

The Parish of Marcham with Garford

Safeguarding Policy

Promoting a safer church

CHURCH DETAILS

Name:	All Saints' Marcham with St. Luke's, Garford [hereafter "the Church"]
Address:	Church Street, Marcham, Abingdon OXON OX13 6NP
Parish Office:	All Saints' Church, Church Street, Marcham, Abingdon OXON OX13 6NP
E-mail:	info@allsaintsmarcham.org
Denomination:	Church of England, Diocese of Oxford

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PPC) meeting held on 24/6/2026.

CHURCH POLICY

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)** to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.

- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Team if we receive any DBS Disclosures that are not clear.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

****The appointed Parish Safeguarding Officer is Ruth Atkins.**

Incumbent, Rev. Nick Weldon (*signature*)

PSO, Ruth Atkins (*signature*)

Churchwardens:

Alison Lyndon (*signature*)

Sue Lawton (*signature*)

Date: 24/6/2025

This policy will be reviewed at least annually.

SAFEGUARDING PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

1.0 Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a church worker / volunteer carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following:

- If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.
- Concerns must be reported within 24 hours to either the incumbent (Rev. Nick Weldon – 07970 984190), or the Parish Safeguarding Officer (Ruth Atkins on 07857 557431) who is nominated by Marcham PCC to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- The PSO may also be required by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company (this will be via the church Administrator).
- Advice may also be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) (Erica Hegg on 07341 866832). The DSA will advise on the procedure to be followed and can advise on any matter around referral to statutory agencies.
- Further advice for concerns about a child is available via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0345 050 7666 (out of hours emergency number is 0800 833 408). The MASH may redirect the caller to a different team if required.
- Any allegations involving a church officer or person in a position of trust must be immediately reported to the DSA. After contacting the DSA, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted on 01865 815956.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the events / concerns should be made. This should be recorded as soon as possible after the concerns have been gathered, writing the individual's words rather than paraphrase, if applicable, and with date and signature and details of the person involved and their role in the church. This should be given to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and kept in a secure place. Forms for recording concerns are available in Appendix A.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to those nominated above, their absence should not delay the seeking of advice from the DSA or (MASH) referral to Children's Social Care.
- Marcham PCC will support the Parish Safeguarding Officer in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way, on a need-to-know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or adult protection agencies ([Reporting a safeguarding concern about someone | Oxfordshire County Council](#)), although Marcham PCC hope that members of the Church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Parish

Safeguarding Officer has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that Marcham PCC demonstrate the commitment of the Church to effective child protection.

2.0 The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer

The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to Children's social care or to Adult social care. It is the task of Children's Social Care to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 or for Adult social care to launch an investigation under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. Consent for reporting to either children's or adult social care should be sought, however there are circumstances where a referral to social care can and should occur without consent having been obtained.

2.1 Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional harm:

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or concern of emotional harm, the PSO will:

- Contact Children's Social Care, or the DSA, for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Will not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so having contacted Children's Social Care.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns (e.g. poor parenting) encourage parent / carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of injury.
- Where the parent / carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to seek help with them / on their behalf. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Social care direct for advice. Make this referral to Children's Social care via the Oxfordshire On-Line MASH referral form.
- Seek and follow the advice given by the DSA (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Care.

2.2 Allegations of sexual abuse:

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact MASH (0345 050 7666) or Emergency Duty Team (EDT) (0800 833 408) immediately who will speak with the TVP Child Abuse and Investigation Unit (CAIU). Do NOT speak to the parent / carer or anyone else. For cases of historical sexual abuse consider the on-line MASH referral route as appropriate to the situation and contact with the perpetrator.
- Seek and follow the advice given by the DSA if for any reason the PSO are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Care / Police.

2.3 Adults:

In an event of allegations of abuse involving an adult, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will refer to the [Adult Threshold of Needs Matrix](#) and refer accordingly. If they are unsure whether a referral is needed, advice can be obtained from the DSA.

3.0 Appointment, support, supervision and training of leaders and workers

Marcham PCC will ensure all workers / volunteers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the principles set out in the Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook (October 2018). The same principles will be applied to those appointed to work with vulnerable adults.

Marcham PCC is committed to on-going child protection training for all children / youth workers / volunteers and will ensure that the training delivered is reviewed and is in line with current thinking and practice.

