

SAFER - Parish Toolkit for Keeping Children Safe



Introduction:

The responsibility for keeping children safe lies with everyone in church. We are continually learning how to do this well. This Parish Toolkit will help equip your church on this journey, with editable templates for you to use, some basic tick lists of what needs to be in place – using the acronym **SAFER (Safeguarding, Accidents, Fire, Emergencies & Risk Assessments)**. Keeping children safe ensures that they have the best opportunity to flourish, the best environment to understand that they are valued and loved, the best hope that they will be rooted in experiencing the love of God.

There are some procedures we need to follow through to ensure that this is prioritized. The ideal DNA of any church is to keep safeguarding on the agenda in all contexts, to keep checking that the church is valuing and welcoming children appropriately.

Ideally the message is delivered regularly in church services, training for volunteers, in every PCC meeting, with the children and with the adults. This toolkit will give you the basics in this ongoing focus, following the acronym **S.A.F.E.R** (Safeguarding, Accidents, Fire, Emergencies & Risk Assessments)



Safeguarding

Checklist:

- **Have you got a Church Safeguarding Policy?**
[Download this model parish safeguarding.policy document](#)
- **Do you have a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)?**
Ask your vicar
- **Have you displayed your Safeguarding Policy in church?**
- **Have you displayed a picture and contact details of your Parish Safeguarding Officer in church?**
[Download this template from the Church of England](#)
- **Does everyone on the team have a current DBS issued through your church?**
 - DBS contact for Diocese of Peterborough is Sharon Welbourne
 - A DBS must be renewed every 3 years



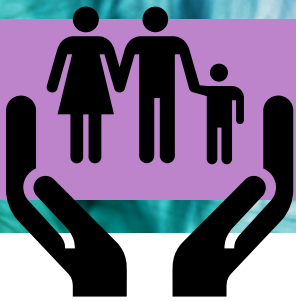
Safeguarding

- **Does the Children and Youth Team have appropriate Safeguarding Training?**

There are 3 online courses

- Basic Awareness (C0) Mandatory for all children's workers
 - Foundation (C1) Mandatory for all children's volunteers
 - Domestic Abuse Training is a requirement for all those working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, including choir/music leaders
 - Leadership Pathway (C2) Where there is a significant leadership responsibility, membership of a local leadership team, or the supervision of other workers, the leadership pathway must be followed.
 - The Leadership course and Role Specific Pathways courses are delivered with a trainer, either online using Microsoft Teams or in person. Safeguarding Leadership is a two-part training of 1.5 hours per session, as well as some work to complete at home before and after the sessions.
 - For online training please link to the [National Safeguarding Portal](#)
- **Ongoing safeguarding training for team?**
 - Keep safeguarding on the agenda in all your planning meetings, reminding your team about good practice.
 - You could choose one aspect of this tool kit in your team meetings to share with your team.
 - Keep safeguarding on the agenda in all your planning meetings, reminding your team about good practice.
 - How about using some of the fun team building ideas from '[The Key](#)'
 - Contact charlotte.nobbs@peterborough-diocese.org.uk if you would like guidance on how to do this
 - Are you using **Volunteer Recruitment Forms** that are clear about expectations and training?

[Volunteer Application Form](#)



Safeguarding

- **How do the children know who to speak to if there is a something they need to share?**
 - It is important that we build talking to our children about how to keep safe (most schools do this 3 times a year). Here are some ideas:
 - 5 fingers represents 5 safe people that the children can talk to if something needs to be shared.
 - Teach the Pantosaurus Song
 - Choose one side of the room that represents safe, and one side that isn't safe, give the children a mix of examples of safe/not safe and get them to run to the side of the room that represents safe/not safe. Try these Safeguarding Praise Party ideas
 - Some great ways for empowering children from the Church of England Safeguarding team here: 'Promoting Safer Church Lesson Plans'

- **Good Practice:**

Each team member who is working with children needs to be identified, this could be a sticky label/lanyard that includes: Name, Role on team, Church.

- Do your team know the systems in place to report allegations?
4 Rs for Handling Disclosures

Do you have registration forms for children?

Example of registration and consent form for children at a toddler group

- If there is an emergency, this is where you go: Police 999
- Consider how to ask for photo permissions



Accidents

Most safeguarding issues will present themselves as trips, bruises, cuts and grazes, getting stuck in a toilet, slips, food allergies, symptoms of COVID, and hot drink burns. Children are often accompanied by grandparents, so it is possible that we could see heart attacks, strokes, and collapse. We need to ensure that our teams know what treatment we can offer, who can give First Aid, what treatment we can offer and who can give it, and at what point we ring 999.

