



Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Warbleton

Policy and Guidance for Responding to Safeguarding Allegations

As members of the PCC of this parish:

- 1 We recognise that in all matters that involve allegations that someone has, or may have, caused harm to another person, whether child or adult, the welfare of the alleged victim is paramount and is our primary concern.
- 2 We recognise that it is not our responsibility to investigate allegations, nor would it be appropriate for us to do so. Our responsibility is to pass allegations on to the person/people who can respond appropriately.
- 3 In the first instance, this will normally involve informing the incumbent and the parish safeguarding officer (unless the allegation is about them) or in their absence a member of the Parish Safeguarding Team, and the completion of a full set of notes.
- 4 Upon becoming aware of any allegation that someone in our church community has harmed, or may have harmed, a child or adult, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team will be informed and consulted (this will normally be done by the incumbent and/or the parish safeguarding officer or, in their absence, by a member of the Parish Safeguarding Team). Out of office hours, advice will be sought from the local authority.
- 5 We recognise that any allegation that a person in a position of responsibility for children (paid or voluntary) has behaved in a way that indicates they may present a risk to children, will be referred by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and, if the alleged behaviour is of a criminal nature, to the police.
- 6 We recognise that any allegation that a person in a position of responsibility for adults (paid or voluntary) has behaved in a way that indicates they may present a risk to adults, will be referred by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to the local Adults Services team manager and, if the alleged behaviour is of a criminal nature, to the police.
- 7 We recognise that human behaviour is complex and many-layered, and that any individual may have motives or intentions that are not apparent, even to those who believe they know them well. Practically speaking, this means that we will commit to ensuring that any allegation that a person has harmed, or may have harmed, a child or adult will be taken seriously even when that person is a highly respected individual whose integrity appears to be without question, while further investigation is carried out. However care must be taken to avoid premature judgement, to maintain respect, and to maintain strict confidentiality.
- 8 We recognize that the best way to identify any false or malicious allegation is to treat all allegations in the same way. A fair and accountable process that is consistently applied is best for all involved, including those against whom allegations are made.
- 9 We recognise that all involved in situations where allegations are made require pastoral support. Both the person making the allegation and their family, and the person against whom the allegation is made and their family, will require skilled and careful pastoral support. Providing that support may be complex, and we commit to working with the wider Diocese should this situation arise.
- 10 We commit to implementing the advice received or any outcome arising from the above process.