

## **St Matthew's Child Protection Guidelines 2008**

These guidelines are extracts from the Diocesan child protection guidelines, 'Safe & Sound' which can be found in full at <http://bristol.anglican.org>

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## Theological Basis for Good Practice in Child Protection

*Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*  
(Deuteronomy 6.4-9)

The writer of Deuteronomy is clear about the need for God's law to be known by everyone. The law is to be in their minds at all times. Children are specifically mentioned (rare in itself) and they are to be included in this –what one might almost call—absorption with the commandments of God. Jesus too refers to this in His summary of the Law.

Many today find difficulty with this concentration on the law of God, and with good reason. Law, from God or our legislature, functions differently in a democratic and literate society from the way it worked in ancient cultures. Then, little was written down, few could read, and a declaration of God's commandments was big news!

But there is another difference in how the law is regarded today to which we wish to draw attention here as we begin to consider the law, and our own diocesan guidelines, in the area of Child Protection.

Law may be experienced as prescriptive, diminishing of personal freedom, and even intrusive. Or it may be seen as freeing to life-enhancing choices because it protects. Think of it like this. On an island edged entirely with cliffs, the owner has built a high fence around the perimeter. There are fine views of the sea and the surrounding islands and plenty of room to play. The one thing rendered impossible by the fence is looking over the cliff-edge. The owner has known people try this in the past, and fall to their deaths. So, although the fence may appear as a patronising piece of enclosure, it is actually a freeing piece of protection. Anything and everything on the island may be richly enjoyed, but the commandment forbids (and indeed does all it can to render impossible) the dangerous and fatal approach to the cliff.

This is not a perfect picture of child protection legislation, let alone of God's law, but it reminds us of the fundamental character of this type of legislation. We say it again: it helps us to PROTECT our children, and ourselves as adults, from those who would harm them or us. It is a fence to protect us from the cliffs and the deadly rocks below them.

**If we see God's law in this way, perhaps we may see child protection legislation and our diocesan guidelines in the same way. We do have a responsibility to prepare our parish/partnership, we must create our own policy based on these diocesan guidelines, and we must put it into operation. Good child protection does not happen when we produce the words on paper which say they must be protected; it happens when and where children are protected.**

# THE PARISH OF ST. MATTHEW & ST. NATHANAEL

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Children and young people are part of the learning, worshipping, caring and changing community of St. Matthew's.

*In practice this means that they should be given opportunities within a secure and safe environment to:*

- ◆ hear God's dealings with his people in the past from the Bible
- ◆ see God at work in the church and in the world now
- ◆ have the benefit of being both members of a peer group and members of the whole church.

To ensure that children and young people will be cared for in a safe and secure environment, our work with them will be carried out according to the following principles:

1. All leaders will be appointed by the PCC in accordance with the procedures contained in the Bristol Diocesan Guidelines 'Safe and Sound'. This will include application to the Criminal Records Bureau and by standard form to the Administrator for Child Protection; following up of references; ratification by the PCC and confirmation of that appointment by letter from the PCC to the applicant. Prospective leaders may join a group as an observer for 2 visits before submitting an application form; their work with a group will begin when references have been received.
2. Appointments will be for a 12-month period, to be reviewed and confirmed annually by the Clergy, Nominated Person and Administrator for Child Protection. A first review for new applicants will be made after 6 months; this process will be 'triggered' by the Administrator for Child Protection.
3. Where parents / carers leave their children in the care of leaders (with the exception of playgroup who operate under Ofsted) there must be at least 2 leaders present. Ideally in a mixed group there must be both male and female adults present with the group. Where possible, subgroups within the hall will have 2 leaders present. All groups will run in accordance with the principles of the Safe and Sound Guidelines to Good Practice. (The recommended ratio of children to adults is in line with Ofsted as laid out on the back of this policy.)
4. A Nominated Person and Administrator for Child Protection will be appointed by the PCC to undertake mutually agreed duties of oversight, as outlined in 'Safe and Sound'. The young people will be made regularly aware of the nominated person.
5. All activities will be adequately insured, in respect of both young people and leaders e.g. through the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group's Church Insurance Policy and/or through its Diocesan Youth Group Insurance Scheme.
6. The 'Safe and Sound' Guidelines will be available for inspection to all groups using church premises.
7. Access to confidential information will be restricted to the Clergy, Nominated Person/Administrator for Child Protection, the Bishop and his representatives. Such information will be stored securely.
8. Responses to disclosures, suspicions or allegations of child abuse will be in accordance with 'Safe and Sound' Section D. All leaders will be informed of the correct procedure. The PCC takes seriously its duty of care to all staff and volunteers.
9. Provision for the safe upkeep of premises and the training of leaders and helpers towards the general furtherance of this policy will be made by the PCC.
10. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually in November by the PCC.

## GOOD PRACTICE

It is the responsibility of the Incumbent and Parochial Church Council and the duty of every individual within the church, to provide safe care and nurture for our children and young people.

