



**Church of the Resurrection, Grovehill  
Parish of Grovehill and Woodhall Farm**  
*A partner with the Hemel Hempstead Team Benefice*

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

**Section 1**

**Details of the place of worship / organisation**

**Name of Place of Worship / Organisation:** Church of the Resurrection, Grovehill, Parish of Grovehill and Woodhall Farm.

**Address:**

Grovehill Church of Resurrection  
Parish of Grovehill & Woodhall Farm  
Henry Wells Square  
Hemel Hempstead  
Herts HP2 6BJ

**Tel No:** 01442 270585

**General Email address:** [revaustin@sky.com](mailto:revaustin@sky.com)

**Senior Leader Name:** Rev. Austin Janes

**Senior Leader Contact Telephone / Email:** [revaustin@sky.com](mailto:revaustin@sky.com) 01442 270 585

**Parish Safeguarding Officer Name:** Alan Cowell

**Parish Safeguarding Officer Contact Telephone** 07964209783 **Email:** [cor.safe@outlook.com](mailto:cor.safe@outlook.com)

**Congregation Contact:** PCC/Church Wardens:

Sally Anderson: [sallyanderson26@hotmail.com](mailto:sallyanderson26@hotmail.com)

Kenny Lana: [klegg1999@googlemail.com](mailto:klegg1999@googlemail.com)

**DBS Officer** – Emma De-Allie (also Congregation Contact)

**Membership of Denomination/Organisation:** Church of England

**Denomination / Organisation Safeguarding Officer:** Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – Mr Jeremy Hirst

**Contact Details for Denomination / Organisation Safeguarding Officer:**

Tel: 01727 818107

Mobile: 07867 350886

Email: [childprotection@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:childprotection@stalbans.anglican.org)

Charity Number: N/A

Company Number: N/A

Regulators: N/A

Insurance Company: Ecclesiastical insurance



The following is a brief description of our place of worship / organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

We are a community church with facilities appropriate for all ages and abilities. We aim to be inclusive in all of our worship and social activities. These activities include weekly worship with Junior Church (Sunday school activities), monthly Causeway Church for adults with additional needs, film nights, bible studies, messy church and other church activities. Some members of the congregation visit those who are unable to attend church through poor health.

### **Our commitment**

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.



## Section 2

### Prevention

#### Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

*1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*

*2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

#### Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate



- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

### **Safeguarding training**

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

### **Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.



## **Section 3**

### **Practice Guidelines**

As an organisation / place of worship working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached or in the appendices – “GOOD PRACTICE OF WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND ADULTS”.

### **Working in Partnership**

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets thirtyone:eight’s safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

## **Section 4**



## Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

- Documenting a concern

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

**Name: Alan Cowell**

**Tel:** 07964209783

**Email:** cor.safe@outlook.com

The above is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to:

**Name:** (hereafter the "Deputy") The Church Wardens:

Sally Anderson: [sallyanderson26@hotmail.com](mailto:sallyanderson26@hotmail.com)

Kenny Lana: [klegg1999@googlemail.com](mailto:klegg1999@googlemail.com)

Emma De-Allie

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

**thirtyone:eight** PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.



**Name of local authority:**

Children Schools & Families team  
During & outside office hours:  
Police Contact  
Hertfordshire Police: 0845 3300 222

**Children's Social Services**

**Tel (including out of hours):** 0300 123 4040

**Website Address:** <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/About-the-council/Contact-us/Contact-a-service.aspx>

**Adult Social Services**

**Tel:** 0300 123 4042

**Website Address:** <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/contact-us/contact-adult-social-services.aspx>

**Police Protection Team Tel:** 101

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
  - Chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
  - Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.



- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

### **Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:**

#### **Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.





## **Allegations of sexual abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

## **Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:**

**Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.**

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

## **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.



## **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs**

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.

## **Allegations of abuse against the Safeguarding Officer or Rev. Austin Janes**

In the event that an accusation is made against Rev. Austin Janes, the Safeguarding Officer (Alan Cowell) should still be notified immediately. In the event that an accusation is made against the Safeguarding Officer, then the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Jeremy Hirst, should be notified (contact details at the end of this policy).



