Blandford Forum Parish Church

Safeguarding Policy

Promoting a Safer Church

Parish: St Peter & St Paul, Blandford Forum
Adopted by PCC: 15th June 2026

1. Our Commitment

Blandford Forum Parish Church is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that all people should feel safe, welcomed, respected and valued.

This policy follows:

- The Church of England Safeguarding Policy and House of Bishops safeguarding guidance
- Statutory safeguarding requirements
- Dorset Council safeguarding procedures, as applied through the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA)
- Relevant guidance and procedures of the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) / Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership

All safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately.

2. Aims of this Policy

This policy aims to ensure that Blandford Forum Parish Church:

- Provides a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Prevents abuse through safer recruitment, training and supervision
- Responds effectively to safeguarding concerns and allegations
- Works within the Church of England safeguarding framework
- Cooperates with statutory agencies through the Diocese
- Signposts staff and volunteers to the local statutory safeguarding arrangements for Dorset, including the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership, Family Support and Advice Line and LADO arrangements

3. Our Commitments as a Church

In accordance with Church of England safeguarding policy, we are committed to:

- Promoting a culture of safety and vigilance
- Safely recruiting, training and supporting those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Responding promptly to all safeguarding concerns or allegations
- Caring pastorally for victims and survivors of abuse
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns, while prioritising safety
- Managing risks posed by individuals in a way that protects others

4. Parish Responsibilities

The parish will:

- Create and maintain a safe and caring environment
- Appoint a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)
- Ensure safeguarding training and induction for relevant staff and volunteers
- Maintain appropriate insurance for all activities
- Display safeguarding contact information on church premises and the parish website
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are handled in line with Church of England guidance

- Store safeguarding records securely
- Review safeguarding practice and this policy annually

All staff, volunteers and church officers are expected to comply with this policy.

5. Key Safeguarding Roles

Role	Name / contact route
Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)	Mary Henley
Incumbent	Revd Chris Beaumont
Churchwardens	Heidi Roberts; Stuart Britton
Diocese of Salisbury Safeguarding Team / Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser route	safeguarding@salisbury.anglican.org | 01722 438651, option 2

Local parish safeguarding contact information should be displayed on church premises and on the parish website. If the concern involves the PSO, Incumbent, or a Church Officer, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team should be contacted directly.

6. Types and Indicators of Abuse

This policy recognises that abuse can take many forms. Staff and volunteers are supported to recognise possible signs and indicators of abuse and to understand that indicators may be physical, emotional, behavioural, relational, spiritual, financial, sexual, online/digital or contextual. The presence of one indicator does not necessarily prove abuse, but any concern, pattern, disclosure or sense that something is wrong must be taken seriously and reported.

Types of abuse and harm recognised by this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Peer-on-peer abuse
- Bullying, harassment or discriminatory abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation and county lines
- Online or digital abuse
- Grooming
- Spiritual abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Self-neglect
- Modern slavery and trafficking
- Radicalisation and exploitation
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Abuse or neglect of adults with care and support needs

Possible indicators of abuse may include:

Area of concern	Possible indicators
Physical abuse	Unexplained injuries, bruising, burns, fractures or marks; injuries with inconsistent explanations; fear of going home or fear of particular people; flinching or avoiding physical contact; repeated accidents.
Emotional abuse	Low self-worth, anxiety, depression, fearfulness, withdrawal, extreme compliance, aggression, sudden changes in mood or behaviour, developmental delay, or persistent criticism, humiliation or rejection being described.
Sexual abuse or exploitation	Sexualised behaviour or language inappropriate to age or understanding; knowledge beyond developmental stage; unexplained gifts, money or phones; secrecy around online

