

SAFEGUARDING POLICY (2021)

Breathing Space Project of St Michael and All Angels Church, Witton Gilbert

Children and Vulnerable Adults

This safeguarding policy applies both to the Breathing Space Project and to the activities of members of the Church of St Michael and All Angels at Witton Gilbert. It represents the safeguarding guidance for both sets of activities and has due regard for the key principles of 'The Church of England's Safeguarding Policy for children, young people and adults' (2017) and the 'Parish Safeguarding Handbook' (2018). Dissemination of this policy, plus training and review issues, apply equally to the Breathing Space Project and St Michael and All Angels Church, their Trustees, Parochial Church Council (PCC) members and all participating members of both organisations.

The safeguarding, or protection of children and vulnerable adults is an ongoing process throughout the lifetime of any organisation working with these groups. Although this policy is written primarily for staff and volunteers associated with Breathing Space and St Michael and All Angels church, its guidance is applicable to anyone who may have concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, where abuse or neglect is either suspected or disclosed.

According to the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is someone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people'.

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 or over:

- Who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability
- Who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself/herself, or unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation

(Definition from the Department of Health 2002)

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults is a legal duty under the Care Act 2014, placing it on a par with the statutory duty to safeguard children.

The lead agency in coordinating safeguarding intervention is the **Local Authority responsible for social services: 'First Contact' and the multi-agency Local Safeguarding Children Board, for children; and 'Social Care Direct' and the multi-agency Local Safeguarding Adults Board, for vulnerable adults.**

To fulfil its obligations to children and vulnerable adults, Breathing Space and St Michael and All Angels will:

- recruit paid and volunteer staff carefully and in accordance with Equality legislation and their equal opportunities policies
- undertake any necessary DBS checks
- provide any induction and training necessary for the competent performance of their roles
- ensure that paid and volunteer staff understand the children and vulnerable adults safeguarding policy, and their responsibilities within it
- ensure that all paid and volunteer staff understand confidentiality issues with regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- ensure that paid and volunteer staff understand current legislation and good practice in relation to the rights of children and vulnerable adults
- regularly review and update the policy and practice of Breathing Space and St Michael and All Angels with regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of safeguarding referral agencies and have contact information that is regularly checked and updated
- develop and maintain constructive working relationships with statutory youth service providers, Social Services, Police personnel and any other organisations responsible for contributing to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults
- ensure that all venues used by children and vulnerable adults have clear and accessible information about who they can talk to
- ensure the provision of all necessary training for Trustees, volunteers and PCC members in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

This safeguarding policy operates for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Breathing Space is committed to ensuring that all those associated with Breathing Space and St Michael and All Angels have positive and enjoyable experiences. Consequently, we are committed to ensuring that all children and vulnerable adults who take part in our activities are kept free from harm. We will ensure that:

- everyone is treated with respect
- activities take place in a safe and secure environment
- staff or volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in accordance with the latest policies and procedures of the Diocese of Durham and Breathing Space
- opportunities exist for children, vulnerable adults, parents or primary carers to talk to us about any concerns they have
- children, vulnerable adults, parents or primary carers feel comfortable and confident to discuss attitudes and behaviours they do not like
- staff or volunteers associated with Breathing Space or St Michael and All Angels will take appropriate action when children, vulnerable adults, parents or primary carers express concern about abuse
- staff or volunteers working for Breathing Space or St Michael and All Angels, or any other person involved with Breathing Space or St Michael and All Angels, will not be authorised to work alone with individual children or vulnerable adults, unless the staff or volunteers concerned have undergone satisfactory DBS checks and/or preparation commensurate with their role
- The principles of good practice and the guiding values inherent within this safeguarding policy will apply equally to on-line and social media communications, in so far as anyone participating in Breathing Space or church activities is aware of such communications. If abuse is suspected it will be reported to the designated safeguarding officers for evaluation and necessary action, such as the making of a safeguarding referral to the appropriate statutory authorities.
- In the event of any safeguarding incident, that incident will be reported to the Funders of grants for Breathing Space activities immediately, or within three working days, for their information, plus details of action taken to address the matter. Breathing Space will keep Funders informed of developments with any safeguarding referral, whilst respecting any legal and confidentiality constraints that apply.
- Whistle-blowers or any others reporting concerns or suspicions of abuse will be treated with respect and confidentiality within the legal and confidentiality constraints operating, in accordance with best practice. Their identity will be protected within those constraints and they will be informed accordingly that only those who need to know their identity (e.g. Police, Social Services, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor) will be so informed. The paramount concern is always the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults whose welfare always takes priority.

