

St. John's Church Killingworth Code of Safer Working Practice

'The Church of England is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has'.

From 'Promoting a Safer Church', The Church of England's Safeguarding Policy Statement.
(The following guidelines are adapted from the Parish Safeguarding Handbook)

All those working or volunteering on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Commit to undertaking regular (every 3 years) safeguarding training.
- Immediately record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another volunteer to the Vicar or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Sign and date the record
- Ensure that their own language, tone of voice, and body language is respectful.
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to about a personal concern.
- Obtain written consent for any photographs & videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.
- Administer any First Aid with others around.
- When working with children or young people, always aim to work with or within sight of another adult.

Must not:

- Invade an individual's privacy whilst washing and toileting.
- Take children to the toilet. If children are too young to go to the toilets by themselves, they should only be taken by their own parent/carer.
- Use any form of physical punishment.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to an individual.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying.
- Allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults that may be vulnerable.
- Allow strangers to give children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the group, lifts.
- Befriend children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable on social media or arrange meetings with them outside organised group occasions.
- Take photographs on personal phones or cameras unless this is agreed by the vicar or the PSO
- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity).
- Smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people.

Acceptable Touch

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. This should almost always be initiated by the child or vulnerable adult and not by the volunteer. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- Always ask permission.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be age appropriate, welcome and generally **initiated by the child/vulnerable adult**, not the volunteer.
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).

In addition:

- You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

We must all take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. Everyone is encouraged to challenge one another if necessary.

Concerns about possible abuse or inappropriate behaviour should always be reported immediately to the PSO or the Vicar.

I agree to abide by the above Code of Safer Working Practice

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____