- **Before we run any group we need to assess the most likely causes of incidents and accidents** (See Risk Management section on page 10 for a variety of editable Risk Assessment templates)
- **Registration forms**
 - It is important that we have information that we might need at hand on the day we are running the group: Name of adults present, children present, permission to contact them for administration purposes (so email &/or phone).
 - The registration forms need to be stored in a safe place – ask church wardens/minister how this looks (eg paper copies locked away/transferred to a secure church management soft ware)
- **First Aid Training:**
 - It is advisable that those who work with children should have some basic first aid training – There may be people in your own parish who would be willing to give some informal, basic first aid training to give some confidence to your volunteers tailored to the age of children/adults in their setting
 - Tip: Find out who has first aid certification with a photo clearly displayed of who this is



Accidents

- **Identify who are the First Aiders**
 - One leader should also have a current recognised First Aid qualification provided by agencies such as the British Red Cross or St John's Ambulance Brigade – some local authorities also offer these courses. A copy of the certificate should be kept in the parish office
 - St John Ambulance – www.sja.org.uk, British Red Cross – www.redcross.org.uk
- **First Aid Kit** You can check with St. John's ambulance what might be essential in your kit. This should be checked annually and any out-of-date items replaced.
- **Accident Book**
 - It is a requirement that an accident book is kept on all premises
 - Full details of any accidents must be entered in here.
 - This is what needs to be recorded: Time and date, venue, who it happened to, what action was taken
 - Since personal information needs to be carefully stored, it may be better to have some tear out sheets, that can then be delivered to the person (the church warden/minister) who stores all the forms. Accident report template can be downloaded here.
 - An accident book/tear out sheets should also be taken on any off-site activities.



Accidents

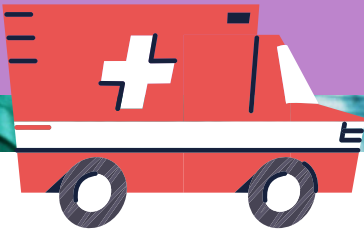
- **Food hygiene** If you are cooking for any groups, you will need to adhere to food hygiene training, for instance www.food.hygiene-certificate.co.uk
 - For more detailed advice, turn to [Messy Church/food hygiene](#)
 - The biggest risks are allergies, burns, hygiene issues, cuts from knives
- **Hot drinks:** In a toddler group this is particularly an issue. If a hot cup of coffee falls on a baby, a burn could cover much of their body. Careful consideration needs to be given as to how drinks are served, how to mitigate risk such as having lidded cups or drinking hot drinks away from children, or to only serve cold drinks.
- **Mitigating infections including COVID**
 - This includes various common infections including diarrhoea and sickness.
 - COVID infection is still a risk, so ensure you have sanitizer, posters reminding people to be risk aware ([See NHS poster here](#)), rooms well ventilated, toys and surfaces are regularly cleaned
 - It is advised to have contact details for your group so that if there was an outbreak of COVID those families could be told

FIRE SAFETY



- Before we run any group we need to assess the most likely causes of incidents and accidents (See Risk Management on page 10 for a variety of editable Risk Assessment templates)
- **Registers**
 - Your register should include *everyone* (including the team) and be filled in as people arrive, then picked up in the event of a fire to check everyone has evacuated the building safely.
- Ensure the team knows that everyone is responsible for fire safety, but ultimately the Wardens, and all parties present need to know what to do in the case of a fire.
- **Plan for how fire safety information is shared with children's team and the children and families**
 - Create a tick list for what needs to be known i.e. People out first (before tackling fires with the extinguishers), Evacuation points, practice drills, when to ring 999

EMERGENCIES



- Before we run any group we need to assess the most likely causes of incidents and accidents (See Risk Management on page 10 for a variety of editable Risk Assessment templates)
- Ensure your team knows what to do in an emergency. For instance, someone you do not know entering the room where you are with the children in your care. PCCs might need to talk about this to shape their policy.
- Registers, registration forms and emergency contacts need to be up to date and easily accessible

RISK MANAGEMENT



What is a Risk Assessment?

- Before we run any group we need to assess the most likely causes of incidents and accidents - The **S.A.F.E.** considerations (above) form your Risk Assessment.
- [Church of England Model Personal Risk Assessment Tool](#)
- The assessment identifies what risks there are and what you can do to minimise the risk.
- Every activity you do must have a [risk assessment](#)
- Reviewed annually, check each term.
- The risk assessment is for everyone to 'own' so it is important to share this with the team and the children in the group. An easy way to do this is to ask the group what they perceive the risks to be, and what needs to be done to mitigate them (this can be quite a fun game!) and then fill in anything that is not covered from the pre-prepared risk assessment
- Find out from your minister/PSO about who needs to store the risk assessment



MORE RESOURCES

[Diocese of Peterborough Safeguarding page](#)

[Parish Safeguarding Handbook Layout 1](#)

[Click here to see:](#)

- Safeguarding Check List, How to do a risk assessment
- Examples of registration forms, handbooks for children's volunteers and for team leaders, Volunteer Agreement
- Template for Risk Assessment from St Andrews Church, with examples
- [Visit the Church of England templates and resources](#)
- A superb framework from The Church of England (published in April 2024): [Working & Volunteering Safely with Children and Young People \(churchofengland.org\)](#) to help you plan for safe recruitment and good practice with your volunteers as they work with children:
- Safer recruitment
- Safeguarding training
- Safe practice
- Communicating with CYP



Basic Safeguarding Checklist

Basic Safeguarding Tick List:

- Have you got a Safeguarding Policy?
- Who is your Safeguarding lead/coordinator?
- Does everyone on the team have a current DBS and appropriate Safeguarding Training?
- Volunteer job roles (good to look at some examples), expectation and training
- How do the children know who to speak to if there is something they need to share? Any safeguarding training for them? 5 Fingers to represent 5 safe people. When you tell a secret etc.
- Refresher on safeguarding training for team
- Lanyards/T-shirts/Badges to identify team members
- Systems in place to report allegations
- Telephone numbers of PSO on display
- Registration forms for children

For more detail look at the [Diocesan Check-List on Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities](#)