safeguarding Representative (or any other person the abuse is reported to) to investigate the matter themselves.**

 Confidentiality underpins this safeguarding policy and it is vital that the person reporting suspected abuse is confident that the information will only be shared with those who really need to know. Therefore it is incumbent upon the person receiving the report of suspected abuse that they maintain strict confidentiality. It is recognised that gossip has the potential to spread very quickly in small communities and this must be guarded against. Remember - allegations of abuse may prove to be unfounded.

**4. The aftermath - Pastoral care**

A suitable person, probably the Rector, should provide pastoral care to anyone in the Parish who has suffered abuse – either recently or in the past. Confidentiality must be strictly maintained, especially in small communities.

It is important that any reports of abuse do get acted upon swiftly and appropriately. It is the duty of the Benefice Safeguarding Representative, Vicar, Archdeacon and Diocese Safeguarding Adviser to ensure that matters are addressed – and there is provision on the report form to record this.

Ultimately the incident should be formally closed when matters have been resolved.

**5. Safeguarding in practice**

**5.1 Activities in the parishes**

The parishes as a whole undertake many activities involving children and vulnerable adults. There are six churches where activities may include bell ringing, school attendance and ‘messy church’ for children, two primary schools where parishioners help with reading etc, two residential care homes for the elderly, various community centres and village halls where indoor and outdoor events are frequent. In addition there are local pubs, garages shops and children’s play areas.

N.B. All children attending ‘Messy Church’ will be individually accompanied the entire time by a parent or other responsible adult, aged 18+.

**5.2 What should we do to ensure safety?**

In order to safeguard vulnerable people the parish recognises the need for vigilance, a method for reporting the incidences and a practical way of avoiding opportunities for abuse to occur.

* Vigilance requires all parishioners to be alert and to use their common sense if they encounter problems.
* Practicality - must include simple steps which are easy to follow.
* Parishioners must be both aware of how to report suspected abuse and be confident that they will be listened to - and that appropriate action will be taken.

 **Vigilance**

The Vicar and lay readers are particularly requested to be vigilant, especially when undertaking pastoral care and visiting elderly people in their homes. Ideally the parishioner should be given an opportunity to raise any concerns during such visits, which should then be reported to the Benefice Safeguarding Representative.

Well-run care homes should not be averse to allowing their guests privacy to express their fears. It is therefore our policy to keep close ties with the care homes within the parish to determine what measures are in place to prevent and report abuse – and to offer a listening ear if necessary.

The church members visiting the school have a good opportunity to observe the children and, knowing them well, are in a unique position to note any problems. The children may also trust them and wish to divulge information. It is our policy to be vigilant to such occasions and allow time and space for the child to speak. Schools will have their own safeguarding policy, so their safeguarding officer would be informed of any concerns too.

 **Don’t give the abuser an opportunity**

The best way to avoid opportunity for abuse is to ensure, where at all possible, that no child or vulnerable adult is alone on a one-to-one basis with an adult. The presence of others – be they more children or other adults – provides protection in the form of witnesses. This means that a group (3+) of children could be alone with an adult e.g. during school service practice sessions in the church. It is good practice to keep doors open and for any activity to be readily observed by others.

Church members undergoing pastoral visits may not be able to avoid being alone with elderly and vulnerable people. The DBS check is of particular relevance here, and great trust is placed in the clergy during those times.

**6. Advertising the policy**

It is important that the Safeguarding policy is known throughout the Benefice and it is the duty of the individual parishes to disseminate the policy to all parishioners whether or not they attend church. The methods for doing this could include notices in the churches, articles in the parish magazine, a special leaflet accessible to children and occasional mention at the beginning of services. There are also other avenues of dissemination not directly involving the church e.g. schools, local pubs and community centres.