## **Section 5**

### **Pastoral Care**

#### **Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

#### **Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk**

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

### **Adoption of the policy**

This policy was agreed by the leadership and will be reviewed annually on:

Signed by:

Position:

Signed by:

Position

Date:

A copy of this policy is also lodged with:



## **ANNEX A**

### **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

#### **The conduct of activities with children and young people**

1. In the conduct of activities and work with children and young people all those involved must be alert to the need to minimise the opportunity for abuse and must take all reasonable steps to keep the children entrusted to their care safe from harm.
2. It will be for each organisation or group to establish its own detailed procedures, but the following general guidelines should be observed:
  - a. Any meeting or group involving children should have at least two responsible adults to ensure that the children are never left unattended;
  - b. Except in an emergency or where the child would otherwise be placed at risk, no child (of whatever age) should ever be left alone with an adult on any church or similar premises unless both adult and child can be observed readily by other adults nearby;
  - c. Every effort should be made to ensure that away from church premises (e.g. when lifts are given) no child is left alone in the company of one adult without the knowledge and consent of the child's parent or guardian; when travelling by car children must be seated in the rear seats;
  - d. Children should not be expected to walk unescorted along dark alleyways or paths, or elsewhere where they may be at risk;
  - e. The Children's Services Department of the local authority must be informed (by the leader in charge) of any event involving children under the age of 8 years which is expected to last more than two hours or of any holiday club run over six or more days; details must be given of the location, date, time and numbers and ages of children involved;
  - f. There should always be sufficient adults present to ensure that the children are properly supervised and safe; an approximate ratio of one adult for every eight children may be taken as a reasonable working guide, but the appropriate figure in a given case will depend upon the age of the children and the nature of the activity.
  - g. The Safeguarding Officer will agree with each group how his/her role as an independent person with whom children may raise any concerns should best be communicated.
3. The above guidance is designed primarily for the safety and protection of children, but if followed should also assist in reducing the risk of unfounded allegations against staff and volunteers.



# Vulnerable Adults

## Best Practice Guidelines

*We hope these Guidelines are helpful with the work you have offered to do.*

*A vulnerable adult is a person aged over 18 who:*

- Is or may be in need of community services by reason of mental, physical, or learning disability, age or illness and who:*
- Is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation which may be occasioned by the actions or inactions of other people.*

## Do

- Treat all vulnerable people with respect
- Respect a person's right to personal privacy
- Always seek consent if he or she is disabled and needs help to go to the toilet
- Minimise unobserved one to one time and always let other team members know where you are'

Remember that it is okay to touch people in a way which is not intrusive or disturbing to him or her, or to others.

- Keep this public and never behind a closed door
- Leave doors open where possible for observation
- Encourage vulnerable adults to feel comfortable and confident enough to point out attitudes and behaviours they are concerned about
- Vulnerable adults should not be driven without consent and where appropriate should be seated in the back seat of the car
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned



- Recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- Beware of position of fire exits, fire extinguishers & first aid equipment
- Make sure that any work or activities with vulnerable adults involves more than one adult, or at least takes place within the sight/hearing of others
- Ensure separate sleeping quarters, if activities involve overnight stays
- Make sure that allegations or suspicions are recorded and acted upon immediately.
- Keep records for transparency of all financial matters including shopping for groceries and goods or collecting money

## **Do Not**

- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay
- Touch in an intrusive or sexual manner
- Gossip about personal details of vulnerable adults and their families
- Make/accept loans or gifts of money from vulnerable adults
- Make sexually suggestive comments, even as a joke
- Use physical discipline
- Help with things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes etc.
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Permit abusive peer activities (e.g. initiation, ridiculing, bullying)
- Rely on your good name to protect you, or believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Spend too much time alone with just one person



## What you should do...

### ...if you suspect a vulnerable adult is being abused:

#### 1. Record the facts as known to you -

Including when and where conversations took place as well as what was said and being careful to distinguish facts from allegations and opinions.