Marcham PCC encourages **all** church members to be aware of safeguarding issues by undertaking the C of E online Basic Awareness and Foundation courses.

All volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults will be DBS checked and asked to undertake any relevant safeguarding training.

4.0 Working with ex-offenders

In accordance with Diocesan policy, no-one who has been convicted of / cautioned for a sexual offence against a child will be permitted to undertake regulated activity or have unsupervised access to children.

A person convicted of / cautioned for any other offense against a child or vulnerable adult for whom there are unresolved serious allegations outstanding will only be able to undertake regulated activity or have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults with the agreement of the incumbent following consultation with the DSA and the Police.

Those identified above will be involved in discussions concerning attendance at worship and other activities.

Having a criminal record does not necessarily bar someone from working with children or vulnerable adults – it will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances around any offences.

5.0 Domestic abuse

Marcham PCC acknowledges that domestic abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, coercive or a mixture of all of these and will seek to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse. It believes that domestic abuse in all its forms is contrary to the will of God and an affront to human dignity. All need to play their part in preventing or halting it. Any concerns of domestic

abuse should be reported to the nominated people in section 1.0. Consideration of child welfare always comes first.

6.0 Social media

Marcham PCC recognises that there are safeguarding issues associated with the use of social media where it involves children and vulnerable adults. Guidelines for the use of social media are in Appendix C.

APPENDIX A

CONFIDENTIAL

Parish of Marcham with Garford

Please remember – if a child or an adult is at immediate risk of significant harm or in immediate danger, call emergency services on 999
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Safeguarding Concern Form

Confidentiality is an important principle that enable people to remain safe in sharing their concerns and to ask for help. However, the right to confidentiality is not absolute. Sharing relevant information with the right people at the right time is vital to good safeguarding practice. Share information on a 'need to know' basis and do not share more information than is necessary.

(Please fill in each section, if not applicable mark as n/a)

About you

Your name:	
Your address:	
Your contact number:	
Your email:	
Your parish:	
Are you a church officer? If so, what role do you hold?	

If you have been told about the concern, and did not witness it, please complete this section

Who told you about the concern?	
Their email:	
Their contact number:	
Are they a church officer? If so, what role do they hold?	
Date/time concern was raised with you?	

About the place where you/they became aware of the concern

Group/activity:	
Date and time:	
Venue:	
Your role in the group/activity:	
Other adults around:	

About the person at risk

Person's name:	
Date of Birth (if not approx. age):	
Email:	
Contact number:	
Are they a church officer? If so, what role do they hold?	
Parental details	
What are this person's known or suspected vulnerabilities?	
Family details (siblings etc)	
School/nursery/workplace:	
Is a social worker already involved?	
What is the desired outcome of this referral?	

Alleged perpetrator (if applicable)

Person's name:	
Date of Birth (if not approx. age):	
Email:	
Contact number:	
Are they a church officer? If so, what role do they hold?	
Any other information about the alleged perpetrator you feel we should know:	

Witness statement.

Describe what was said and what you observed. Use extra paper if needed.

Type of abuse known or suspected

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Financial
- Domestic
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Spiritual abuse

Who have you contacted? *Fill in the date and time of those you have contacted about this incident.*

