

**St Andrew's Church
Bedford**

**HEALTH AND SAFETY
POLICY**

and guidelines for safe working

**Reviewed and adopted on 15 November by PCC for the year
2022—2023**

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Further information is available in the white **Health and Safety folder** which is to be found in the cupboard in the Church Office

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1 **General Statement**

The Parochial Church Council recognises and accepts its responsibilities as an employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees whilst at work, contractors, volunteers and others who may be affected.

The Parochial Church Council will take all reasonable steps within its power to meet these responsibilities, as far as possible, paying particular attention to the following:

- Provision and maintenance of healthy and safe premises and systems of work.
- Provision and maintenance of a working environment free of health and safety risks and provide satisfactory facilities for staff.
- Provision of adequate information, instructions, training and supervision.
- Safe arrangements in the use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances.
- Ensuring that any machinery or equipment provided is safe and that instructions on its use are provided.
- Maintaining premises, including access and exits, in a healthy and safe condition.
- Making staff aware of what evacuation procedures to follow in the event of a fire or other emergency situation.
- Reasonable steps to avoid fire and procedures to ensure safe escape in the event of fire.

All Staff and Volunteers are to receive a copy of this document, to read in full and retain for future reference.

A volunteer may be defined as any congregation member or any other person who assists with any of the activities of the Church and the Centre on a voluntary basis.

2 Who is Responsible?

The Health and Safety Policy is determined by the Parochial Church Council, which has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Council's health and safety policy. This policy will be reviewed and updated every year. The Vicar and other clergy, the Church Wardens, the Centre Manager and members of the Church Centre Management Committee also have responsibility as part of their roles.

Every member of staff and every volunteer, while at work, has an obligation to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other people who may be affected by their actions.

All staff and volunteers should co-operate with the Parochial Church Council to fulfil the obligation to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, by familiarising themselves with the procedures set out in this Health and Safety Policy.

Staff and volunteers are actively encouraged to make a positive contribution to the safety of their workplaces, by informing the Church Centre Office, the Church Wardens or a member of staff if they become aware of any serious or dangerous situation or any shortcomings in health and safety arrangements.

Regular reports to the Parochial Church Council will be made in respect of any matters affecting health or safety.

3 Staff and Volunteers working on the premises

The PCC acknowledges the valuable contribution to the maintenance, repair and redecoration of the Church and the Church Centre provided by staff and volunteers, but it is concerned that the health and safety of all volunteers, staff and other people using the premises should be of paramount importance.

All volunteers should learn the location and correct use of items relating to Health and Safety, such as telephones, fire extinguishers, fire blankets, wheel chairs and first aid equipment

For the safety of themselves and those they are working with they should have regard to the following at all times when working on any part of the premises and:

- **If in doubt about the safety of any operation – Stop! Get help – Do not take risks**
- Do not work alone.
- Keep the working area as clear as possible.
- Avoid risk from trailing electric cables or hoses.
- Use adequate lighting in work areas.
- Wear appropriate protective clothing, particularly gloves, footwear and headgear, eye and ear protectors.
- Always use materials in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep children and unauthorised people away from work areas (including the kitchen). Use barriers to close off where required.
- Leave areas tidy on completion of work and put all tools away in their appointed storage place.
- Take extreme care when using flammable materials.
- Never overload electrical equipment.
- Do not use electrical tools in damp or wet conditions, unless battery operated.
- Always report any accident or injury sustained, to the Church Centre Office.

Tools and Equipment

- Select the right tool or piece of equipment for the job.
- Check it is sound – never use faulty tools or equipment.
- Use it safely and carefully and only for the purpose specified by the supplier.
- Follow the manufacturer's safety instructions strictly.
- Use appropriate protective clothing, particularly footwear and a hard hat, if appropriate.
- Use appropriate eye/ear/breathing protection.

- Equipment brought temporarily on site must be in safe condition and used by competent people.
- If equipment is found or suspected to be faulty, do not use it. Label the item and enter details in the Maintenance Record Book and report it to the Church Centre Office.
- Repairs to faulty equipment must be undertaken only by accredited members or contractors.

Manual Handling:

The section is particularly important for staff and volunteers moving stacks of chairs, the choir stalls and the staging platforms.

- **Stop and think** – plan the lift.
- Do not attempt to lift heavy items without help.
- Use appropriate handling aids where possible.
- Wear appropriate clothing and protection, particularly footwear.
- Remove obstructions such as discarded wrapping materials.
- For a long lift consider resting the load mid-way.
- Position feet correctly.
- Adopt a good posture.
- Get a firm grip.
- Keep close to the load.
- Do not jerk.
- Put down first, then adjust.
- Avoid excessive fatigue.
- If in doubt, get help.
- Take special care when handling hazardous materials.

Ladders and Step Ladders and Trestle Scaffolds and Platforms:

More information can be found in the Health and Safety Executive Guidelines which is in the white Health and Safety folder in the cupboard in the Church Office

Mowers:

Before use, user should check

- That the mower is in proper working order and free from damage.
- Always return mowers to shed after use and ensure that the door is locked.
- Petrol must be kept in a suitable approved container with a screw cap, and should be stored in the shed.
- Always wear appropriate clothing including trousers, ear plugs, eye protection and sturdy footwear. (shorts and sandals should not be worn).

