
SAFEGUARDING

SAFEGUARDING FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Key information

Safeguarding is an important aspect of all ministry at St Nick's and is the responsibility of everyone, whether you are leading groups of adults, young people or children. As small group leaders, you may encounter vulnerable adults or issues of current or historical abuse raised by adult group members.

Appropriate response to issues of both current and historical abuse is vital, for the protection of the individual and for others who may be impacted.

We're conscious that abuse, whether recent or historical, is sensitive and pastorally challenging. If you have any personal concerns, please seek support by speaking to your SLOB leader.

Please refer to this leaflet as necessary during the year. More information on supporting vulnerable adults can be found in the St Nick's Safeguarding Policy (electronic copies of these documents available at www.stnickschurch.co.uk/safeguarding or via mikey@snca.co.uk).

Thank you for helping us to serve the church family in this way.

What is abuse and what is historical abuse?

Abuse

The Department of Health states that “somebody may abuse or neglect an individual by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Individuals may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger” Abuse can be described under one of (or a combination of) these categories:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial and material abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self neglect

More information on areas of abuse and how to recognise signs of abuse can be found in the St Nick’s Safeguarding Policy.

Historic abuse is any allegation or disclosure of abuse committed in the past against a child or young person who is now an adult.

If anyone reports any of the above abuse to you, whether recent or historical, and whether they were the abused or the abuser, you must follow the action points on the next page.

Remember

1. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse
2. Children and young people means anyone under 18
3. Illegal activity includes sex with someone under age 16, child pornography and sharing explicit images of children
4. The church is required to take advice from the Diocese and may need to report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the Police.

When someone tells you they have been abused, or have committed abuse, whether recently or many years ago...

General points:

- (1) Above all else, listen
- (2) Keep calm, and show understanding/acceptance of what is said, however unlikely it seems. Reassure the individual that they were right to tell you
- (3) Never push for information. Avoid leading questions and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- (4) Let the individual know what you are going to do next and that you will keep them informed. Let them know that you will need to tell someone else - **don't promise confidentiality**
- (5) However, do reassure them that you will only tell who you need to, and that they will remain involved in decisions going forward

Action you must then take:

- (1) You must contact your Ministry Leader, Chris Fishlock, and tell him what you know (you do not need to disclose any names at this stage unless told otherwise). If the allegation is against your Ministry Leader, contact the Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO), Tricia Owusu-Sekyere (contact details can be found on the back page).
- (2) You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact either your Ministry Leader or the CSO.
- (3) Apart from telling your Ministry Leader or CSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with co-leaders, SLOB leaders or other church members
- (4) Under no circumstances should you investigate concerns of abuse yourself. Your role is to pass on the information you have received.
- (5) Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours),
 - writing down exactly what was said and when,
 - what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation),
 - record dates and times of these events and when you made the record.
 - Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. A copy of these notes must be passed onto your Ministry Leader/ CSO.
- (6) Consider your own feelings and ask your Ministry Leader for pastoral support if needed, and consider with your Ministry Leader what pastoral support is needed for the individual involved.

If you have any concerns or need to talk to anyone, please first contact the Minister, Chris Fishlock: chris@snca.co.uk, 0778 231 5549 otherwise contact the Church Safeguarding Officer, Tricia Owusu-Sekyere: safeguarding@snca.co.uk, 0795 722 7699

- If you have experienced abuse yourself, the issues raised by this document may be particularly sensitive. If you would like pastoral support, please approach your SLOB leader. We recognise this may be a very difficult thing to do, especially if you have not told anyone before, but we are eager to provide appropriate pastoral support.
- If you have committed abuse or any related form of criminal act in the past, we would encourage you to be open about it with the Minister, however difficult that may be.
- A disclosure of recent or historical abuse might have been made to you in a context outside of St. Nick's, for example on a summer camp. If you did not report the matter at the time, we encourage you to do so now, however much time has passed. If you are in doubt, please raise the matter with the Minister.
- If for any reason you feel unable to approach the Minister, please approach your SLOB leader in the first instance and seek advice. In the interests of maintaining appropriate confidentiality, we could encourage you to do this as a last resort without (at least in the first instance) disclosing the names of those to whom your concern relates.

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