Policy Statement

The Parish of Rayleigh believes that it is the joy and responsibility of the Church to welcome children and ensure that the Church is a place where they can grow and flourish, and be kept safe. It is therefore committed to protect and care for children and young people. This means that it will:

- Ensure that all its workers with children and young people, its clergy, and lay people meet the standards required by this policy
- Ensure that where Safeguarding issues are raised that they will be taken seriously. Anyone causing harm to children will be held to account and information will be shared with the relevant agencies and authorities.
- Work with any ex-offenders in our congregations to help them change their way of life.

To bring this about the Parish will:

- Work closely with the Diocesan Child Protection Advisor to ensure that our Policy and Procedures closely mirror those of the Diocese of Chelmsford.
- Develop its training programmes and make up to date information available through a variety of media, monitor practice across all activities
- Have strong and well managed risk assessment procedures
- Work with the organisations in our Parish and wider Diocese which protect children and monitor offenders
- Co-operate with other faith groups and denominations to protect and care for children and young people
- Offer help to all children regardless of race, disability, gender, culture or creed
- Listen to those who have been abused in the past and take their complaints seriously.

Adopted: 20th May 2013
Worried about a child? Here’s what to do.

When you are worried that there is any chance that a child or young person has been abused or harmed, is being abused, or is at risk of abuse or harm by a member of the church community or in an activity for which the Church is responsible, the Parish Child Protection Representative (PCPR) must be informed immediately. In the absence of the PCPR you should contact the Deputy PCPR and, if all else fails, contact the Diocesan Child Protection Advisor directly.

It is the responsibility of the PCPR to head up the Parish’s response to the incident. They in turn will contact the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser (DCPA) at the earliest opportunity who will provide ongoing support throughout the process.

This pattern also applies to claims of abuse by a person who is now an adult, but who was abused when a child or young person.

In either case, the PCPR must be contacted as quickly as possible once the claim has been made and no longer than 24 hours.

**How to contact the PCPR:**

Name: George or Jo Gibbs  
Home line: 01268 773 945  
Email: jogeo@bluebottle.com

**How to contact the deputy:**

Name: Revd Nick Rowan  
Home line: 01268 784426  
Mobile (emergencies): 07795 245212  
Email: nick.rowan@parishofrayleigh.org.uk

**How to contact the DCPA:**

Office direct line: 01245 294457  
Mobile (emergencies): 07903 831965  
Email: safeguarding@chelmsford.anglican.org  
Post: 53 New Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1AT

If there is no immediate answer to a phone call or email, leave contact details and you will normally be contacted within 1 working day. It is always best to leave a phone number, as this is the quickest way to ensure that your concerns are responded to quickly.
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1. **Purpose**

1.1 An effective Parish child protection policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected behaviour when dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the Parish’s commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns, referrals and monitoring may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.

2. **Introduction**

2.1 The Parish of Rayleigh takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care.

2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Chelmsford Diocesan policy which has been prepared in accordance with the national policy of the Church of England as approved by the House of Bishops.

It can be found at [www.churchofengland.org/media/37378/protectingallgodchildren.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/37378/protectingallgodchildren.pdf)

This manual has been issued by the Parish with the purpose of protecting those who are vulnerable to abuse or exploitation. It deals with children (defined as anyone under the age of 18). There are also national and local policies which relate to the needs of vulnerable adults, to bullying and to domestic abuse. The contents overlap: when we respond to a child protection issue we also must also take bullying and domestic abuse into account. A response to bullying may mean looking at its impact on a vulnerable adult.

The diocesan website [www.chelmsford.anglican.org/safeguarding/childprotection](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/safeguarding/childprotection) deals with safeguarding as a whole.

This manual is directed at different users, including church groups, clergy, administrative staff. It also aims to help statutory agencies understand how we manage child protection.

Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) [http://www.escb.co.uk](http://www.escb.co.uk). Furthermore, this Parish policy must be read in conjunction with the Diocesan Child Protection Policy to which this Parish policy directly relates.