#### 2. Speak to the Parish Safeguarding Officer the Vicar or the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

3. It may be in certain exceptional circumstances that the police need to be contacted immediately.

4. Always consider whether immediate medical attention is required.

### ...if a vulnerable person tells you something which suggests they have been abused:

1. **Listen** rather than asking direct questions or pressing for details (Stick to “when / where / what / who?” questions. Do not impose your opinion e.g. “that must have been terrible...”)
2. **Do not stop the person** while they are freely recalling significant events
3. **Reassure** (who may have been threatened, told to keep what is happening secret, or told that no one will believe them) that they have done the right thing in telling someone, and that they are not to blame
4. **Let them know that there are other people who need to be told** so that they can help them
5. **Record the facts and tell someone** (as listed above in ‘if you suspect a vulnerable adult is being abused’)
6. **Do not delay or decide to give the benefit of the doubt** to parents or others
7. **Detailed enquiries must be left to the investigating agencies**



**...if an allegation is made against you:**

**Inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Vicar and in every case the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor **MUST** be informed as soon as possible.**

**Contact Numbers:**

**Parish Safeguarding Officer:**

Alan Cowell

07964209783

cor.safe@outlook.com

**Congregation Contact:**

PCC/Church Wardens:

Sally Anderson: [sallyanderson26@hotmail.com](mailto:sallyanderson26@hotmail.com)

Kenny Lana: [klegg1999@googlemail.com](mailto:klegg1999@googlemail.com)

Emma De-Allie

**Vicar:**

Revd Austin Janes

01442 270585

[revaustin@sky.com](mailto:revaustin@sky.com)

**Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser:**

Jeremy Hirst

01727 818107 / 07867 350886

[safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org)





# Using Social Media to Engage and Communicate with Young People in the Church

Social media has become a key aspect of communicating, not just with young people but to the church community as a whole. There are some specific points that we suggest you consider when you are thinking about how you engage with young people in our church.

Great care must be taken if you plan to use social media to communicate with young people both inside and outside the church. This is because it is very hard to regulate the information that is shared, and to monitor the interactions between adults and young people through this medium.

We recognise that some youth leaders are confident in the use of social media and alert to the risk associated with its use. However, we feel it may be beneficial to set out some checks and balances that youth leaders can put in place. This does not replace a need for you to conduct a risk assessment for your specific church group as with other activities with young people.

## Set up and procedural guidelines

1. As youth leaders if you do not feel confident in using social media then do not use it to communicate with young people.
2. Remember that children under the age of 13\* are not allowed social media accounts and there may be other children in the church whose parents do not let them have access to it. On this basis it is important to have a variety of methods of communicating with young people.
3. Parents still need to know what activities their children are involved with and parental consent should always be sought before taking children and young people to off-site activities (this is in addition to the consent forms in place for the everyday church activities). You cannot rely on young people to communicate what is happening to their parents. This remains the responsibility of the youth leader.
4. When using social media consider using a platform (i.e. Zoom or Facebook) that allows for secure, group communication and where people can only join with the consent of the administrator\*.
5. When using social media consider setting up a separate account from any personal social media accounts and ensuring that there are limitations on its use. Make it clear that this is your youth leader/worker account, and the only one they are to access. If any young people try to add or contact you through your personal accounts, deny the requests.
6. Consent should be sought from parents for direct communication with young people to take place, whether this is via social media or using text message, WhatsApp or email.
7. Where there is a paid youth worker, they should be the first point of contact for young people and it is wise for them to have a separate mobile phone for work use – this can then be used for all communication with young people.
8. Where all youth leaders are voluntary then consideration could be given to the purchase of a youth work mobile that can be held at the church and used to communicate with young people, either via social media or direct messaging.



9. When considering which social media platforms to use it is best to use one where there is a record of what has been posted to any group or where there is evidence of messaging threads. An example of a platform that **does not** have this capability is Snapchat.

