

**Parish Safeguarding:
Advice for Parents**

Dear Parents,

Our parish takes the safety and wellbeing of your children very seriously, alongside helping them to discover a sense of God and wonder. As such, we have a number of policies in place to keep them safe while they are attending church services or other activities that we run.

Our Children’s Leaders are:

And you can contact them:

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer is:

And their contact details are:

Our Clergy are:

And their contact details are:

We make sure that we always have at least 2 safely recruited adults present at any children’s activity, and more if it is a large group or has a number of very young children, in line with guidance from the NSPCC. This means that no adult should ever be on their own with your child or with a group of children. This may however mean that we have to cancel activities on occasion if we do not have enough adults to run safely, and we will always try to give you advance notice of this.

We will need to know your details and your child’s details – we will ask you to fill in a form with this information. This is so that we can contact you if we need to, and so that we can take a register at activities and know which children we have present. This will also help us to make any particular arrangements needed for your child, such as allergy awareness, special needs, access issues or court orders. We may also ask you to complete a form if we are doing any different activities than normal, such as going out of the Church, or taking photographs of children at a service, so that you will know what we are doing and can agree whether or not your child can take part.

You are always welcome to observe your child in their church activities, but to allow them to enjoy them fully we would ask that you don’t interrupt them without discussing with a children’s leader first. If you would like to come to the children’s activities regularly, we would be happy to discuss with you how you can become a helper.

We will inform you as soon as possible if

* your child is ill or has an accident whilst in our care
* is upset whilst in our care or has caused upset to another child or adult by their behaviour so that the problem can be looked at and resolved.

Because we always have at least 2 adults working with a child or groups of children, our helpers will not take your child in their car to or from church activities on their own. Our helpers can take your child in their car if you come with them, or if we have 2 helpers free, as long as we have adequate insurance in place, and the right type of car seat available to keep your child safe. If you cannot collect your child from a church activity, please let us know in advance so that where possible, arrangements can be made for their safe return home.

Older children may have their own phones, email addresses and social media accounts. Our children’s team will only contact your child directly by these means with your consent, and will copy you into any message they send your child. In general, they will only contact them with information about church activities, such as information about the youth club, or a change of start time or date for an event. On occasion, your child may contact one of our children’s team with a worry, or something they are upset about. In replying, our helper will encourage them to tell you, but will copy in someone else in the Leadership team, so that all messages are supervised by someone to make sure they are appropriate. Children’s team helpers will never arrange to meet your child on their own outside of church activities, nor will they “friend” your child on social media.

Our children’s workers are required to undergo safer recruitment procedures – this means that they have filled in an application form so we know something about them; have been interviewed; we have taken up references; and we do a DBS check. They, and all other Church officers, such as the Churchwardens, worship leaders and pastoral visitors have had to take safeguarding training. Training is also available to you, as a parent so that you can understand how we safeguard people in the Church. The Introduction to Safeguarding Training (C0) is available free through this website under “Online Courses”. <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

If at any time you have any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of your child in relation to their attendance at church or contact with church helpers, or you think the above rules have been broken, please tell someone straight away. This could be one of the people in the list above, or if you are uncomfortable about that, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser based at Wells can be phoned on 01749 685135. You can also always seek advice from the Police on 101, or in an emergency or if you think a crime has been committed, on 999.