The Code of Safer Working Practice†

Approved by the PCC on 28th September 2021. To be reviewed annually
Latest review: *24th February 2026*

The Code of Safer Working Practice expresses our commitment to demonstrating God's love by placing the highest priority on the safety of those to whom we minister. It sets out what we expect from anyone who ministers in our church, in both paid or voluntary roles, and is one of the ways we ensure high standards of safeguarding in all we do.

Upholding the code

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO). Staff and volunteers who breach this code may be subject to disciplinary procedures or asked to leave their role. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to the relevant statutory agency.

All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must:

- treat all individuals with respect and dignity
- respect people's rights to personal privacy
- ensure that their own language, tone of voice and body language are respectful
- ensure that children, young people and adults know who they can talk to about a personal concern
- record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another worker with their activity leader and/or the PSO. All written records should be signed and dated
- obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.

In addition, those working with children and young people must:

- always aim to work with or within sight of another adult
- ensure another adult is informed if a child needs to be taken to the toilet
- respond warmly to a child who needs comforting but make sure there are other adults around
- ensure that the child and parents are aware of any activity that requires physical contact and of its nature before the activity takes place.

All those working on behalf of the parish with children, young people and adults must not:

- use any form of physical punishment
- be sexually suggestive about or to an individual
- scapegoat, ridicule or reject an individual or group
- permit abusive peer activities, for example initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying
- show favouritism to any one individual or group
- allow an individual to involve them in excessive attention-seeking
- allow unknown adults access to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable. Visitors should always be accompanied by an approved person
- allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable in the group
- befriend children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable on social media
- take photographs on personal phones or cameras as this means that images are stored on personal devices.

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In addition, for children and young people, you must not:

- give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example in an emergency for medical reasons or where parents fail to collect a child and no other arrangements can be made to take a child home. In such situations, the circumstances and your decision must be recorded and shared with an appropriate person at the earliest opportunity)
- smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people
- arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include family members/carers) outside organised group occasions.

Acceptable touch

Sympathetic attention, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, can be wholly appropriate. However, abusers can use touch that appears safe to 'normalise' physical contact which then becomes abusive. As a general rule, the use of touch between adults in positions of responsibility and those with whom they are working or volunteering should be initiated by the person themselves, and kept to the minimum. In addition to this, always follow the guidelines below:

- ask permission before you touch someone
- allow the other person to determine the degree of touch except in exceptional circumstances (for example, when they need medical attention)
- avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual, abusive or offensive
- keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors
- touch should be in response to a person's needs and not related to the worker's needs. Touch should be age-appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the worker.

[†]*This appendix reproduces the Church of England's Code of Safer Working Practice.*
http://bit.ly/CoECode