

Principles on Appropriate Boundaries with Children and Vulnerable Adults

St Pauls Church, New Southgate, London. N11 1PN

The PCC is committed to promoting a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment for all, especially children and vulnerable adults. All staff, volunteers, and church officers must uphold appropriate boundaries in every interaction, in line with the Church of England's *Code of Safer Working Practice* and *Safer Environment and Activities* guidance.

Key Principles

- **Respect and dignity:** Treat all individuals with kindness, avoiding language, behaviour, or physical contact that could be misinterpreted or cause harm.
- **Positions of responsibility:** Recognise the power imbalance inherent in pastoral and leadership roles. Use authority to empower, not exploit.
- **Acceptable touch:** Physical contact must be age-appropriate, publicly visible, and initiated by the individual wherever possible. It is best to ask permission before touching.
- **Confidentiality:** Handle sensitive information with care, sharing only when necessary for safeguarding purposes.

- **Safe communication:**

Avoid private messaging with children. Be mindful of vulnerable adults; if unsure get in touch with the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Vicar to help with clear boundaries.

To ensure online safety, avoid one-to-one chats between adults and young individuals and maintain appropriate boundaries, just like in the offline world.

Do not use personal social media accounts to contact children; instead, where necessary, an official group account for communication and updates will be created so that any interactions occur publicly on the group's page to ensure accountability. Always behave online as you would in person, avoiding inappropriate content and comments.

Where social media contact with vulnerable adults is done on a pastoral basis, it must be professional and transparent.

- **Lone working:** Avoid one-to-one situations unless unavoidable. Record and report any exceptions (e.g. emergency transport).
- **Reporting concerns:** All breaches or concerns must be reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer promptly and recorded appropriately.

This policy applies to all church activities and interactions, both in-person and online. It will be reviewed every two years