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Safe Church Policy

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety Policy and the Safety Manual

- We commit ourselves to respect other people's minds, emotions and bodies.
- We acknowledge and accept the trust granted to us by those who are taking part in church activities, their families, and the wider community. We therefore commit ourselves to striving to ensure that all our actions are morally upright.
- We are willing to know the full extent of the problem of abuse and the causes of such behaviour within the church. We will strive to be aware of our legal responsibilities and obligations in relation to prevention, reporting and processing requirements and seek to meet them at all times.
- We will ensure as far as possible that all people in positions of authority within the church and/or working with children and young people are aware of the appropriate standard of conduct and boundaries. We require those who work on behalf of the church to indicate their agreement with this policy statement and work towards providing an environment that prevents abuse.
- We believe that churches ought to be places of safety and refuge for children, young people and others, where they should be and feel safe from any threat when on church property or involved in activities operated by the church, or accessing services provided by the church. We believe that the church should be a place where people can disclose abuse and have it dealt with effectively.
- We will establish a prevention strategy that includes screening, sound recruitment and selection procedures, clear boundaries, risk identification and management, education, support, supervision and training.

- We acknowledge that the age of consent for sexual activity is determined by legislation. However, we are mindful that this must be read in the light of our moral and spiritual responsibility. All people in a position of authority within the church, be it real or perceived, paid or unpaid, have a moral and spiritual responsibility towards those over whom they have authority. In this situation it is never appropriate to take part in sexual activity of any kind, regardless of the person's age. We affirm that sexual behaviour belongs in a marriage relationship only, and that in this context it is a good gift of God.
- Irrespective of any other action that may be taken by authorities outside the church, the church reserves the right to exercise its powers.

When An Allegation Or Complaint Is Made

- We are committed to establishing a process that strives for truth and confidentiality. We will ensure as far as possible that a compassionate response is the first priority in all allegations, through offering assistance, protection and care without passing judgement or prejudicing the rights of the alleged offender. We acknowledge that concealing the truth is contrary to the character of God, unjust to victims and a disservice to offenders.
- We understand and value the need for support to all parties involved in an allegation, including the aggrieved person and the alleged offender, and we actively seek to provide this support.
- We acknowledge the personal and public difficulties that a false, misconceived, malicious or vexatious allegation can cause for the person accused. We will take whatever steps are possible to address these difficulties.

Revisions and Changes

Adopted by Leadership Team: 27/01/2023