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St Mary's Wootton safeguarding policy

The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on 19 January 2026.

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church is committed to:

- promoting a safer environment and culture.
- safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- caring pastorally for victims / survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Parish will:

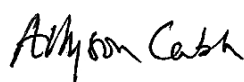
- create a safe and caring place for all.
- have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the Incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- offer support to victims / survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This church appoints Kate Wilson as Parish Safeguarding Officer with the assistance of Emma Hearn, Martin Sanders and Pauline Kendell.

Churchwardens:

Allyson Cable

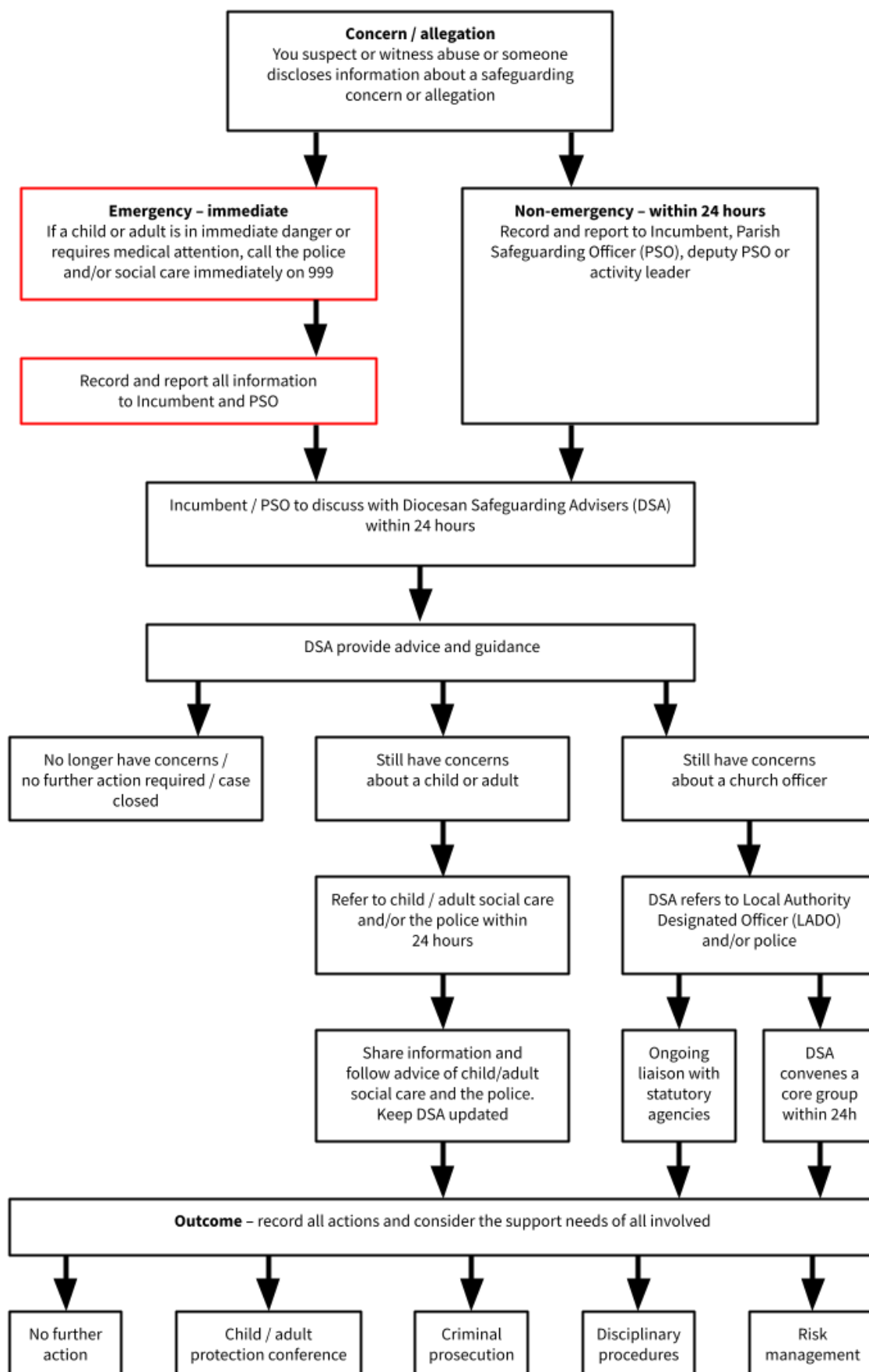
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allyson Cable'.