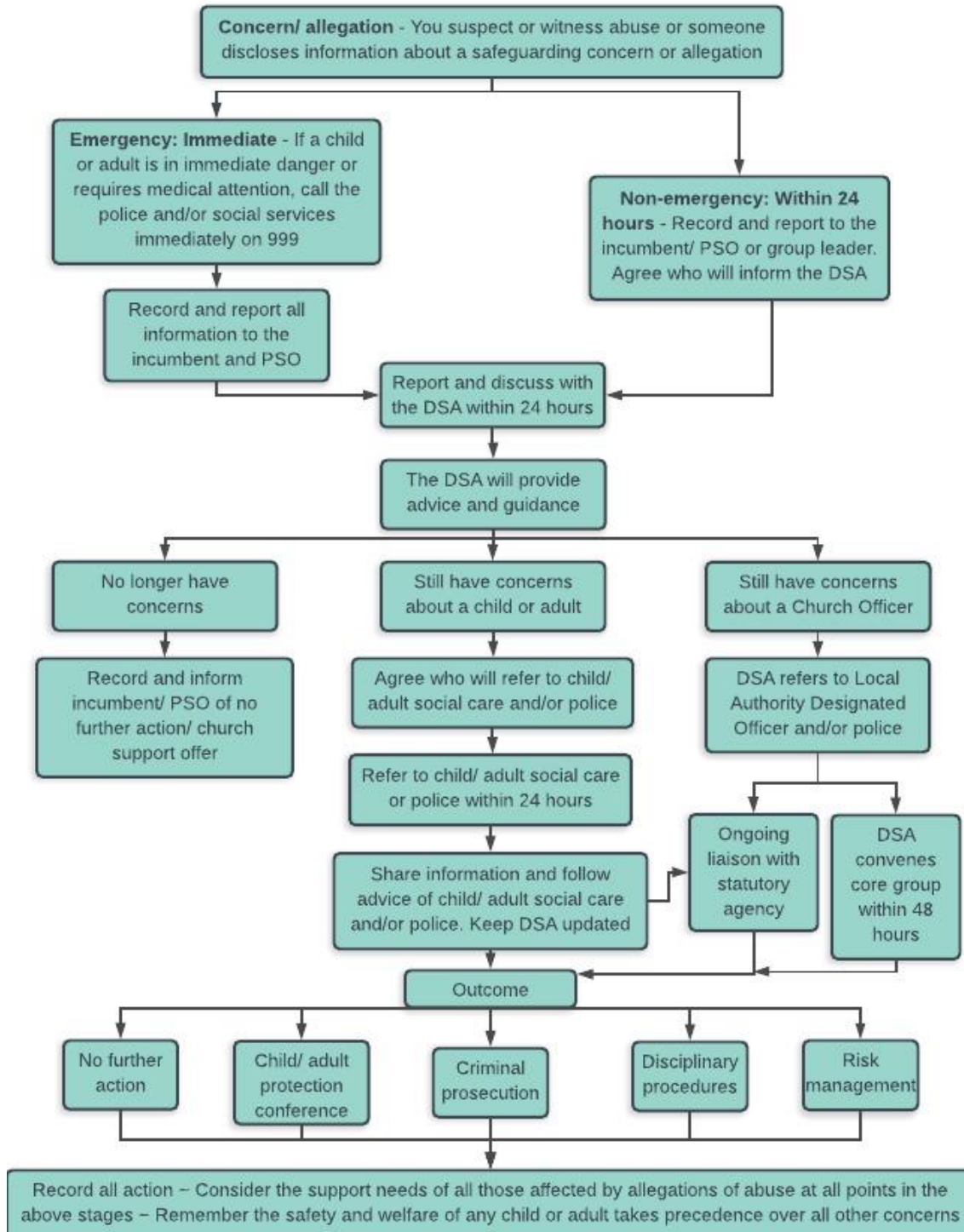
Name/role	Date and time	Type of communication (written, email or phone call)

Please return this form to safeguarding@allsaintsmarcham.org and phone Ruth Atkins to let her know you have sent it (07857 557431)

*****Once this form has been sent to the safeguarding office, please shred the hard copy and delete the electronic version.**

Appendix B

Quick Guide to reporting a concern



Appendix C

Guidelines for the use of social media

This includes the church Facebook page, all church related email and WhatsApp groups, and any other church related social media.

Legal considerations

The law views anything you share online as being in the public domain. Sharing your thoughts with friends using social media or email might feel private, but if more than one person can read what you have written, the law classes it as 'published', and therefore subject to numerous laws around libel, slander, copyright, Freedom of Information and data protection. If you would not say something to a local newspaper or in a meeting, you should not say it online.

Honesty and transparency

Truth matters – don't repeat unsubstantiated claims without finding out if they are true. Repeating an untruth does not make it true, and you are opening yourself up to the charge of libel and/or slander. When discussing topics relevant to our parish churches, the Church of England or the Diocese of Oxford, use your real name. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. It may be appropriate to use a disclaimer to the effect that views expressed are your own and not necessarily the view of everyone in our churches.

Tone

As with any other communication, think about the tone you use. Without visual clues, humour can easily be misinterpreted online. Make sure you are not trying to pass off offensive comments through your attempts at humour. Treat your friends and colleagues with respect and do not sound off online. As a rule of thumb, ask yourself:

- Would I be happy for my parents to read this?
- Would I be happy for God to read this?
- Would I be happy with this appearing on the front page of a national newspaper?