	activity; sexually transmitted infections; pregnancy; fear, shame, avoidance or disclosure.
Neglect	Persistent hunger, tiredness, poor hygiene, untreated medical or dental needs, inadequate clothing, frequent absence, being left without appropriate supervision, or a pattern of unmet physical, emotional or developmental needs.
Domestic abuse	A child or adult appearing fearful, controlled or isolated; injuries or distress linked to a partner or family member; controlling communication, money or movement; repeated crisis at home; children showing anxiety, aggression, regression or sleep difficulties.
Online or digital abuse	Receiving sexual, threatening or coercive messages; pressure to share images; secrecy, distress or compulsive use around devices; online bullying; contact from unknown adults; sudden change in online behaviour.
Peer-on-peer abuse / bullying	Intimidation, coercion, humiliating behaviour, threats, exclusion, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, physical aggression, discriminatory language, or a child becoming frightened of peers or activities.
Grooming and exploitation	An adult or older young person offering special attention, gifts, transport, alcohol/drugs or secrecy; attempts to isolate a child or young person; boundary testing; a young person going missing or being found in unsafe contexts.
Adult safeguarding concerns	Changes in presentation, unexplained injuries, fearfulness, poor care, pressure about money or possessions, neglect of personal care, isolation, coercion, or a person with care and support needs being unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

Indicators may include changes in behaviour, unexplained injuries, fearfulness, withdrawal, or disclosures by a child or young person. All concerns must be treated seriously. A disclosure should be listened to calmly, recorded accurately, and reported; staff and volunteers must not investigate.

7. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Church of England Safeguarding Pathway

Blandford Forum Parish Church follows the Church of England safeguarding procedures, which require safeguarding concerns and allegations to be recognised, responded to, reported and recorded, and to be managed through the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser / Diocesan Safeguarding Team where required.

Safeguarding concerns must not be managed independently by the parish and must not bypass the diocesan system.

The normal parish route is:

1. A staff member, volunteer or church officer recognises or receives a safeguarding concern or disclosure.
2. They respond calmly, listen, reassure appropriately, and do not promise confidentiality.
3. They report the concern immediately to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent, unless that person is implicated.
4. The PSO or Incumbent contacts the Diocesan Safeguarding Team / DSA without delay for advice and case management.
5. The DSA advises on, or undertakes, referral and liaison with statutory agencies, including Dorset FSAL, Dorset LADO, Police, Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care as appropriate.
6. A written record is made and stored securely.

If the concern involves the PSO, Incumbent, another Church Officer, or there is any reason why the usual parish route is not appropriate, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team should be contacted directly. If someone is at immediate risk of serious harm, call 999 first and inform the PSO and DSA as soon as possible afterwards.

8. External Safeguarding Contacts and Signposting

The following contact details are included so that staff, volunteers and funders can see clearly how Dorset statutory safeguarding routes are accessed. In ordinary Church of England practice, parish staff and volunteers

report concerns to the PSO or Incumbent, who consult the Diocese of Salisbury Safeguarding Team / DSA. Direct contact with statutory agencies may be necessary in an emergency or where advised by the DSA.

Service	Purpose	Contact details / signposting
Emergency services	Immediate danger or urgent medical attention.	Call 999.
Diocese of Salisbury Safeguarding Team / DSA route	Church of England safeguarding advice, casework and statutory liaison for the parish.	Email: safeguarding@salisbury.anglican.org Phone: 01722 438651, option 2 Urgent out of hours: thirtyone:eight, 0303 0031111 (Friday 5pm to Sunday 10pm).
Dorset Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL)	Dorset statutory route for advice and referrals about children and families.	Phone: 01305 228558 Opening hours: Monday-Friday 8am-10pm; Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays 9am-10pm. Out of hours emergencies: 01305 221000. Signposting: Dorset Council "Worried about a child" / Family Help in Dorset pages.
Dorset Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Advice and management of allegations against adults working or volunteering with children in Dorset.	Email: LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Phone: 01305 221122 Referral route: Dorset Council LADO Referral Template, submitted to lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. Parish staff normally liaise through the DSA unless advised otherwise or in an emergency.
Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) / Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership	Local multi-agency safeguarding procedures, thresholds, guidance, training and resources for those working with children in Dorset.	Website signposting: pdscp.co.uk/dorset/ Procedures manual: pandorsetscp.trixonline.co.uk Relevant pages include reporting concerns, continuum of need, allegations against staff, child sexual abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, online safety, exploitation and wider safeguarding guidance.
Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board / Dorset Council Adult Safeguarding	Safeguarding adults with care and support needs who may be experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.	Signposting: Dorset Council "Safeguarding adults - report a concern" and Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board procedures. Immediate danger: call 999.