2.3 There are four main elements to our child protection policy:

a) Prevention through the creation of a positive atmosphere and the pastoral support offered to children and young people.

b) Protection by following agreed procedures, ensuring team members are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.

c) Support individuals who have been abused.

d) Working with offenders

2.4 This policy applies to all those working with children and those attending events or activities organised under the authority of the PCC.

2.5 This Parish recognises that it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.
3. Parish policy

3.1 We recognise that for members of our Parish, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to prevent abuse.

Our Parish will therefore:

a) Establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe and secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.

b) Ensure that children and young people know that there are adults within the Parish who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.

c) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within Parishes and the Diocese who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those carrying out these responsibilities for the current year are listed on the second page of this document.

4.2 It is the role of the Parish Child Protection Representative to ensure that all of the child protection procedures are followed within the Parish, and to make appropriate, timely referrals to the Diocese in accordance with Parish procedures. If for any reason the Parish Child Protection Representative (PCPR) (see page 2) is unavailable, a Deputy Parish Child Protection Representative has been identified who will act in their absence (see page 2). Additionally, it is the role of the Parish CPCR to ensure that all those working with children within the Parish are aware of the Parish's internal procedures, to advise workers and to offer support to those requiring this.

4.3 The PCC are responsible for ensuring that the Parish follows safe recruitment processes. As part of the Parish's recruitment and vetting process, enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be sought (via the Diocese) on all individuals who have substantial and unsupervised access to children.

4.4 The role of the Nominated PCC Member for Child Protection is to ensure that the Parish has an effective policy, that the Diocesan guidelines are complied with and to support the Parish in this aspect. PCC Members must not be given details regarding individual child protection cases or situations to ensure that confidentiality is not breached.

4.5 The Parish will appoint a Named Person who may or may not be the PCPR. This person's role is to carry out identity checks for Disclosure and Barring Service applications. For the avoidance of doubt, the named person must not be the incumbent or any member of his/her family.

The named person must have an up to date DBS check. Checks should be renewed every 3 – 5 years.

4.6 The PCPR provides an annual report for the PCC detailing any changes to the policy and procedures, training undertaken by team members and other relevant issues.

4.7 Representatives from the Diocese (DCPR) are available to offer advice, support and guidance to the PCPR on 01245 294457 or, in an emergency, 07903 831965

5. Procedures

5.1 All action is taken in line with the following guidance;

a) Diocesan child protection policy.
5.2 All those working with children are kept informed about child protection responsibilities and procedures through induction, briefings and awareness training. There may be other adults in the Parish who rarely work unsupervised, more usually working alongside members of the Parish staff. However, they will be made aware of the Parish policy and the identity of the PCPR.

5.3 Anyone who works with children, or other member of the Parish, who receives a disclosure of abuse, an allegation or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the PCPR (see page 2) or in their absence the Deputy PCPR (see page 2). In the absence of either of the above, the DCPR should be contacted (See page 2).

5.4 The PCPR or their deputy will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the DCPR (see page 2) by telephone. (See the Diocesan child protection policy Part C for more details).

5.5 The Parish will always undertake to share the Diocese’ intention to refer a child to Children’s Social Care with the parents or carers unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from the DCPR and/or Essex Police.

5.6 A statement on the Parish website will inform parents and carers about our Parish’s duties and responsibilities under child protection procedures. Parents can obtain a copy of the Parish child protection policy on request from the Parish office at any time.

6. **Training and support**

6.1 Everyone who works with children (including all Clergy) will undertake appropriate child protection awareness training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, that is to be kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals.

6.2 The Parish will ensure that the PCPR and DPCPR undertake training and attend refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep knowledge and skills up to date.

6.3 All those working with children should have access to advice and guidance on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of induction and are referred to in the Children’s and Youth Work code of conduct.

7. **Confidentiality**

7.1 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a child nor should they agree with a child to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern this must be reported to the PCPR and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities. (See the Diocesan child protection policy Part A Section 5 for more details).

7.2 Everyone will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a “need to know” basis only. Any information shared with a volunteers or staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.
8. **Records and monitoring**

8.1 Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our Parish is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our Parish. For information about the status of such records and when these records should be passed to other agencies see the Diocesan child protection policy Part C Section 3.

8.2 Any member of the Parish receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time, and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken.