- This safeguarding policy is the primary guidance for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. However, in addition there are other Breathing Space/church policies and practices that operate in combination, such as risk assessments and the minimisation of risks proactively (e.g. staffing/volunteer ratios for particular activities), the obtaining of consents, insurances and the Diocesan parish handbook.

What is abuse?

Abuse means harming a child or vulnerable adult. There is evidence to suggest that its occurrence can be significantly reduced by: learning more about the problem; giving children and vulnerable adults self-protection strategies; knowing how to listen to children and vulnerable adults and by knowing what action to take when there are suspicions or disclosures of abuse.

Main types of abuse:

Children:

Emotional/Psychological

Action or inaction by others that causes mental anguish.

Emotional harm is the emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. It may involve children witnessing aggressive, violent or harmful behaviour such as domestic violence. Some level of emotional harm is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Grooming. Harassment. Inappropriate emotional involvement. Modern slavery.

On-line abuse, via social media messaging and all electronic communications.

Physical

Any intentional physical contact that results in discomfort, pain or injury

Physical harm may involve assaults including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

Supply drugs to children. Inappropriate/unauthorised methods of restraint.

Sexual

Any form of sexual activity with a child under the age of consent

Sexual harm involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Downloading child pornography. Taking indecent photographs of children. Sexualised texting and on-line sexualised communications that are abusive/demeaning. Grooming and sexual exploitation, by whatever means.

Neglect

Failure to identify and/or meet care needs

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Vulnerable Adults:

Emotional/Psychological

Action or inaction by others that causes mental anguish

Inflexible regimes and lack of choice. Mocking, coercing, denying privacy, threatening behaviour, bullying, intimidation, harassment, deliberate isolation, deprivation. Modern slavery. Domestic abuse. On-line and social media communications that are demeaning/abusive.

Financial

Usually associated with the misuse of money, valuables or property

Unauthorised withdrawals from vulnerable adult's account, theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills or inheritance.

Physical

Any physical action or inaction that results in discomfort, pain or injury

Hitting, slapping, pushing, shaking, bruising, failing to treat sores or wounds, under or overuse of medication, un-prescribed or inappropriate medication, use of restraint or inappropriate restraint, inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual

Coercion or force to take part in sexual acts

Inappropriate touching. Sexual exploitation. Causing bruising or injury to the anal, genital or abdominal area. Transmission of STD. On-line and/or social media communications that are sexually exploitive, demeaning, abusive, undermining of dignity.

Neglect

Failure to identify and/or meet care needs

Untreated weight loss, failing to administer reasonable care resulting in pressure sores or uncharacteristic problems with continence. Poor hygiene, soiled clothes not changed, insufficient food or drink, ignoring people's requests, unmet social or care needs.

Verbal

Any remark or comment by others that causes distress

Demeaning, disrespectful, humiliating, racist, sexist or sarcastic comments. Excessive or unwanted familiarity, shouting, swearing, name calling. This may include on-line and/or social media communications.

