

# Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia



## CATEGORY B

MISCELLANEOUS (UNPLANNED/INFORMAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS IN CHURCH SETTINGS)

### B1. DEFINITION OF CHURCH SETTING

Church settings include buildings or properties such as church, parish halls, presbyteries, religious houses, convents, monasteries, pastoral centres, retreat houses and the like.

The very nature of church buildings, religious houses and those who work in them should give a sense of safety and security. For this reason, even when church premises are being used by individuals and groups not normally associated with them, the church authorities have a responsibility for ensuring a safe and secure environment.

When this is unavoidable, any significant contact should be reported as soon as possible.

**N.B. This policy does not cover school premises, which have their own policies.**

### B2. VISITING CLERGY

This policy applies to all who live/work whether temporarily or permanently in church settings. Temporary roles include visiting clergy and religious. The Supply Priest Policy (Policies of Supply Priest and Testimonial of Suitability) must be followed where appropriate in this case.

This requires that a Testimonial of Suitability is taken up by the Bishop. A copy of this policy is available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer/Adviser or the Vicar General's Office.

Visiting Clergy and Religious and all other temporary visitors must adhere to the safeguarding policies and the Code of Conduct for contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Temporary or permanent roles may also include part-housekeepers, lodgers/tenants, house-minders (when the priest is on holiday), volunteers who for whatever reason spend a good deal of time on church premises.

Those in charge of individuals or groups and clubs who are not part of the organisational structure of the church but who use the premises on a regular basis or one off basis e.g. disc jockey, cleaners, gardeners, handy-men.

### B3. VISITORS TO THE PRESBYTERY

- a. The Presbytery has a dual function, as a private residence and for public functions e.g. pastoral work. These functions should be kept separate.
- b. Those whose roles involve them in work within the presbytery, such as housekeepers, secretarial/parish staff etc. and with whom parishioners may come in contact, should have job descriptions and be recruited in accordance with Church policies.
- c. Lodgers/Tenants, house-minders and visitors staying for a substantial period of time must have suitable references. The Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer/Adviser should be consulted as to whether a CRB check is required in some circumstances. A written agreement should be drawn up as to the expectations of their conduct.
- d. This does not apply to short or occasional visits by friends or family members where there would be no question of them being regarded as having any role of responsibility for the presbytery or parish.
- e. Visitors to the presbytery must adhere to the Code of Conduct with children.



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## B4. VISITORS TO THE PARISH CENTRE/GROUNDS

- a. The Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR) will either be a member of the parish team that runs the Parish Centre and grounds, or have an agreement with them that whenever there are non-parish activities involving children and young people, the team will inform the LSR so that he/she can act accordingly.
- b. Where a non-parish based group uses Church premises on a regular basis, the LSRs must ascertain that they have a child protection policy in place for their organisation, including proper recruitment procedures for their leaders/helpers, and that references and CRB checks have been obtained. Evidence of this must be provided and continued use of the premises must be subject to this condition. Any group that does not have its own procedures will be required to follow those of the Church.
- c. A written agreement should be devised with non-parish based groups using church premises detailing that they have Safeguarding measures in place and their agreement to adhere to these measures. (**Form CaSE 7** contains an agreement to be used).
- d. Where an adult has contact with children/young people during a single event organised by the parish (e.g. children's entertainer), the LSR will ensure that the individual responsible for the event manages the situation so that the individual in question does not have unsupervised contact with children/young people or vulnerable adults. The individual must also adhere to the Code of Conduct.
- e. Occasionally, church premises are used by non-parish based groups that include children and young people who use the hall on a casual basis e.g. children's parties. In these circumstances, written agreement is required pointing out that this is a private booking, and that the adults organising the event or those with parental responsibility for the children or young people present will exercise a supervisory function and are responsible for ensuring that the children and young people are safeguarded.

## B5. KNOWN OR ALLEGED ABUSERS IN THE PARISH OR LOCAL COMMUNITY

When information is received that an individual is worshipping or wishes to worship in a particular parish or religious house the matter must be referred immediately to the LSR who will refer to the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer/Adviser. Contact with children and young people must be avoided until directed by the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Officer/Adviser.

## B6. SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Children, young people and vulnerable adults should be able to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a way that is both in accordance with the nature of sacramental confession and offers protection to both themselves and the confessor.

There are two ways this can be achieved:

- a. In a place that is clearly visible to others but others are not able to hear what is being said.
- b. Use of a traditional confessional box with complete separation between the penitent and the confessor.

When deciding which approach is adopted, consideration should be given to the individual's needs, wishes and feelings; e.g. older children may wish to use the confessional box as opposed to celebrating the sacrament face to face. The confessor is free to exercise his personal choice. Whatever the choice, it must be in accordance with the principle of creating a safe environment. The Code of Conduct applies to priests celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation with children young people and vulnerable adults.

A priest hearing a confession must take care that he does not confirm a mistaken sense of responsibility in an individual whom has experienced abuse. He should also be aware that the disclosure of child abuse during the Sacrament of Reconciliation raises child protection issues.