

The Parish of Swaythling

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St Alban's and St Mary's Churches

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Swaythling Parish
St Alban's & St Mary's Churches

Parish of Swaythling Safeguarding Policy

The Parish of Swaythling takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm, and has produced the following safeguarding policy and underpinning procedures in order to set out the standards we wish to uphold.

This policy applies to all church officers¹ and is informed by and supports the House of Bishops' and Diocesan policy and practice guidance. The term 'parish' is used to denote the PCC and Incumbent who together are responsible for ensuring the safety and protection of all vulnerable groups involved with the church. It is also the responsibility of all church officers to assist the PCC in this endeavour.

We, the PCC and Incumbent, recognise that:

- The welfare of the child or young person is paramount.
- All children and adults with vulnerabilities, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- Partnership working is essential to good safeguarding practice.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to without delay.
- All church officers have a responsibility to report concerns to their Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO).
- Church officers must receive support and training to be aware of and understand best practice, and how to manage any welfare or safeguarding issues that may arise.

¹ A "Church Officer" is anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/safeguarding/policy-practice-guidance>

1. Promoting a safer environment and culture

We will ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to safeguard vulnerable groups in order that they can participate fully in any pastoral, social and other PCC endorsed or approved activities and events, safe from harm and abuse.

The following activities and events have been identified as those which are attended by children, young people or vulnerable adults run by the church:

Activity	Location
Messy Church / Messy Mornings	St Alban's church and Community Room
Sunday morning children's activities	Community room, St Alban's, and/or Parish Hall, St Mary's
Youth Activities	Community Room / Basement
Home communions/home pastoral visits	Various, as applicable
Worship Services	St Alban's church and/or St Mary's church
Friday Lunch Club	Community room, St Alban's
Thursdays Together	Community room, St Alban's
Cake, Craft and Chat	Community room, St Alban's
Going Beyond Bible study group	Community room, St Alban's

For these activities and events we will, as applicable:

- Designate a Group Leader
- Provide an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to children, taking into account the nature of the activity, the venue and the age, gender and needs of participants.
- Ensure adults do not work alone with children and young people
- Obtain parental/guardian consent for attendance at groups and trips, use of images and transporting children in private cars
- Ensure unaccompanied children are taken care of by a suitably appointed adult and endeavour to establish contact with the parent or carers to gain their consent to their child's attendance
- Ensure no child or young person is invited into the home of a church officer unless the reason for this has been approved and agreed with parents and the PCC.
- Ensure pastoral carers do not misuse or abuse the trust that is bestowed upon them
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out before the activity/event takes place, and these are reviewed regularly
- Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC
- Ensure that all activities and events which are not run directly by the church but which take place in church buildings or grounds comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance.

2. Safer Recruitment

We will select, vet and train all church officers working or volunteering with vulnerable groups in accordance with the House of Bishop's and Diocesan safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

We will:

- Ensure we have clear role descriptions and/or person specifications for all posts working or volunteering with children and/or adults
- Ensure all church workers and volunteers who work with children and adults complete and sign an application form and confidential declaration before appointment
- Ensure we take up written references and carefully check the applicant's right to work in the UK before appointment
- Seek an enhanced DBS check for anyone eligible before appointment
- Ensure that all applicants with children and adults are interviewed
- Offer support and training after appointment
- Ensure all church leaders and those who work with children and/or adults complete appropriate safeguarding training at least every three years.

3. Responding to safeguarding concerns

We will ensure that anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with legislation, statutory and national safeguarding policy and procedures.

We will:

- Appoint at least one lay Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) for children and adults
- Put arrangements in place to cover if the PSO is not available
- Develop a written procedure for dealing with abuse and allegations and make this available to all church officers
- Clearly display contact details of the PSO and the Diocesan Safeguarding team, as well as local and national services available to get help with safeguarding issues
- Store personal information and safeguarding records securely and ensure information needed in an emergency is readily available
- Ensure all church officers are aware of their responsibilities in regard to the recording, storage and sharing of information

4. Care of Survivors of abuse

We will ensure that those who have suffered abuse will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and taken seriously.

5. Managing risk

When it is known that a member of the church community may pose a risk to children and/or adults, we will consult without delay with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser so that a safe course of action in accordance with national and local safeguarding policy and procedures is followed, in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies.

6. Code of Safer Working Practice

We will follow the guidance issued in [Promoting a Safer Church](#)², which states that:

"All Church Officers will respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults and promote their well-being.

The Church will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments. This will be done by training, support, communication, learning, governance and quality assurance processes.

The Church will strive to support all Church Officers to adhere to safer working good practice and to challenge the abuse of power. It will ensure that processes are in place that listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the knowledge that they will be cared for."

The requirements for a safer environment are summarised in the Church of England's [Code of Safer Working Practice](#)³.

7. Monitoring and Review

This safeguarding policy and the following documents are available via the Swaythling Parish website or the Church of England website, or can be requested from the Church office:

- Parish Safeguarding Handbook
 - <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance>

² <https://tools.parishdashboards.org.uk/storage/app/media/Resources/promoting-a-safer-church.pdf>

³ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/code-of-safer-working-practice-02.07.2021.pdf>

- House of Bishops' Safer Environment and Activities Guidance
 - <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance>
- Promoting a Safer Church
 - <https://tools.parishdashboards.org.uk/storage/app/media/Resources/promoting-a-safer-church.pdf>
- Code of Safer Working Practice
 - <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/code-of-safer-working-practice-02.07.2021.pdf>
- Safeguarding Referral Form Template
 - <https://www.swaythlingparish.org.uk/safeguarding/>
- Church of England Website - Safer Recruitment and People Management
 - <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance/>

Date and Review:

This policy comes into effect on **2 July 2025**. It will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with the latest legislation and best practice.

Signed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer:

Name: Helen Parker

Date: 2 July 2025

Signed on behalf of Swaythling PCC

Name: Peter Dockree

Date: 2 July 2025

** Note: Update to Section 6, on Code of Safer Working Practice, was added to this policy on 12 September 2024*