**Responding to Safeguarding Allegations or Concerns**

**Procedure for St Andrew’s Church, Buckland Monachorum with the Church of the Holy Spirit, Milton Combe**

Under House of Bishops guidance, every PCC must have a procedure in place to deal promptly with safeguarding allegations or concerns. This procedure localises the national and diocesan guidance so that church officers are aware of how to respond properly in their local context when they become aware of a safeguarding concern.

All church officers should be up to date on safeguarding training at the appropriate level for their role. From their training they should understand the principles of:

Recognise – Respond – Record – Refer

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility – concerns must always be shared

As well as being up to date on training, all church officers should have read section 7 of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook and retain a (hard or electronic) copy for reference. Church Officers should always follow the guidance in section 7 in their response to a concern.

Church officers should know who to contact. A list of the relevant persons a church officer may need to contact in this parish when responding to a safeguarding concern is available. Relevant Local Authority contact details are on display in the church buildings and can be accessed on the Safeguarding Contacts page of the Diocese of Exeter website.

If a church officer is in any doubt as to how to respond to a safeguarding concern they should consult with the Parish Safeguarding Representative or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Outside of office hours, the statutory services will be able to guide the appropriate response to an urgent concern.

Appendix A - The Church’s Procedure for responding promptly to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations.

Appendix B - Guidelines for responding to a person Disclosing Abuse

Appendix C - Quick Guide to responding promptly -taken from Parish Safeguarding Handbook

This procedure was approved by St Andrew’s Church Buckland Monachorum with the Church of the Holy Spirit, Milton Combe PCC on 25th November 2024 and is to be reviewed annually.

Signed: …………………………………………………… (Incumbent)

Appendix A

**The Church’s Procedure for responding promptly to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations.**

Every concern should be noted as these may contribute to the larger picture.

**If you have a concern that a child or adult is or may be being abused, or that a church officer is or may be abusing a child or adult, then you must follow the following procedures.**

* **Respond** well to the person, if a direct disclosure, to ensure that they feel listened to and taken seriously. Explain to them what will happen next.
* **Inform** them that their identity and the identity of the respondent will be shared with key church officials and may be shared with statutory agencies, if there is a current risk to children or adults.
* If you believe it is an **Emergency situation (**child or adult in immediate danger of significant harm), then contact the emergency services on 999.
* If it is a **Non-Emergency t**hen contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) or incumbent in the first instance. They must then contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA). If neither are available, then contact the DSA directly. If the concern arises in an activity, discuss with the activity/group leader , who will contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent.
* **Any safeguarding concern** must be reported to the DSA within 24 hours.
* If the PSO, incumbent, or DSA are not available within 24hours, contact the local multi agency safeguarding team (**MASH) 03451551071** and /or contact the Police.
* **Remember, if in doubt always do something.**
* **Do not** contact the respondent or anyone implicated until advice has been sought from the DSA or statutory authorities.
* **Record** the details of the concerns/allegation as soon as possible. Record the time, date , location, persons present, how the concern or allegation was received (face to face, telephone, email, letter etc). Record the actual words used where possible. Record details of information provided to the person. Sign and date the record. Pass copy to DSA and keep copy secure and confidential.
* **Record** where possible the Child’s or individual’s full name, age, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP
* There should be close communication between the DSA/PSO/incumbent until the situation is resolved.
* Appendix B

**Guidelines for responding to a person Disclosing Abuse**

**Respond**

Do

* Listen carefully to what the person is saying and maintain eye contact.
* Take what is said seriously.
* Only use open ended questions (Who?, What? When? Where? Why?How?)
* Do allow the person to talk at their own pace.
* Remain calm and be positive
* Take into account the persons age and level of understanding
* Check whether they mind you taking notes whilst they talk.
* Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do
* Tell the person what you are going to do next.

Do Not

* Do not promise confidentiality.
* Do not make promises that cannot be kept.
* Do not make assumptions or jump to conclusions.
* Investigate
* Do not ask leading questions;
* Do not contact the person about whom the allegations have been made.
* Do not delay, or deal with concerns on your own.

**Appendix C**

**Quick Guide to responding promptly -taken from Parish Safeguarding Handbook**