**7. Training and DBS checks**

The Mission Community Safeguarding Representative has the responsibility to ensure that relevant people within the parishes have undergone the DBS check and to keep records to that effect. Relevant people will include: the Vicar, lay readers, church wardens, bell captains and the Mission Community safeguarding representatives. Other relevant people could include those who work specifically with children in the parish, or have responsibilities for older members of the congregation. The safeguarding reps will identify these people and arrange for a DBS check. DBS checks are renewable every 5 years. Application for a DBS check must now be made on-line. The diocese has ceased to be an umbrella body for the parishes and this task has been given to the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

N.B.Clergy undergo DBS checks upon renewal of their licence. It is therefore assumed that these checks are automatically in place for lay readers and the vicar.

The safeguarding representative will undertake training as required by the Diocese.

**8. Special circumstances**

There may be persons amongst the congregation who are known paedophiles or have committed other offences against vulnerable people. Anyone who is deemed to be a potential threat to others – for whatever reason – will require a sensitive intervention from the Benefice. Such intervention should include a risk assessment, involving the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and Vicar. Such persons must not be put into any role or office within the church which could afford them status and thereby encourage vulnerable people to trust them.

**9. Review of Safeguarding policy**

The Safeguarding policy will be reviewed every year, at the instigation of the PCC chairman and/or Mission Community Safeguarding Representative. Any lessons learned about the policy working in practice will be incorporated. Posters and information will be refreshed yearly.

**Date of Adoption**

The PCC of this Church agreed and adopted the above Policy at its meeting on ………….

The PCC shall review this policy annually. The next review will take place at the first PCC meeting following the APCM to be held on ……….…………………………………………….

**Signed**

Incumbent/Vicar/Rector/Priest in Charge .............................................................................

Churchwarden .......................................................................................................................

Churchwarden .......................................................................................................................

Date …………………………………

**APPENDIX 1 - SAFEGUARDING REPORT FORM**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date and time** | **Reported to:** | **Place:** |
| **Person reporting incident** |  |
| **Person(s) affected** |  |
| **Description of events**, including place, date, time, person(s) involved – in reportee’s own words. *(Attach, and sign, additional sheet if necessary)* |
| **Actions already taken by victim or person reporting incident (if any)** |  |
| **Signature Benefice Safeguarding Representative** | Signed: | Date: |
| **Agreement to further action by victim or their representative** | Signed: | Date: |
| **Further Action** |
| **Details of how report made to Vicar: who, date, method** |  |
| **Details of reporting to Diocese of Exeter: who, date, method** |  |
| **Date reported to appropriate authority + notes** |  |
| **Outcome/Follow-up/Pastoral care requirements** |
| **Incident closed**Signed Benefice Safeguarding Representative or Vicar | Signature +Date: |

**APPENDIX 2**

**CONTACT DETAILS FOR SAFEGUARDING IN SOUTH TAMAR MISSION COMMUNITY**

**Details for contacting all church wardens and safeguarding representatives can be found in the Parish Magazine and on the website: www.southtamar.church.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Person** | **Role** | **Contact details** |
| Rev Andy Atkins | Vicar | 01822 870298Email: vicar@southtamar.church |
| Julie Hibbert | Mission Community Safeguarding Representative (Lamerton) | 01822 618221Email: safeguarding@southtamar.church |
| Rosie Culverhouse | Church warden and safeguarding rep, Milton Abbot and Dunterton | 01822 870567Email: rosie@southtamar.church |
| Deborah Asbridge | Church warden and safeguarding rep, Marystowe | 01822 860378Email: deborah@southtamar.church |
| Josie Whitfield | Safeguarding rep for Coryton | See website for contact details via church wardens (Richard Searight, Sylvia Andrews) |