8.3 These file notes are kept in a confidential file, which is separate to other files, and stored in a secure place in the office of the Team Vicar. In the same way notes must be kept of any child who is being monitored for child protection reasons.

8.4 In order to ensure compliance with this policy and the Code of Practice the PCPR will support the various groups working with children in carrying out an internal audit of their procedures from time to time.

9. **Attendance at strategy meetings & core groups**

9.1 It is the responsibility of the PCPR to ensure that the Parish is represented and a report submitted to any child protection conference called for children from the Parish. Whoever attends should be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the Parish has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference. (See the Diocesan child protection policy Part C Section 2 for more details).

10. **Supporting children at risk**

10.1 Our Parish recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place.

10.2 The Parish can be a stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, whilst attending Parish activities their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

10.3 This Parish will endeavour to support children through:

   a) The Parish ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all children and adults a sense of being respected and valued.

   b) The implementation of appropriate behaviour management as outlined in the code of conduct.

   c) A consistent approach agreed by all team members which will endeavour to ensure the child knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued.

   d) Regular liaison with other agencies who support children and their families.

   e) A commitment to develop productive supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child’s best interest to do so.

   f) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgable team, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
g) Recognition that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse so staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

h) Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

11. Safe Parish, safe working

11.1 It is essential that the high standards of concern and responsibility adopted with regard to alleged child abuse by parents or carers are similarly displayed when members of the team are accused of abuse.

11.2 Only authorised agencies may investigate child abuse allegations (Social Care Services, the Police). Whilst is is permissible to ask the child(ren) simple, non-leading questions to ascertain the facts of the allegation, formal interviews and the taking of statements is not.

11.3 The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against an individual working with children is set out in the Diocesan child protection policy Part C Section 2.

11.4 The PCPR should in the first instance contact the DCPR. Through discussion and consultation a decision will be made whether or not to make a referral to Essex Children’s Social Care Services.

11.5 If for any reason it is decided that a referral to Essex Social Care Services is not appropriate, it will be necessary to address the matter in accordance with the Diocesan child protection policy.

12. Use of the church premises by other organisations

12.1 The Parish ensures that organisations using parish premises have confirmed that their organisation has a child protection policy, where appropriate, by making this requirement a condition of booking (see Parish Premises Bookings Terms and Conditions).

12.2 This Parish satisfies itself that any organisation seeking to use church premises, including halls, agrees not to undertake any practice which contravenes the Diocesan Child Protection Policies through the inclusion of this requirement in our conditions of booking (see Parish Premises Bookings Terms and Conditions). If it is discovered that such practices are in use:

- The organisation will be in breach of the contract
- A referral will be made to the DCPA; and
- The organisation may be referred to the police.

13. Whistle blowing

13.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where adults working with children fail to do so.

13.2 All those working with children should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary they should speak to the Team Vicar.

14. Working with offenders

14.1 Where a known offender is in the Parish, a written agreement must be in place outlining what activities in which this person is and is not able to participate. The incumbent, churchwarden and PCPR will be required to monitor the situation. There will be regular meetings with the individual to establish that the agreement is being adhered to.
15. **Adult survivors of abuse**

15.1 It is inevitable that adult survivors of abuse will be present in any church community. If survivors become aware of referred persons in a congregation, there is a risk that memories of abuse may be triggered.

15.2 If this happens, parishes must be prepared to provide pastoral support and the DCPA will provide advice about sources of counselling and advice.

15.3 Protocols for disputes and dissatisfaction are set out in the *Diocesan Child Protection Policy Part E*.

16. **Policy review**

16.1 The PCC is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy.

16.2 The PCC is responsible for ensuring that the key contacts list on page 2 is kept up to date.

17. **Appendixes**

**Appendix 1**  Child registration form
**Appendix 2**  Children's work team application form
**Appendix 3**  Children's work team application form covering letter
**Appendix 4**  Confidential declaration form
**Appendix 5**  Session register
**Appendix 6**  Risk assessment
**Appendix 7**  Volunteer agreement
**Appendix 8**  Recruitment policy
**Appendix 9**  Code of practice for children's and youth work