

# WORKING & VOLUNTEERING SAFELY WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



**Children and young people are uniquely created by God and are precious to him. They need protection and support in order to grow and thrive. They also need to be listened to, valued and treated fairly.**

Action should always be taken to ensure that they are kept safe, and this should be communicated with all those involved and their parents/carers.

In the Church of England there are clear policies and practice guidance to follow when setting up any new activity. To make it easier, this document sets out what you need to do and who can support you with this. It includes links which will signpost you to the relevant information.

Your setting may already have its own guidance, policy and/or procedures so please make sure you liaise with the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), vicar and other relevant leaders, who should be able to help you.

Elsewhere on The Church of England website, there is much useful information, including [templates and resources](#).

For general guidance on setting up youth or children's work in your church, see [this document](#) from the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

## SOMETHING MISSING?

We will keep track of the advice in this document and will update as appropriate. We are working with the Church of England National Safeguarding Team to check everything we suggest is appropriate and up to date.

If something vital is missing please let us know by emailing [the30kproject@churchofengland.org](mailto:the30kproject@churchofengland.org)





## WHERE TO BEGIN

### CHECKLIST BEFORE YOU START

If you do not have all three of the following in place then do talk to your vicar/PCC.  
New activities should not take place before this is organised.

- **Has your church got a safeguarding policy agreed by the PCC?**  
The *Promoting a Safer Church Policy statement* is available to download [here](#).  
Your Diocese Safeguarding Team may also have a parish template that you can use, if not the Church of England have one [here](#), entitled 'Model Parish Safeguarding Policy'.
- **Do you have a Parish Safeguarding Officer and are their details available to the congregation?**  
[This link](#) has downloadable posters you can display, under Parish Resources.
- **Is your church following the policy on Safer Recruitment and People Management?** (See further information in the Safer Recruitment section below.)



### SAFEGUARDING DASHBOARD

If your diocese subscribes to the [Safeguarding Dashboards](#) online tool, (which most do), are you using it to track your safeguarding compliance? If not, contact your diocesan safeguarding team to sign up for it. It keeps everything very straightforward.

**In the following section there are four areas to work through, to help you ensure that the groups and activities are run as safely as possible, in line with the Church of England policy and practice guidance.**

1. Safer recruitment
2. Safeguarding training
3. Safe practice
4. Communicating with children and young people



# 1. SAFER RECRUITMENT

There is a clear policy from the Church of England about [Safer Recruitment and People Management](#). There is also [E-learning](#) from the Church of England which should be completed by those who are recruiting staff/ volunteers.

Once someone has agreed to help as a volunteer, there are a number of checks to be done before they can start volunteering. This takes time and patience, but becomes easier with practice. For full information, [this part](#) of the Safer recruitment and People management policy looks at the pre-appointment checks.



**Here are some useful templates that will take you through the process:**

- Volunteer Application form [here](#).
- Reference request form [here](#).
- Confidential declaration form, and accompanying privacy notice [here](#), under the heading 'How should applicants make a confidential declaration?'
- Interview advice and sample questions [here](#).

**Once you have done these, each volunteer will need:**

- a letter of appointment (example [here](#))
- a volunteer agreement (example [here](#))
- written information about safeguarding, expected behaviour (example [here](#)) and church procedures.

Make sure each volunteer has read, understood and agreed to adhere to all the policies and procedures that apply to the groups they are part of.

Click on each of the following to see model policies for:

- [Safeguarding](#)
- [Anti-bullying](#)
- [Drug and alcohol abuse](#)
- Data protection. (See the GDPR section below for more information and also [here](#).)

Any worker or volunteer age 16 or over who is in an eligible role must be DBS checked.



## 2. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

### WHO NEEDS TO COMPLETE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING?

- Anyone who is a church officer should complete basic awareness training. A church officer is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid).
- Anyone working with children and young people should also complete the foundation training.
- Additionally, there are specialist modules covering Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment.

### WHERE CAN THE TRAINING BE ACCESSED?

- The training can be accessed as e-learning via the Church of England [training portal](#).
- **Your PSO, and Diocesan Safeguarding Team can advise on training requirements for each role and how to sign up for them.**
- You may also be able to access the training in person locally (again, ask your PSO).
- The Church of England Learning and Development Framework can be accessed [here](#).

- There will be local expectations and these should be checked with your PSO.
- Please also find out what your diocese requires for young leaders between 16-18 years old.



### 3. SAFE PRACTICE

It is essential that we work in ways which do not put ourselves or others at risk. For full information, please follow the [Safer Environment and Activities](#) policy and work closely with your PSO.

#### Social media

If you are using social media you should follow the guidance in [Safer Environment and Activities](#). You should have local practices and protocols which are in line with this. See especially page 28.