Tim Dillistone

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Dillistone'.

Date: 19 January 2026

Appendix 1: Guide to responding to a safeguarding concern or allegation



Appendix 2: Responding to concerns of abuse

Do:

- Listen.
- Take seriously what is said.
- Only use open questions. (Open questions begin with words like who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no”).
- Remain calm.
- Consider the person’s age and level of understanding.
- If face to face, check whether they mind you taking notes while they talk, so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end, you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Reassure the child or adult (who may have been threatened, told to keep what is happening secret, or told that no one will believe them) that they have done the right thing in telling someone, and that they are not to blame.
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell your activity leader / Parish Safeguarding Officer / statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next, including that you may have to pass the information on to someone who can help.
- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Use the safeguarding concern form to record the facts of what has been told to you, immediately but no later than 24 hours after the disclosure or concern.
- Always consider whether immediate medical attention is required and if it is safe for the person to go home.
- Report concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO): safeguarding@stmarys.org.uk
- Leave enquiries to the investigating agencies.

Do not:

- Do not make promises to keep information to yourself.
- Do not make assumptions.
- Do not investigate by yourself.
- Do not contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Do not do a physical or medical examination.
- Do not speculate or jump to conclusions.
- Do not delay or decide to give the benefit of the doubt to parents or others.
- Do not stop the person while they are freely recalling significant events.

Record concerns:

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Record the date, time, place and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
- Record only facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.

Report:

- Report to the PSO or Incumbent within 24 hours.
- Report to police or relevant agency if there is an immediate danger to the individual or others.
- The PSO or Incumbent will report to DSA.

Appendix 3: Contact details

Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO)	Kate WILSON	safeguarding@stmaryswootton.org.uk
	Emma HEARN	
	Pauline KENDALL	
	Martin SANDERS	
Incumbent (vicar)	Joseph ADEWALE	vicar@stmaryswootton.org.uk
Churchwardens	Allyson CABLE	wardens@stmaryswootton.org.uk
	Tim DILLISTONE	
Children's services	Bedford Borough Council	01234 718700 / out of hours 0300 300 8123
	Central Bedfordshire Council	0300 300 8142 / out of hours 0300 300 8123
Adult services	Bedford Borough Council	01234 276222 / out of hours 0300 300 8123
	Central Bedfordshire Council	0300 300 8303 / out of hours 0300 300 8123
Diocesan Safeguarding Officers (DSO) www.stalbansdiocese.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-contacts	Jeremy HIRST	01727 818107 / 07867 350886 safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org
	Dave ADAMS	01727 818104 / 07469 351357
	Warren LUCAS	01727 818106 / 07311 310545
Police	Emergency	999
NHS mental health www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/Where-to-get-urgent-help-for-mental-health/	Out of hours all ages mental health line	111, "mental health" option
	North Bedfordshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	01234 893 300
	Community mental health team (adults)	01234 880433
Helplines	NSPCC	0808 800 5000
	ChildLine	0800 1111
	National Domestic Abuse helpline	0808 2000 247
	Thirtyone:eight (Christian safeguarding support)	0303 003 111
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Bedford Borough Council	01234 276 693 Lado@bedford.gov.uk
	Central Bedfordshire Council	0300 300 8142 LADO@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Appendix 4: Record of concern