9. Dorset Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL)

This Safeguarding Policy makes specific reference to the Dorset Family Support and Advice Line (FSAL) as Dorset's statutory route for safeguarding advice and referrals relating to children and families.

Contact details: FSAL can be contacted by telephone on 01305 228558. Dorset Council publishes opening hours as Monday to Friday, 8am to 10pm, and Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays, 9am to 10pm. For out of hours emergencies, Dorset Council signposts 01305 221000.

In line with Church of England procedures:

- Staff and volunteers report concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent
- The PSO or Incumbent consults the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser / Diocesan Safeguarding Team
- The DSA determines whether and how FSAL should be contacted, unless immediate risk requires emergency contact first
- The parish records the concern and advice received in accordance with its Safeguarding Concern Process

Where church activities involve young people from outside the immediate parish, staff and volunteers are aware that Dorset Council safeguarding procedures apply when activities take place within Dorset, and that all statutory liaison is undertaken via the DSA unless there is an emergency or the DSA advises otherwise.

10. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

This policy recognises the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in managing allegations against adults working with children or young people, including paid staff, unpaid staff, volunteers, casual staff, agency staff and those working in a self-employed capacity.

Contact details: Dorset LADO can be contacted by email at LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or by telephone on 01305 221122. Dorset's LADO referral route uses the Dorset Council LADO Referral Template, submitted to lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

In accordance with Church of England safeguarding procedures:

- Any concern or allegation about an adult's conduct must be reported immediately to the PSO or Incumbent, unless that person is implicated
- The PSO or Incumbent must contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser / Diocesan Safeguarding Team without delay
- The DSA liaises directly with Dorset LADO and other statutory agencies as required
- Parish staff and volunteers do not contact LADO directly unless advised to do so by the DSA, the DSA is unavailable and urgent action is necessary, or there is an emergency situation

If a child or adult is in immediate danger, call 999 before contacting the PSO, Incumbent, DSA or LADO.

11. Safeguarding Concern Process

The parish operates a clear and robust safeguarding response process, detailed further in the Safeguarding Concern Process (Version 1.4 - October 2025). This policy confirms that the Safeguarding Concern Process contains the practical reporting and recording steps, while this policy sets out the overarching commitments, routes and external signposting.

All staff and volunteers must follow the 5 Rs:

1. Recognise a safeguarding concern
2. Respond calmly and appropriately
3. Report immediately to the PSO or Incumbent
4. Record accurately (who, what, when, where, how)
5. Refer through the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser / Diocesan Safeguarding Team

Emergency Situations

If a child or adult is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, call 999. The PSO and DSA must be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

Non-Emergency Concerns

- Concerns must be reported and recorded within 24 hours
- Staff and volunteers must not investigate concerns
- Confidentiality must not be promised
- All records are stored securely and confidentially

12. Training and Awareness

All staff and volunteers working with children, young people or vulnerable adults:

- Receive safeguarding induction
- Are trained to recognise indicators of abuse
- Understand the Church of England safeguarding pathway
- Know how to report concerns to the PSO or Incumbent
- Understand when the Diocese of Salisbury Safeguarding Team / DSA should be contacted directly
- Understand the role of the DSA in statutory referrals, including FSAL and LADO liaison
- Are signposted to Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance where this supports recognition of abuse, thresholds and local procedures

13. Review and Accountability

This Safeguarding Policy and related procedures are reviewed annually by the PCC to ensure continued compliance with Church of England guidance, statutory requirements and good practice.

The PCC will also review this policy earlier if Church of England guidance, diocesan requirements, statutory requirements or local Dorset safeguarding procedures change.

14. Reference and Signposting Sources

The following sources should be checked when this policy is reviewed, as contact details and procedures can change:

- Church of England Safeguarding e-manual: Reporting Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations
- Church of England diocesan safeguarding contacts
- Diocese of Salisbury Safeguarding pages and Safeguarding for Parishes guidance
- Dorset Council: Worried about a child / Family Help in Dorset
- Dorset Council and Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership: LADO / allegations against staff guidance
- Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership / Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website and procedures manual
- Dorset Council safeguarding adults information and Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board procedures

Signed:
Revd Chris Beaumont
Incumbent

Date:15th June 2026