#### Registration

- You must have a registration form, signed by parents/carers, for each child or young person you work with. See a sample [here](#).
- They should be renewed at the start of each academic year, or if there is a significant change.
- You must have a register for every event with names of every adult and child present. See a sample [here](#).
- The registers must be kept on file and stored safely in case of query at a later date, your Diocesan safeguarding team can advise on how long the information must be kept.
- Every person must be signed in and out, even if they leave early.



Some churches use functions within [ChurchSuite](#) or other apps to register the attendance of their children and young people. There are other apps in development, including [Church Organiser](#), which is free for Church of England churches.

#### What to include:

- Contact details and consent to contact parents about the running of the sessions.
- Medical information.
- Emergency contact details.
- Who can they be collected by/ can they go home alone?
- Photos/ filming consent, this should be obtained from the child (if age/stage appropriate), not just the parents/ carers.

#### Access and Storage

They should be stored securely and kept confidential. Any essential information you need for any children needs to be accessible to the leader during the activity. An example of this would be medical information about a child with an allergy.





### 3. SAFE PRACTICE (CONTINUED)

#### GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

All churches need to comply with current rules around data protection for people of all ages, including children. The checking and setting up of GDPR systems is time-consuming, but keeping them up-to-date less so. **Please note especially that safeguarding concerns for a child or young person allows for the confidential sharing of data as a matter of priority.** See the short video [here](#) for reassurance (you will need to scroll down the website page).



- Do you have a GDPR policy?
- Do you have a privacy notice?
- Do you have a GDPR audit?
- Do you have procedures to enable people to view the data you hold?
- Do you have procedures to follow if there is a breach of GDPR?

The [Parish Resources](#) website has a lot of useful information and templates to help you navigate GDPR.

#### Health and Safety

Your PCC should have agreed a Health and Safety policy, so please ask to have a copy of it and take note of its provisions and requirements. For comprehensive guidance on policy see the website of [Ecclesiastical Insurance](#).

**First Aid Training:** At least one leader at each session should have a current recognised First Aid qualification and this should be communicated. Everyone should know how to respond in an emergency. If any child has complicated medical needs that might need emergency treatment, or arrives with medicines that might need to be taken during the course of the session (e.g. inhalers, epi-pens) this will need to be considered as part of your risk assessment. Their parent/carer will need to fill out a form. Example [here](#).

**First Aid resources:** [This link](#) from the Diocese of Peterborough shows an example of the contents of a first aid kit. This should be checked at least annually and any out-of-date items replaced. It is a requirement that an accident book is kept on all premises. An accident report template can be downloaded [here](#).

**Food hygiene:** If you are cooking for any groups, you will need to follow good food hygiene practices. Check out your local authority or online for training courses.

**Fire and emergencies:** Ensure the team knows that everyone is responsible for fire safety. Make sure that everyone knows what to do in the case of a fire and that this is part of the risk assessment for the activity.



### 3. SAFE PRACTICE (CONTINUED)

#### Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are a positive tool that help you to think through, agree and communicate the best ways to run the activity safely.

- They need to be done for every activity you run. If you do something different with the group such as going off site or on a holiday you will need to complete an additional risk assessment.
- It is important that they are updated and re-signed annually, or if there is any significant change.
- They should be active documents, which are shared with the leaders and helpers, so that everyone knows what is in place and why.
- See how to do a risk assessment with this advice from the Diocese of Peterborough [here](#), with a basic example [here](#), and a log for each leader to sign to say they have read and understood it [here](#).



## 4. COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTS AND CARERS



It is important that you think through how you will communicate with children, young people and parents/carers and that this is done safely and with consent.

### BEING CLEAR

Children and parents/ carers need to know who the leaders and helpers are. They can be identified by a T-shirt or sticky label/lanyard that includes: Name, Role on team, Church. Sample lanyard to print [here](#).

The children and young people need to know who they can speak with if they have concerns or worries. They also need to understand what the rules are for the group and how they are kept safe in the group.



Parents and carers should be provided with key safeguarding information including where to find your policy and who the Parish Safeguarding Officer is.

### Here are some resources to help with this:

- Leaflets to give to parents, and to children [here](#) and [here](#).
- Lesson plans: '[Promoting a Safer Church Lesson Plans](#)'
- [Film](#) about safeguarding to share with children and young people
- NSPCC Teach the [Pantosaurus Song](#), from the NSPCC. Link [here](#).
- Childline poster [here](#).
- [Thirty:one Eight Raise your roar](#) Christian resources to talk with children about safeguarding.
- 5 fingers represents 5 safe people that the children can talk to if something needs to be shared. Example [here](#).

## AND FINALLY...

1. Do adapt the templates we have provided to reflect your local context.
2. We are very grateful to the dioceses and organisations who have allowed us to link to their material.
3. This live document was correct when produced on 22.04.24.
4. If you have any queries or additions please contact [the30kproject@churchofengland.org](mailto:the30kproject@churchofengland.org)