Date of record:	
Name and role of person completing form:	Contact details of person completing form:
Initials of individual(s) to whom the concern relates:	Ages and DOB of individual(s) concerned, if known:
Record of concern / contact: <i>(please use initials when detailing concerns and detail facts of what was said, heard or seen)</i>	
Reported to: Parish Safeguarding Team Member / Incumbent / Diocese Safeguarding Officer <i>(delete as applicable)</i> Other agencies <i>(please specify)</i> :	
Follow-up action:	

Appendix 5: Church activities

Growth groups	Weekly groups for Bible study and fellowship Overseen by Joseph Adewale
Sunday groups for children and young people	Weekly gatherings during 10am Sunday service Overseen by Emma Hearn
J@m for young people	Fortnightly meeting on Sunday evening Led by Emma Hearn
Lunch Club for people over 50	Monthly meeting Led by Jean-Michel Rodrigues
Church services	Weekly 10am Sunday service Led by Joseph Adewale / staff team / wardens
Woman's ministry	Ad hoc events agreed by PCC in advance
Men's ministry	Ad hoc events agreed by PCC in advance
Holiday Club for children and young people aged 5–14	Annual summer holiday programme Led by Emma Hearn and approved by PCC in advance

Appendix 6: Safeguarding training requirements at St Mary's

Role	Training requirements
Parochial Church Council (PCC)	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • (optional: <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i>)
Children and youth volunteers	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i>
Pastoral care team	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i>
Growth group leaders	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i>
Welcome team	• <i>Basic Awareness</i>
Sound and tech team	• <i>Basic Awareness</i>
Refreshments	• <i>Basic Awareness</i>
Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO)	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i> • <i>Leadership</i> • <i>Safer Recruitment and People Management</i> • <i>Parish Safeguarding Officer Induction Training</i>
Clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers, Authorised Lay Local Ministers	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i> • <i>Leadership</i> • <i>Safer Recruitment and People Management</i>
Churchwardens	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i>
Administrator and other paid staff	• <i>Basic Awareness</i>
Clergy with Permission to Officiate	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i> • <i>Leadership</i>
Pastoral care team	• <i>Basic Awareness</i> • <i>Foundations</i> • <i>Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse</i>

Compliance of training will be monitored by the PSO. Clergy training is managed and monitored by the Diocese of St Albans. The highest safeguarding training required should be renewed every three years.

Appendix 7: Safer recruitment process

Recruiting volunteers and staff

Volunteers and staff who work with children and vulnerable adults will be appointed by the PCC on the recommendation of the Incumbent / Youth and Children's Worker. Assistant leaders for each group will be recruited with the involvement and agreement of the Youth and Children's Worker or group leader in consultation with the Incumbent. Interviews will take place but may be informal or formal. Satisfactory references will also be sought prior to anyone starting a new role.

New volunteers will:

- have read and understood St Mary's safeguarding policy.
 - have read and understood the [Diocese of St Albans Best Practice Guidelines](#) document regarding working with children and or vulnerable adults.
 - agree and sign a standard role description.
 - sign a declaration confirming awareness of safeguarding policies and risk assessments.
 - sign a confidential declaration form.
 - receive a DBS clearance and then renew every three years.
 - undertake Diocese safeguarding training – *Basic Awareness, Foundations and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse*. The highest level is to be renewed every three years.
 - provide two references, one from within St Mary's and one from another source.
 - have completed an application form.
 - complete a three-month probationary period.
 - complete an induction process.
 - Attend a group team meeting.
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Appendix 8: Best practice guidelines

For guidance on best practices when arranging activities or working with children, young and vulnerable people, visit the [Diocese of St Alban's Best Practice Guidance](#) website. It is a useful and easily accessible list of Dos and Don'ts, and also has downloads of the Parish Safeguarding Toolkit, a leaflet on working with children and the Code of Conduct for working with vulnerable adults.