Permanence

Assume what you say is permanent. Even if you delete an online comment, it could already have been seen by other people or republished on other sites. It's easy to say something in the heat of the moment that you will come to regret, and it could remain online permanently for all to see. Always think carefully and never make personal comments about someone that you wouldn't also say in public or to them in person.

Security

Do not assume anything electronic is secure. You might be able to delete or recall an email but there's no guarantee the recipient will. Your privacy settings on social media might mean only your 'friends' or 'followers' can see the things you say, but there is no guarantee that they will not pass them outside of your trusted circles. Equally, be careful about any personal details you share online – again, assume anything you share about yourself is in the public domain.

Confidentiality

Social media does not change our fundamental understanding about confidentiality across the whole life of the Church. When telling a story that involves someone else, always ask yourself, 'Is this my story to tell?' Would it cause distress, inconvenience or embarrassment to others if they found out you had shared? If in any doubt, do not share it. Similarly, be careful when copying others into an email which has gone backwards and forwards a couple of times – there may be confidential information earlier in the correspondence.

Public vs private

Remember that the distinction between public and private lives is increasingly blurred. If you are an officer or paid member of staff of our church, anything you do or say in the public domain could be interpreted as being representative of the Church – even if you feel you are speaking in a personal capacity. A good name is easily lost, and the reputational damage caused may be widespread. Be aware that controversial or sensitive comments may attract attention of the media. If in doubt, take advice, but please remember that you are responsible for your online activities.

Children and young people

Maintain clear boundaries. You should not exchange private messages with young people via social media and should not accept 'friend requests' from young people without due consideration. If your youth work includes an element of social media, keep your communications public and send messages to whole groups, rather than individuals. Publishing photographs of children and young people is only permitted if a parental consent form has been completed. The Children and Families Minister, Jill Rowe and Youth Leader, Rob Finch will have these. If photos are not allowed of any child or young person, this must be adhered to.

Courtesy and respect

Increasing people use Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, X (Twitter), WhatsApp, Snapchat and TikTok to comment live events as they unfold. While this can enhance participation in a service or church event, consider whether it is courteous to those around you to be commenting on the contributions of others. Are you treating the speaker with courtesy and respect? Are you giving the meeting or event your full attention? Might you be distracting those around you? Are you acting with grace?

Social media is a tool, not an end in itself

Ask yourself: what am I trying to achieve here? Is this the best tool to use for that end? If you start something, do you have the resources to monitor and manage it? Remember the value of other forms of communication. It can become easy to hide behind an online person and neglect other relationships – remember that while social media is an exciting forum and presents opportunities, the value of face-to-face relationship should never be forgotten.

Live streaming of church services

It is good practice to have a footer on slides or at the beginning of a service to say if it is being live streamed on YouTube.

(June 2026)

Appendix D

Key contacts

Organisation	Contacts
Parish of Marcham with Garford	The incumbent, Rev. Nick Weldon on 07970 984190 or The Parish Safeguarding Officer, Ruth Atkins on 07857 557431 Safeguarding email for Ruth Atkins Safeguarding@allsaintsmarcham.org Ruth is assisted in her role by Shae Porter, our Safeguarding administrator who should be contacted about recruitment, training or DBS checks on safeguardingadmin@allsaintsmarcham.org
Diocese of Oxford	Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA), Erica Hegg on 07341 866832 During office hours, and if there is no immediate danger, call 01865 208 295 For <u>urgent</u> safeguarding concerns email safeguardingreferrals@oxford.anglican.org (Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm and Fri 9am-4.30pm). Outside of operational hours Please call our partners Thirtyone:eight on +44 (0) 303 003 1111 for confidential advice, guidance and support.
Oxfordshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Call 0345 050 7666 or complete this online form (in hours Monday to Thursday: 8.30am – 5pm and Friday: 8.30am – 4pm). Out of hours emergency number is 0800 833 408
Any allegations involving a church officer or person in a position of trust	Must be immediately reported to the DSA. After contacting the DSA, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be contacted on 01865 815956.

Additional supporting information

[The Church of England Parish Safeguarding Handbook \(August 2019\)](#)

[Diocese of Oxford Safeguarding webpages](#)

[Parish of Marcham with draft Garford Privacy Notice](#)

[Thirtyone:eight home page \(thirtyoneeight.org\)](#)