### **Involving young people in the process of engaging with social media**

10. Consider agreeing with young people a list of ground rules for communicating via social media – this could include:
- Being respectful of others in the group, their opinions and experiences
  - Not sharing group members' contact details outside of the group without their consent
  - Not using the group to bully or put down other members of it.
11. Be clear with young people that if they share something on social media that makes you concerned then you will have to pass it on, in line with the church safeguarding policy.
12. Model healthy social media use:
- Only post messages before 8pm;
  - Do not respond to messages after a specific time at night;
  - Regularly review the information shared within the group to ensure that it is beneficial, uplifting and sits within the purpose of the group;
  - Set 'office hours' when you as the youth worker will have the phone on you. e.g. 8am-8pm (unless at an event with the young people where you might need it for emergency communication).
  - In terms of posts/pictures on your youth work pages, make sure they are in line with the church safeguarding policy and procedures, and are wholesome and suitable for all audiences under the age of 18.
13. Always ensure that you are using social media to communicate with the whole group. Do not use it to communicate with individual young people.
14. If young people direct message you through social media/WhatsApp outside of the group chat:
- Keep screenshots or documentation of the messages and any response.
  - Ask that the young people do not message you that way again.
  - Consider whether an immediate response is needed, particularly if it is late at night – even if there is a simple and quick response, consider leaving it until the next day within your 'office hours'.
  - Consider sharing the response with the whole group rather than getting into a one-on-one discussion with a young person
  - Note: If your phone is off outside of 'office hours' then you will not see these messages until the next day when you are again at work. This is a good habit to get into and takes the pressure off maintaining boundaries around communication with young people.
15. If, despite your best efforts to maintain the boundaries around when you are available, a young person in crisis contacts you 'out of hours', think about how you respond.



- If they appear in emotional distress or are threatening to harm themselves then you should contact the DPS immediately and initiate safeguarding reporting procedures. You may also need to contact the parents and even the police if the risk of harm is imminent.
- If they appear to need to have talk through a situation, consider arranging a time to meet with them in the following days to work through it. (This meeting should take place in line with your church safeguarding policy and procedures)
- Keep a record of any discussion that has taken place and send it to the DPS within 24 hours.

## Social Media Platforms and minimum age criteria

You will note that the minimum age for most social media platforms is 13 years old but not all. It is important, even if young people under that minimum age are using these platforms for other communication that you do not engage with them through this medium.

With all of these social media platforms it is important to note that parental consent is required for a young person to register for an account. However, this does not override your need as a youth worker to seek this consent from parents as well.

Social Media Platform	Minimum Age
Facebook	13
Instagram	13
TikTok	13
Twitter	13
Pinterest	13
YouTube	13
Google Hangouts	13
*WhatsApp	16
**SnapChat	Do not use
***HouseParty	Do not use

\*Please note that the minimum age to register for a WhatsApp account is 16 years old. As such we strongly advise that you do not use this platform to communicate with young people under this age, even if they say that they have an account.

\*\* We strongly advise against the use of Snapchat and any other app where the messages are not stored. Snapchat is designed specifically so people can share their immediate thoughts and images and then they disappear. This leaves young people vulnerable to exploitation and grooming because perpetrators know that this is the case and will target young people using Snapchat for this reason. In addition, Youth workers leave themselves open to allegations with no way to evidence what has been said or posted as it is impossible to produce a record of these communications as part of an accountability process or if there were safeguarding concerns.



\*\*\* HouseParty is an app that is designed for groups of friends to gather together – it focusses on informality and is not a secure platform where you can manage precisely who attends the ‘party’. There are other video conferencing facilities which give a viable alternative and where people respond to a specific invitation which may be more appropriate to use.