On occasions, incidents happen but if you have put in place appropriate supervision and looked carefully at procedures, buildings and equipment, you will be providing the safest possible for your activities. Make sure that you consider the following:

- Training
- Appropriate Behaviour
- Ratios and Registration
- Information, Medical and Consent Form(s)
- Accommodation
- Insurance
- Transport

*(for further details on each of the above see 'Safe and Sound' pages 28 – 38)*

### **Photographs**

Careful consideration should be given to why photographs are taken of children and what their subsequent use might be. Permission should be sought from parents before any photographs of their children are taken.

It is our recommendation that any photographs posted in a public place (e.g. Notice Boards, church magazine, website etc.) should aim to obscure the identity of any individual child.

### **Unaccompanied children**

Sometimes children may attend worship or children's groups apparently without the knowledge of their parents. No hard and fast guidelines can be given and the age of the child/young person should be taken into consideration. The following points may assist:

- establish whether the child attends with his/her parents/carers' knowledge, or at least without his/her parents/carers' objections. (The child may be of a different denomination or religion)
- establish their address and contact details. Include these on the register. Provide information about the group to the child to take to his/her parent/carer
- seek to secure parental consent to the child's involvement, preferably by direct contact with the parent/carer rather than by using the child as an intermediary
- bear in mind that the child may have some school, home or personal difficulties, which s/he may not be willing to disclose, and which need sensitive handling
- remember that, for an unaccompanied child or young person, Church may be a rare 'safe place'
- if the child/young person does not attend after having attended frequently, it may be appropriate to undertake some careful pastoral follow-up

### **Off-site visits and activities**

Any off-site activity needs prior PCC approval (for insurance purposes). Refer to 'Safe & Sound' (pp 37, 77-90) for helpful guidelines on organising the event, risk assessment, emergency procedures, parental consent forms etc.

# APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

## Code of Behaviour

### All clergy, paid employees and volunteers should;

- treat all children and young people with the respect and dignity befitting their age
- watch their own language, tone of voice and body language
- learn to control and discipline children and young people without physical punishment which is illegal for children's workers
- ensure that another adult is informed if a worker needs to take a child to the toilet/ toilet breaks should be organised for young children
- if known in advance, seek a parent's permission if a child or young person is to be seen on his or her own; another adult should be nearby and the child or young person must know this
- try to ensure that a mixed group has male and female helpers
- ensure that children and young people know that they can speak to an independent person (the Nominated Person) in the parish
- ensure that they know who the Nominated Person is

### Clergy, paid employees and volunteers should not;

- invade a child's privacy whilst toileting or washing
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- be sexually suggestive about or to a child or young person even in fun
- touch a child or young person inappropriately
- scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child or young person
- show favouritism to any one child, young person or group
- allow a child or young person to involve the worker in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature
- give lifts to children or young people on their own. If this is unavoidable ask the child or young person to sit in the back of the vehicle and record this on an exceptional circumstances form (see appendix for sample form D page 88 Safe and Sound)
- share a bed/bedroom with a child, children, a young person or young people
- place themselves in a situation where they are alone with a child, children, a young person or young people
- permit abusive peer activities, e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying
- allow unknown adults access to children or young people; visitors should always be accompanied by a known person
- allow strangers to give children or young people lifts

### Touch

One of the aims of the following guidelines is to help church groups provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour. It may be appropriate to comfort a child or young person who has either hurt him/herself or is distressed but adults should be encouraged to take their cue from the child/young person. Try to make sure other adults are around. Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature. It is unlikely that any type of physical contact in the course of work with children and young people could be misconstrued as abuse.

- all volunteers must work with, or within sight of, another adult

- if **any** activity requires physical contact make sure that the child, young person and their parents are aware of this and its nature.
- there must be no physical punishment of any kind
- avoid physically rough games
- avoid unnecessary touch
- avoid taking young children to the toilet, but when unavoidable make sure another adult is informed or organise a toilet break for the whole group
- first aid should be administered by someone suitably qualified and with others present
- very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming him/herself or others. If possible, try to make sure there is another adult present. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible
- all incidents should be recorded and the information given to the Nominated Person
- all physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child/young person's needs and not the needs of the adult
- colleagues must be prepared to support each other
- other adults should be prepared to speak out and take necessary action if any adult is behaving inappropriately and make sure the Nominated Person is aware of the situation

## Ratios: Children and Adults

Specific ratios are recommended for the number of children to adults and it is necessary to be aware and plan for these levels. **There should always be two adults with any group of children, however small the group.** This also means that there should be at least two adults in any vehicle which is being used on behalf of the Church to carry children/young people.

Specific activities, for example, swimming, may require different ratios.