Possible signs of abuse:

All associated with Breathing Space or St Michael and All Angels will look out for the following possible signs that a person is being abused. However, it is understood that not all children or vulnerable adults exhibiting these signs will necessarily be experiencing abuse. Caution, sensitivity and common sense will help staff, volunteers and others to decide precisely how to respond to these signs. [There will always be a need to tell a colleague or line-manager what you have noticed and what your action was, and for that to be recorded]

If a person:

- becomes withdrawn or isolated;
- becomes aggressive;
- starts to seek attention;
- becomes afraid of particular people;

- develops chronic medical problems such as stomach pains or headaches;
- acts in sexually inappropriate ways towards others or peers;
- develops eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia;
- fails to thrive;
- is often hungry;
- has regular accidents;
- has poor personal hygiene;
- is regularly tired;
- is reluctant to go home;
- wears inappropriate clothing;
- develops poor social relationships;
- exhibits inappropriate emotional responses;
- exhibits dramatic changes in mood or behaviour;
- engages in drug or alcohol misuse;
- runs away from home or other places;
- feels depressed;
- has bumps, bruises, wounds or especially burns;
- has unconvincing explanations for such injuries;
- talks of a friend who is being abused;

we will take steps to establish whether the child or vulnerable adult is experiencing abuse.

If abuse is suspected:

ensure that the appropriate person/people are contacted: David Wilcox, Safeguarding Officer (**07769 156 747**); and/or Gillie Boggon, Breathing Space Project Coordinator (**07508 471 522**) (or in their absence, Pat Bainbridge, Churchwarden, or Jenny Tinkler, Churchwarden, or Noel Dixon, Chair of Breathing Space Trustees, or Revd Michael Peers, Team Vicar – for contacts see [St Michael and All Angels](#) website).

ensure that the allegation or suspicion is taken seriously and that it is reported and recorded.

ensure that the appropriate agencies are advised accordingly.

Referral agencies can be found at the end of this document.

Advice about initial disclosures by children or vulnerable adults:

Do:

- listen to the person carefully
- accept what the person is telling them
- inform the person about the confidentiality rules that apply in safeguarding people, in language they understand (i.e. that they cannot promise not to share the disclosure with other people/agencies who need to know)
- reassure the person that they have done a good thing telling somebody about what is happening to them
- reassure the person that it is right to talk

- not blame the person for the abuse experienced
- inform the person what support they can give, and ensure they know where they can find further support
- inform the person what they will do
- thank the person for confiding
- report and record the situation
- contact Social Services (and the Police if it is felt that the person is likely to be at risk if they return home, or are in imminent danger)

Do not:

- promise confidentiality
- be judgemental
- show emotions or reactions to what they are being told, such as anger, disbelief or disgust
- ask direct questions
- suggest that the effects are in any way minimal
- become unnecessarily involved
- be dramatic or critical
- confront the person with the abuser(s)
- chastise the person for not confiding earlier
- encourage the person to forget about what has happened to them

When recording disclosures by children or vulnerable adults, or suspicions that abuse is occurring, try to provide the following information:

- name, age and address of the person (date of birth is useful)
- whether these concerns are yours or someone else's
- brief description of the episode that has prompted the report: date, time and specific episode
- physical or behavioural signs that prompted a report
- if anyone has spoken to the person and who that was and what was said
- name(s) of abuser(s)
- any places mentioned that are significant
- any special circumstances (any disability or other factors in the person's living arrangements)
- any person or agency consulted
- any referral made

What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed:

1. If abuse is suspected or disclosed, in the first instance try to contact: David Wilcox, Safeguarding Officer (**07769 156 747**); Gillie Boggon, Breathing Space Project Coordinator (**07508 471 522**) (or in their absence, Pat Bainbridge, Churchwarden, or Jenny Tinkler, Churchwarden, or Noel Dixon, Chair of Breathing Space Trustees, or Revd Michael Peers, Team Vicar – for contacts see [St Michael and All Angels](#) website) to discuss your concerns.