## Video Conferencing

We recognise that video conferencing has become a valuable tool as we look at ways to meet together as church and as a youth group, particularly at a time when we are not able to meet physically. There are many difference platforms available for this such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype, Google Meeting, FaceTime, Facebook Rooms and Google Duo. As we have already stated it is important to ensure that in using this technology we still apply our safeguarding policies and procedures:

- It is important to ensure that there are always at least 2 youth workers in the call and that they are online first.
- Just as you would do usually if you have concerns about someone then follow the reporting procedure within your church.
- Meeting links i.e. Zoom, should be sent to the parent’s email, not the child’s.
- Users who cannot connect to a video conferencing call via video but wish to do so via phone, should be made aware that their phone number will be displayed to the other users.
- **Do not be tempted to record your virtual youth group meeting.** If you are following your usual safeguarding policy and procedures, then you do not need an added record. Keeping a record of what is said and done in this way presents an added challenge of:

- o where this is subsequently stored
- o parental and personal consent to the recording
- o the potential breach of an individual’s right to privacy

## Using Video Conferencing for Mentoring and Pastoral Support with Young People

We know that churches offer a great variety of work with young people, including mentoring and individual pastoral care. We understand the value of this work when is carried out by skilled and experienced youth workers. At the time of writing, churches continue to face restrictions around face-to-face meetings with young people because of the Coronavirus outbreak. We are aware that churches may be considering continuing to provide mentoring and individual pastoral support using video conferencing platforms. Please consider the following advice should you wish to do so:

- If, as a church you did not offer individual mentoring and pastoral support meetings to young people before the Coronavirus outbreak then starting these should be in agreement after discussion with the DSP.
- The youth worker **and** Designated Person for Safeguarding should complete a risk assessment focussed on working one to one with young people online considering the following:

o Do you have a youth worker that is skilled and experienced in engaging and supporting young people through mentoring and pastoral support programmes?



o What are the benefits of providing pastoral support and mentoring online at this time – does this need to be a broad offer to all young people or are there specific young people who need this support and where there are no other agencies already providing it?

o What risk factors do you need to consider in your decision to use video conferencing to conduct mentoring or pastoral support meetings online?

o How will you mitigate these risk factors in arranging meetings and keeping a record of them?

- Seek written consent of both the young person and the parent or guardian before arranging the meeting – is this something that the young person wants and is the parent happy with it going ahead?
- Ensure that the meeting is booked in advance and that someone else is aware that it is taking place.
- Keep all mentoring and pastoral support meetings within the working day.
- Keep a written record of when meetings have taken place and an outline of the topics discussed, including any actions. Ensure that this record is stored securely. For computerised records this should be encrypted with a password or stored in a secure online location that can only be accessed by agreed personnel. If you are making handwritten records these should be stored securely in a locked cupboard. All records should be kept in line with the church record retention policy.
- Ensure that the young person is aware that you will be making notes of the discussion and that if you have any concerns that you will have to pass them on in line with the safeguarding policy
- Agree with the young person where they will be in the house when you have the meeting.
- We strongly advise that they are not in their bedroom, although we also recognise that for some young people there will not be another private space in their home. Consideration needs to be given to this in the risk assessment.
- Avoid conducting online meetings with young people from your own bedroom or personal space. If this is not possible use the technology to change the background either to a neutral image or so it is fuzzy.
- Remember that young people under the age of 16 cannot legally register for a Zoom account. However, this does not preclude them from using Zoom if it is set up by an adult. On this basis it is likely that the account will be held by the parent or guardian. This is another reason why a parent or guardian to be aware of the meeting taking place.



## St Albans Diocese Ex-Offenders Recruitment Policy

- St Albans Diocese, as an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the diocese complies fully with the [code of practice](#) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly
- St Albans Diocese undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed
- St Albans Diocese can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended)
- St Albans Diocese can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected
- St Albans Diocese is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background
- St Albans Diocese has a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process
- St Albans Diocese actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records
- St Albans Diocese select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience

• An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position

- St Albans Diocese ensures that all those in St Albans Diocese who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences
- St Albans Diocese also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, St Albans Diocese ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment



- St Albans Diocese makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the [code of practice](#) and makes a copy available on request
- St Albans Diocese undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.