The tower and bell chamber:

It is necessary to go up to the roof of the tower to raise the flag or for inspection and maintenance. The ladders to the bell chamber and the roof are especially hazardous. Anyone going to the roof must ensure that someone else in the building is aware where they are going in case of an accident. The door to the Flower Room should be closed to avoid a child following them out of curiosity.

Tower Bells: The Tower Bells pose a particular danger if handled by inexperienced people. It is the responsibility of the Tower Captain or the most senior ringer to ensure the bells are left 'down' after being rung and ropes looped and raised out of reach on the 'spider' which is then padlocked. On the rare occasions when the bells need to be left 'up' (e.g. before ringing for a wedding) the ropes must be looped on the 'spider' and padlocked and a large notice hung on the padlock to warn that the bells are 'up'.

No child should be allowed in the ringing chamber without an adult unless they are a competent ringer.

Visual Display Equipment – VDUs:

Staff and volunteers using VDUs should make full use of the equipment provided and adjust it to get the best from it to avoid potential health problems:

Getting Comfortable:

- Adjust the chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for work.
- Make sure you have enough work space to take whatever documents or other equipment you need.
- Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help to avoid awkward neck and eye movements.
- Arrange the desk and VDU to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. Avoid directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light.
- Make sure there is space under the desk to allow legs to move freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, especially for shorter users.

Keying in:

- Adjust the keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and do not overstretch the fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.

Using a Mouse:

- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you do not have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.
- Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too hard.
- Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them too hard.

Reading the Screen:

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit light conditions in the room.
- Make sure the screen surface is clean.

- When setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye.
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focussed and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

Posture and Breaks:

- Do not sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change posture as often as practicable. Avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange the workstation).
- Take opportunities to take a break from the screen. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.

4 Preparation of Food and Drink (see the Food Hygiene regulations 2006)

The Church Centre is equipped with an excellent and well equipped kitchen plus a small area in the Holt Room for preparing drinks. The kitchen is regularly used for preparing food for events. Ideally, the person in charge of preparing food should have a certificate in Food Hygiene and anyone assisting should be trained in the basic principles of food hygiene.

- All those using the kitchen are responsible for ensuring that it is left clean and tidy.
- Any damage or broken equipment should be reported to the Centre Manager.
- No child under 14 should be allowed in the kitchen on their own.
- Great care should be taken when using knives and sharp utensils.
- The oven, stove top, warming oven, electric urn and dishwasher are all potentially places for burns and scalds and equipment should be used with great care.
- Spills of water and oil, particularly, should be mopped up immediately and the kitchen users warned of the danger of slipping.

- There is a first aid box and a telephone for emergencies in the kitchen.

5 Accidents and First Aid

Most accidents that occur on Church premises are falls as a result of uneven or slippery ground, or poor lighting. All staff and volunteers should be alert to and report any areas of concern.

External pathways should be checked for cracked or raised paving stones and slippery areas. Internally, checks should be made for damaged floors and carpets. Candle wax on the floor is a hazard in the church. The kitchen floor is particularly hazardous when wet from spills. Notices should be displayed if floors are wet.

First Aid Boxes are located:

- At the back of the Church in the south west (children's) corner
- In the Centre inside the kitchen
- In the Centre by the rear door to the Car Park
- In the Church Centre Office
- A portable box is available on request from the Church Centre Office
- In the Mower Shed

The appointed person responsible for the first aid boxes is the Health and Safety officer. A list of people who have up-to-date training in first aid can be found inside the boxes.

Plastic disposable gloves should be worn when treating bleeding injuries and when cleaning up and disposing of bodily waste.

All accidents must be recorded in the accident book, which is located in the Church Centre Office, and reported to the Health and Safety Officer who is responsible for reporting accidents to the Local Authority Environmental Health Department if required. Accident Forms are to be found in or near the First Aid Boxes.

Certain workplace accidents are reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.

Immediate notification to the Local Authority Environmental Health Department by telephone is required if:

- *A member of the public is killed or taken to hospital following an accident on the premises. This must be followed up with a report form (F2508) within 10 days.*
- *An employee, volunteer or self-employed person working on the premises is **killed** or suffers **major injury**. This must be followed up with a report form (F2508) within ten days.*
- *A written report (F2508) must also be sent to the Local Authority, Environmental Health Department within ten days of any other injury to an employee or volunteer which results in their absence from work, or being unable to do their normal work for more than three days.*

Major Injuries include fractures (other than to fingers, thumbs or toes), amputation, dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine, incidents resulting in electrical shock etc.

Diseases relating to work activities are also covered by the above regulations.

First Aid Training

People on the list of First Aiders will be required to renew their certificates every three years following additional training which will be arranged by the Health and Safety Officer. From time to time, others will be invited to join them and undertake the training.

