

Safeguarding Annual Report 2023

As you will be aware Safeguarding is a major priority for the Church of England, for our church, and church activities, to embody Christ's welcome for all. We must ensure all are as safe as possible, for children and vulnerable adults, indeed any person who needs our help and support.

I have to report that there were four safeguarding concerns during the year. All were resolved "in house" without the need to consult the Diocese or to seek outside help.

During the year twenty-six people completed or renewed their DBS checks. Additionally, almost the whole of the PCC completed Safeguarding training to the required levels.

As from January 1st 2024 the duration of a safeguarding qualification is 3 years, (it was originally 5). Whilst most members are protected until 2025, there are a small number who will renew in 2024. These people will be contacted directly. At this time Basic Awareness and Foundation courses can be completed online whilst Leadership training is on a face-to-face basis. There will be no Leadership training until at least March/April of 2024. A new module is being created and will be ready at this time.

A new safety proforma was created mid-year to enable children to attend Sunday school without an accompanying parent or guardian. The policy is that a parent or guardian will bring the child to church and place them in the care of a responsible adult Sunday School Teacher/Helper. The child should not be allowed to depart from the church unless placed into the care of the person who brought them or a person known to the Sunday School staff. In the event of the failure of a parent/guardian to collect the child, the child should not be left in the care of a only one person.

Notices regarding Safeguarding information and contacts have been placed in all toilets and elsewhere within the Church and Church Hall. If you have a safeguarding concern, or know of someone who is struggling then please contact either Rev. Alan or the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Please do not try to resolve the concern yourself. Pass the information to the relevant person(s) who will deal with matter with complete confidentiality.

Our Church is supportive and caring, and may we all continue to care for each other. A kind caring word can mean a great deal to someone who is living alone or needs a supportive shoulder to lean on.

Can I thank you for your support during the last year. It is much appreciated and I am grateful for all that you do as a Church "behind the scenes". As the Safeguarding Officer I am here to help at any time. You can speak to me in the knowledge that whatever is said will be treated in the strictest confidence.

R. Batchelor (Parish Safeguarding Officer, Rushmere St Andrews). December 2023.