### In line with Ofsted we recommend

Age of children	Maximum group size with TWO ADULTS	ADDITIONAL adults required
Aged 0-2 years	4	For additional children up to a maximum of 2 – one additional adult
Aged 2-3 years	8	For additional children up to a maximum of 4 – one additional adult
Aged 3-8 years	16	For additional children up to a maximum of 8 – one additional adult
Over the age of 8 years	20	For additional children up to a maximum of 12 – one additional adult

**Twenty** children with only two adults might pose a risk, even **fifteen** could be a problem. You may also need a higher ratio of adults to children if there are no other activities going on in the building at the same time.

We suggest that a ‘reserve’ group of people should be created; these may be called upon to assist when any of the above ratios is exceeded. As all children’s activities within your church are PCC approved you may like to ask your churchwarden for assistance in this area.

**Don’t forget there should be a minimum of two adults however small the number.**

In a crèche the specific ages of children and any special needs or circumstances should be assessed at the beginning of each session. Necessary action should be taken if it is felt that the adults present would be unable to deal with the children if an emergency arises.

*It is important to remember that you can only carry two babies at a time should you need to leave the premises in the event of an emergency!*

## Registration

Basic information on each child/young person in a group should be available. A register of attendance should be kept for each session with a record of adult leaders and children/young people present.

## Child Abuse

People working as volunteers or paid staff with children and young people need to be very aware of the possibility that children can be abused. It is the duty of every Christian to be vigilant about the care of children in the congregation and other church related activities.

### Definitions of Abuse –

**Physical Abuse** – may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

**Emotional Abuse** – is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate. It may involve placing inappropriate expectations on a child or causing a child to be fearful.

**Sexual Abuse** – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

**Neglect** – is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

**Organised Abuse** – abuse involving one or more abusers.

**Spiritual Abuse** – can be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God.

*(for further detail on these definitions see 'Safe and Sound' pages 40 and 41)*

### Indications of possible abuse

**As a volunteer or paid worker with children and young people you are not responsible for diagnosing abuse.**

However, those who work with children have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all may not be well with a child.

Information or concerns may come from a variety of sources such as:

- a child or young person claiming to have been abused
- a fellow worker may have concerns
- another child may talk about concerns
- a family member may share concerns
- physical or emotional signs may raise concerns

Most professionals working in Child Protection would emphasise that, of the various signs of abuse, what the child says is by far the most significant.

### Some Signs of Abuse

See 'Safe & Sound' <http://www.bristol.anglican.org>

**If you suspect a child or young person is at risk of abuse, DO NOT DELAY. Speak to the Nominated Person, Diocesan Child Protection Officer, or Social Services. Telephone numbers are on p9 of these guidelines**

## Group Sessions on Site – Safety Check List

It is all too easy to think that accidents do not happen but the sad reality is that they do. Careful attention to safety procedures, safety of buildings and equipment and constant vigilance is best practice. Here is a suggested checklist for on-site activities.

	YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the child/adult ratio for each group correct, bearing in mind the different age groups?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have anyone who can be called upon to be an additional adult if the ratio is not correct?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the register completed at each session of the group and does it include the names of the leaders and helpers at each session?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have emergency contact and medical information for all children should there be an emergency during the session? See Form A</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the places where children/young people meet safe and secure from unwelcome people?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you be sure that no child can wander out of the building?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is suitable access and provision made for disabled people?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the meeting area is in a different part of the church away from where the congregation is meeting is there a means of contact with someone within the church should an emergency arise?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a first-aider available and does everyone know who it is?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is a first aid kit available?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an accident book – do leaders know where it is and are accidents properly recorded?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can any other unusual incidents be recorded?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do fire drills take place?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are notices displayed informing people what to do in case of fire?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are fire appliances suitable and serviced regularly?</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the local Fire Prevention Officer visited the premises?</li> </ul>		

## Safe & Sound at St Matthew's 2007 – Information

### How the Nominated Person can help

- Available for any child or adult to talk to about Child Protection matters
- Name/photo and telephone number on church notice board
- Can lend Diocesan guidelines 'Safe & Sound' to anyone who needs to see it. (These guidelines can also to be found on the Diocesan website <http://www.bristol.anglican.org/> )
- In contact with Diocesan Child Protection Officer
- Can advise on Criminal Record Bureau checks and can arrange visit by Diocesan CRB application checker

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### Useful telephone numbers:

<b>CP Nominated Person – Pauline Roberts (via Church Office)</b>	<b>0117 9441598</b>
<b>CP Administrator – Isabel Geissinger (via Church Office)</b>	
<b>Diocesan CP Officer – Carolyn Buckeridge</b>	<b>0844 8920104</b>
<b>Social Services:</b>	
<b>Bristol Child Care Teams</b>	<b>1. East 0117 9548453</b>
	<b>2. South 0117 3532160</b>
	<b>3. North 0117 9038766</b>
	<b>4. Central 0117 9036774</b>
<b>Emergency (out of office hours)</b>	<b>01454 615165</b>
<b>Police – Avon &amp; Somerset Constabulary</b>	<b>0845 4567000</b>
<b>Childline</b>	<b>02076503200</b>
<b>Childline – helpline for children</b>	<b>0800 1111</b>

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