**APPENDIX 3**

**OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person/Body** | **Role** | **Address** | **Tel/Email** |
| Christine Hindle | Dioscesan Safeguarding AdviserExeter | The Old DeaneryThe CloistersExeter EX1 1HS | 01392 345909safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org[www.exeter.anglican.org/church-life/](http://www.exeter.anglican.org/church-life/) |
| Sarah Miller  | Assistant Safeguarding AdviserExeter Diocese | The Old DeaneryThe CloistersExeter EX1 1HS | 01392 345910safeguarding@exeter.anglican.org |
| Phill Parker | DBS co-ordinator | The Old DeaneryThe CloistersExeter EX1 1HS | 01392 294969 |
| Ven. Ian Chandler | Archdeacon for Plymouth | St Mark's Church, 1 Sanctuary Close, Plymouth PL2 1EN | 01752 202401 |
| Police | Emergency, + 101 number for expert, immediate advice |  | 101 (advice, non urgent) or 999 (emergency only) |
| CCPAS Church’s child protection advisory services | For advice on child protection – working hours |  | 0845 120 4550 |
| CCPASChurch + NSPCC  | Confidential helpline (out of hours) |  | 0800 389 5344 |
| NSPCC | Child protection helpline |  | 0808 800 5000Free and manned 24/7 |
| Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) | Investigating incidents and liaison between police, social workers, GPs etc | MASHPO Box 723ExeterEX1 9QS | 0345 155 1071mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk |
| Care Direct | Info, advice if vulnerable adult being adused |  | 0845 155 1007Csc.caredirect@devon.gov.uk |
| West Devon Borough Council | Useful website and information sheets | Kilworthy ParkTavistockPL19 0BZ | 01822 813600 |
| SPLITZ/Devon domestic abuse | Help and advice – domestic abuse |  | 0345 155 1074 |
| Rape Crisis Helpline | Rape advice and help |  | 0808 802 9999 |

**Appendix 4**



**[Insert Parish Name] Parish Safeguarding Policy Statement**

**Statement of Safeguarding Principles**

The [insert Parish Name] Parochial Church Council fully recognizes and accepts the House of Bishops’ Safeguarding Policy Statement “Promoting a Safer Church 2017”, and commits to complying with the current Church of England and Diocesan safeguarding policies and practice guidance. In so doing we will comply with the secular multi-agency safeguarding procedures relating to children and young people and adults experiencing or at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

**We are committed to:**

* Promoting a Safer environment and culture within our Parish and in our Parish activities by adhering to safe working practices and acknowledge the principle that safeguarding is everyone’s business.

In addition we will ensure that any individual organization renting/using our premises for activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults is aware of this, our Safeguarding Policy, and aware of their own individual responsibilities to have appropriate safeguarding policies and processes in place, including safer recruitment.

* Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibilities related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church in accordance with the House of Bishops’ Safer Recruitment: Practice Guidance 2016.

We will ensure those appointed are aware of the Diocesan and Parish Safeguarding Policies and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. We will support them by ensuring they receive Diocesan safeguarding training commensurate with their role and that they are fully aware of and have access to the practice guidance.

* Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation in accordance with the statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the House of Bishops’ safeguarding practice guidance.

We will ensure that any complaint made regarding a vulnerable person, who may have been harmed or is in significant danger, will be reported immediately and we will fully cooperate with statutory agencies during any investigation into allegations concerning a member of the church community or any other person.

* Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.

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 and provide them with details of local and national support agencies.

* Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.

We will work with others to ensure the appropriate support for them and those affected. Where that person is considered to pose a risk to others, we will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor to mitigate any identified risk.

* Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

We will endeavor to offer pastoral care and support whilst ensuring any risk has been assessed and is being managed in accordance with House of Bishops’ policy and guidance and in collaboration with the statutory agencies and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

**Safeguarding representative**

We will ensure that there is an identified person/s to be the Parish Safeguarding Representative/s who will be suitably recruited and trained, and is aware of their role and responsibilities, and who will be the point of contact for any concerns.

We have appointed [insert safeguarding rep(s) names here] as our Parish Safeguarding Representative/s.

**Guidance**

Copies of Diocesan and parish guidelines and procedures are held by/can be accessed at ………………………………………….

**Review**

This policy will be formally reviewed annually and a copy shared with the Archdeacon at the time of the Visitation.

**Date of Adoption**

The PCC of this Church agreed and adopted the above Policy at its meeting on ………….

The PCC shall review this policy annually. The next review will take place at the first PCC meeting following the APCM to be held on ……….…………………………………………….

**Signed**

Incumbent/Vicar/Rector/Priest in Charge .............................................................................

Churchwarden .......................................................................................................................

Churchwarden .......................................................................................................................

Date …………………………………