2. If you cannot contact them, don't delay in contacting **Social Services** to share your concerns and to seek advice. The contact details are at the end of this document. Remember, **the focus is on the safety and welfare of the child or vulnerable adult** and it is always good practice to share your concerns with appropriate others, especially the statutory safeguarding services who can provide professional and independent help and guidance. The Team Rector and Breathing Space Trustees should be consulted along with the statutory agencies involved. It is also essential to contact the **Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor** to seek advice and guidance within 24 hours.
3. If an alleged or suspected abuser is not associated with Breathing Space or St Michael and All Angels, notify **Social Services immediately** and take action on their advice. The decision whether to notify the victim's parents or primary carers will be made in **consultation with Social Services** and with due regard to the legal rights of the child or vulnerable adult.
4. If someone using the Breathing Space service or St Michael and All Angels, is suspected of abuse, or is the subject of an allegation of abuse, notify **Social Services immediately** and take action on their advice. That person should normally be excluded from activities involving Breathing Space and/or St Michael and All Angels, until the conclusion of an investigation into the alleged or suspected abuse. The Team Rector and Breathing Space Trustees should be consulted along with the statutory agencies involved. It is also essential to contact the **Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor** to seek advice and guidance within 24 hours.
- 5) If the alleged or suspected abuser is a person doing work for Breathing Space or St Michael and All Angels, as a member of staff or volunteer, notify **Social Services immediately** and take action on their advice. That person should normally be excluded from activities involving Breathing Space and/or St Michael and All Angels, until the conclusion of an investigation into the alleged or suspected abuse. The Team Rector and Breathing Space Trustees should be consulted along with the statutory agencies involved. It is also essential to contact the **Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor** to seek advice and guidance within 24 hours.
6. Other participants in activities involving Breathing Space and/or St Michael and All Angels (i.e. service users or providers) will be advised that they should not discuss with the suspected/alleged abuser any aspect of the alleged incident(s), nor the investigation that follows disclosure, because that action may affect the outcome of the investigation.
- 7) It may be advisable to involve the Police from an early stage, and advice about involving the Police should be sought in the first consultation with Social Services. For children and young people, **First Contact Service** should be contacted. For vulnerable adults, **Social Care Direct** should be contacted.
- 8) The safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance and suspicions or allegations of abuse must always be dealt with promptly and thoroughly in the ways outlined above. However, alleged abusers and/or their families should be offered pastoral care and support where

appropriate, in consultation with the statutory agencies and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, but never at the expense of safeguarding the victim of abuse.

9) Grant Funders for Breathing Space activities should be promptly notified of any safeguarding incident, within three working days, along with the actions taken to investigate and resolve any safeguarding referral.

Policy review:

Paid and volunteer staff will meet regularly to identify any issues of policy or practice with regard to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults that need attention, plus consider any changes to relevant legislation, procedure or examples of good practice.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually at the appropriate management committee meeting, in consultation with paid and volunteer staff through the responsible officer(s).

This policy was formally adopted on the 2nd day of February 2012 at the Management Committee meeting.

This policy was last reviewed and updated on: **8th March 2021**

The next Planned review is March 2022

Officers responsible for ensuring that good safeguarding practice is followed:

David Wilcox, Safeguarding Officer (**07769 156 747**);
Gillie Boggon, Breathing Space Project Coordinator (**07508 471 522**);

Referral Agencies:

Durham County Social Services (Social Care Direct) (for vulnerable adults): 03000 267979

Or text: 0778 602 7280
textphone (Minicom): 01429 884124

Or email: safeguardingadults@durham.gov.uk

First Contact Service (for children and young people): 03000 267979

Other main contacts:

Durham Constabulary:

Tel: 101 (within County Durham) or 0345 6060365

Textphone (Minicom) 0191 3752090

Or in **emergency/urgent need to protect from harm**: 999

Childline: 0800 1111

County Durham Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Partnership 03000 268198

Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor: Mrs Beth Miller: 07968 034075

David Wilcox, Breathing Space & PCC Safeguarding Officer: 07769 156 747

Breathing Space Project Coordinator, Gillie Boggon: 07508 471 522

Team Vicar, Revd Michael Peers: 07487 306 251