

Parish of St Edmund's and St Mark's, Wootton Bridge Part of the East Medina Plurality

Code of Conduct

(based on the Church of England Code of Safer Working (Practice))

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to the Parish Safeguarding Officer. 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 made to the relevant statutory agency.

Basic Principles

- 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 Parish Safeguarding Officer. All written records should be signed and dated. Remember to state facts not opinion. Follow the three Ws – What did you see? Who was involved? When did it happen?
- Obtain written consent for any photographs or videos to be taken, shown, displayed or stored.

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 (e.g. 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.

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 e.g. 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.

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

- Give lifts to children you are supervising, on their own or your own (unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. 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, except when this is a social situation with family members/carers present
- Arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include family members/carers) outside organised group occasions.

Related Policies

Social media

Lone working

Policy Review

Reviewed by: Parish Safeguarding lead.

Agreed by the PCC: 28 May 2026

Signed and Agreed

Incumbent: Vacancy

Churchwardens: Harry Kirby and Steve Beynon

Next review: May 2028