

Safeguarding Guidelines for Volunteers

Best Practices for Working in Christ Church Willaston Church
Community Hub (specific to Places of Welcome)

Introduction

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone involved in Christ Church, Willaston Community Hub. Volunteers play a vital role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all members, especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults. These guidelines are designed to help volunteers understand their duties and act in accordance with best practice.

The salient points have been highlighted but please read the whole document- thank you.

1. Understanding Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the measures taken to protect individuals from harm, abuse, or neglect. This includes physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse, as well as neglect and exploitation. Volunteers must be alert to the signs of abuse and know how to respond appropriately. Remember, if it doesn't look or feel right, report it (see *Points 3 and 4*)

2. Code of Conduct

- Treat **everyone** with respect, dignity, and fairness, regardless of age, gender, background, or ability.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries at all times. Avoid physical contact that could be misinterpreted.
- **Never** be alone with a child, young person, or vulnerable adult in a private or isolated setting.
- Use language that is respectful and free from discrimination or harassment.
- **Do not** share personal contact details or engage in private messaging with those you meet **in your capacity as a volunteer** unless authorised by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (who will seek advice from the Diocese Safeguarding team). This does not apply to people you know outside of church, in which case, this is a judgement call as long as both parties are agreeable e.g. friends, family members, neighbours etc.

3. Recognising Signs of Abuse

Volunteers should be vigilant for the following indicators:

- Unexplained injuries or changes in behaviour
- Withdrawal, anxiety, or sudden changes in mood
- Reluctance to go home or be with certain individuals
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge
- Neglect of personal hygiene or appearance

4. Responding to Concerns

1. Remain calm and listen carefully if someone discloses abuse or expresses concerns.
2. **Do not promise confidentiality**; explain that you have a duty to share concerns with the appropriate person.
3. Record what has been said, using the individual's own words, and note the time, date, and any witnesses.
4. Report your concerns immediately to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) at this email: aswillaston@outlook.com (or in person if the PSO is present) Details can also be found on both noticeboards inside church.
5. Do not investigate or confront the alleged abuser yourself.
6. If you feel there is an immediate danger to any individual, please phone 999.

5. Maintaining Confidentiality

Respect the privacy of all individuals. Information should only be shared with those who need to know for safeguarding purposes. All records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with data protection laws.

6. Support

- Familiarise yourself with the Christ Church safeguarding policy which can be found on the church website.
- Seek support from the PSO if you are unsure about any situation or need advice.

7. Safe Working Practices

- Always work in pairs or groups where possible, especially when supervising children or vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that activities are risk assessed and that consent is obtained where necessary.
- **Do not promote any self-interests, charities or try to evangelise.** The community hub is a space where people must be able to make their own decisions regarding faith. Church displays may spark an interest, in which case, you should signpost them to a member of the clergy.

8. Whistleblowing

If you believe that safeguarding procedures are not being followed, or you have concerns about the behaviour of another volunteer or staff member, you should report this to the PSO. You will be supported and protected for raising genuine concerns.

Conclusion

By following these safeguarding guidelines, volunteers help create a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for all members of the church community hub. **If in doubt, always seek advice and prioritise the wellbeing of those in your care.**