6 Access for people with disabilities.

The Church and Church Centre have good access for people with poor mobility or in wheelchairs. However such people may need help over the sills to the main entrance of the church and in other doorways. Sidespeople, specifically need to be aware that people may require help when entering the church

The handrails on the Foyer stairs should be checked regularly to ensure that they have not come loose and children should be discouraged from swinging on them.

When lighting church services, consideration should be given to those with poor sight, who need a brighter light to read by and to see when they move around.

7 Fire Safety

All staff and volunteers should:

- Learn the location of fire-escape doors and the safe routes to them and know where should assemble..
- Learn the location of fire extinguishers and fire blankets and how to use them with safety.
- Ensure that **NO SMOKING** rules are observed.
- Ensure that fire doors are not left wedged open.
- All corridors, foyers and aisles must be kept clear at all times to permit the unimpeded movement of wheelchairs and to avoid interference with means of escape.
- Overcrowding should be avoided
- On seeing a fire or smelling smoke:
 - Immediately raise the alarm.
 - Evacuate the building to Kimbolton Road or the Car Park
 - Always use the nearest available exit.
 - **Do not** stop to collect personal belongings.
 - **Do not** re-enter the building.
 - Call the fire brigade and other emergency services giving the post code **MK40 2PF**
 - Close doors wherever possible to contain the fire.

Trained individuals can use fire extinguishers to fight the fire, if possible without risking personal injury

Telephones are located:

- In the Office – you must dial all digits of the number
- In the Consulting Room – you must dial all digits of the number
- In the vestry – you must dial all digits of the number
- In the Kitchen – 999 use only

Candles

- Church candles must be extinguished, using snuffers, by the duty server, vergers or sidespeople as soon as practical after any service (except those lit daily in the Chapel on the votive candle holder and above the reserved sacrament)
- Boxes of matches must be kept in the clergy vestry between services, except for one box which is kept in the chapel for lighting the candles daily.
- Children with candles should be under adult supervision.
- Candles should only be used with an appropriate holder.
- Hand held candles should be extinguished if children are moving about the church.
- Decorations to candle holders should be flame retardant.

Rubbish

To avoid a risk of fire, rubbish should not be allowed to collect and must be disposed of regularly in the Wheelie bins which are located near the rear entrance to the Church Centre and in the Church Centre Car Park.

8 Traffic and Parking

- People arriving at the Church/Church Centre by car should use the Church Centre Car Park, approached from St Alban Road, or park safely in the adjoining roads.
- Access to private properties and driveways should be left clear and no vehicles should be double parked so as to block any road or prevent access by emergency vehicles.
- At all times consideration should be given to the safety and convenience of local residents.
- Pedestrians should take particular care when going to or from the car park.
- Children should be carefully supervised when near any vehicles.
- Drivers should not reverse their vehicles into St Alban Road when leaving the Church Centre Car Park.
- Whilst the church has no control over the bay immediately outside the church entrance, where possible it should be kept free by church goers for use by people with a mobility

problem or holding a 'blue badge'. There are three designated bays in the car park for disabled drivers/passengers.

- Pedestrians and cyclists should use the controlled crossing lights when crossing Kimbolton Road.
- Bicycles should be locked to the bike rack on the left of the Centre entrance or in the car park. They should not be left in the Foyer.

9 Locking up the Church and Church Centre.

(see also St Andrew's Security Policy)

The people designated to lock up, should ensure that before leaving the premises:

- All lights are off.
- All windows are closed and locked.
- Electrical equipment is off and unplugged (except for equipment otherwise marked and equipment on time clocks).
- Fire escape doors are closed and no fire doors are left open.
- Check all rooms and toilets are unoccupied.

Only authorised people may set alarms.

Key holders leaving the premises should liaise with any other people or groups on the premises and check the notice board near the door to the Church Centre Office, to ensure that no-one is locked in.

10 The Personal Safety of Staff and Volunteers

Ideally no-one should be in the Church Centre or the Church alone.

- When the cleaner or caretaker are working alone in the church and church centre, they should be particularly alert

if the alarm is not set when unlocking first in the morning. If they have any concerns that there is already someone in the building who should not be there, they should call someone else to go into the Centre with them. When they are alone in the building the doors should be locked.

- When a member of staff or volunteer is working alone in the office, they may choose to lock the back door and the front door or the office door.
- **Morning and Evening Prayer:** Anyone leading Morning or Evening Prayer who finds themselves alone should know that they can either lock the church door or forgo the service and return home if they feel unsafe.
- Locking up the Church and Church Centre (see 9 above). Each evening someone is designated to lock the church and lock and alarm the Church Centre. The person will frequently be alone. They should be advised to carry a mobile phone and turn on the lights, turning them off as they proceed in the checking process from the far end of the Church Centre to the front door (or back door).

11 Covid-19

The Church Wardens with the assistance of the Church Centre Staff have carried out Risk Assessments in accordance with Diocese, National and Local governments' guidelines. These Risk Assessments are held electronically in the Church Office and can be viewed on request.

ALL RESTRICTIONS LIFTED ON 24/2/2022 PER GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the PCC. Last updated:- 9 November 2022