ST PAUL'S E-SAFETY POLICY

SEPTEMBER 1, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR COMMITMENT TO E-SAFETY

St Paul's and St Paul's Youth and Children's leadership team are committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure the Youth and Children's ministry is E-safety aware and competent. E-Safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of mobile phones, computers (including laptops, netbooks, tablets) and other electronic devices including games consoles, to communicate and access the internet, emails, text messages, instant messaging, social networking sites and other social media. Today safeguarding embraces interaction online as well as traditional offline communications. We should be teaching young people how to stay safe online as well as offline and we need to be informed in order to help young people navigate the online environment using new digital technologies and social media safely.

RATIONALE

- As a children's or youth worker at St Paul's Church, we recognise that using the Internet (and other forms of technology) is an important part of the lives of the children and young people we work with.
- We understand that for many children and young people, using the Internet is a regular part of their lives and has a significant impact on their social development.
- In accordance with The Church's Safeguarding Policy, we recognise that we must take all possible steps to protect young people from significant harm or risk whilst using the Internet or any other form of technology.
- We also recognise the importance of establishing and updating procedures to ensure workers are protected whilst they work with children and young people.
- All workers are responsible for reading any polices produced regarding safeguarding and communication matters and are expected to adhere to the guidelines in the current policies.

REASONS FOR CONTACTING A YOUNG PERSON VIA EMAIL OR SOCIAL MEDIA

- Volunteers should only use electronic communication for reasons relating to work with children and young people, not for general socialising (see guidelines below).
- We recognise that there will be times when it is necessary and important to use electronic communication. However, we recognise the need for an appropriate response and always encourage face-to-face contact as opposed to a contact or reply via online methods of communication.
- Volunteers should make the Children's/Youth Worker aware when they are using electronic communication. This must be set up as part of a group communication and not individual.

PARENTAL AWARENESS AND CONSENT

- Parental consent for using electronic forms of communication is essential and will be included on the St Paul's consent forms or by letter with a return slip agreeing to the use of this form of communication. It is clearly outlined what means we will be using for communication and what we will be communicating.
- This Policy will be available to parents and careers and we will seek to ensure they are aware and are happy that we use electronic communication and what type of electronic communication we are using (e.g. email).

SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS

- 'Internet' communication specifically refers to the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Facebook messenger, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat and other websites of a similar nature.
- 'Email' communication specifically refers to the use of emails, including written text and/or pictures sent from personal or work accounts.

LANGUAGE

- All language should be appropriate and where possible 'standard responses' should be used (e.g. if you have sent an email out containing event details and receive a reply asking for further details, create a standard response with additional details so that all young people receive the same information).
- Volunteers should take great care over the language used to reduce the risk of misinterpretation.
- When sending emails, volunteers should not use informal language such as shorthand or 'text language' as this can often be misunderstood and lead to further complications.

HOURS OF COMMUNICATION

- When using email/text/the Internet for communication with young people (within the guidelines above), it is advised that it should take place between the hours of 9am-7pm.
- If a project takes place in the evening (after 5pm) and it is necessary to send an email/use the Internet, volunteers should seek advice from the Children's or Youth Worker but there should be no email communication after 9pm.

INTERNET, EMAIL AND TEXT COMMUNICATION

EMAIL

Vulnerable people can find it easier to communicate via email rather than talking face-to-face. They may therefore share more personal or sensitive information about themselves or someone else than if talking one-to-one. General advice and support may be offered by email but no more – mentoring must be carried out by those qualified to do so.

- ✓ Email should only be used to communicate specific information (times and dates of events, for example).
- ✓ We recommend having a 'shared' email account where all volunteers can access any emails, regardless of whether it is private or public. This would allow communication amongst staff and young people to remain safe.
- ✓ When emailing a child or young person you must always copy in the Children's/Youth Worker.
- ✓ Volunteers should encourage appropriate 'face to face' contact where possible.
- ✓ Volunteers should make their line manager or team leader aware when they are using email to contact young people.
- ✓ Email histories should be kept and dated.

- ✗ Conversation (repeated sending of emails between two individuals) via email is discouraged.
- ✗ It should not be used as a relationship building tool.
- ✗ Do not uses Kisses or emoticons which could be misinterpreted.

TEXTING

This is probably the most used method of communication amongst children and young people. This form of communication is, however, difficult to monitor; members of the youth team using this method of communication must be accountable for what is said.

- ✓ Use appropriate language.
- ✓ Only text during the guideline hours.
- ✓ Should only be used to communicate specific information (times and dates of events, for example).
- ✓ Use the Youth Work mobile phone when possible.
- ✓ All sent and received messages should be kept.
- ✓ Itemised bills can be used to check communication if necessary.
- ✓ It is acceptable to use one or two smiley faces, especially if a young person has initiated this practice.

- ✓ Do not uses Kisses or emoticons which could be misinterpreted.

Be aware of leaving your personal phone around children and young people. Make sure that you have a passcode on your personal phone.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media sites and forms of communication such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook Messenger, are constantly evolving. **Children's and Youth volunteers should always consider accountability and whether the form of electronic communication they use can be traced.** If someone is in doubt about the suitability of a form of communication, he/she should always ask those leading the team.

- ✓ Use the 'Stpauls Youthteam' Facebook account in order to communicate with young people through Facebook in agreement with the Youth Worker. Please make it clear who it is that the young person is interacting with when using this account.
- ✓ Make sure your communication is clear and unambiguous.
- ✓ Use to send information only.
- ✓ Keep Facebook contact visible where possible – i.e. posting on a young person's wall is preferable to in-boxing (sending a private message) as it is more visible and, therefore, easily accountable.
- ✓ Make sure your own privacy settings are in place.
- ✓ Only communicate with those in your pastoral remit – keep social media contact to the group you volunteer in.
- ✓ Always share any social media communication you are having with children or young people with the Children's or Youth Worker.

- ✖ **Do not add any children or young people as friends on personal social media accounts.**
- ✖ Do not enter into conversation through social media.
- ✖ Snapchat should not be used, as no record of communication can be traced.
- ✖ Do not post photographs of children/young people whose parents have stated that they don't want images of their child being used.

FACEBOOK MESSENGER AND ONLINE CHAT FACILITIES

Live chat services and chat facilities cannot be kept on record and are therefore an unsuitable form of communication between workers, children and young people.

- ✓ Refrain from engaging in conversations via these mediums.

- ✗ Use of live chat facilities between volunteers and children or young people is not permitted.

DANGERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

SEXTING

'Sexting' is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photographs, primarily between mobile phones. It is a rising concern amongst young people, and all adult volunteers should remain vigilant. Once made public the 'sexts' are very difficult to remove. Apart from causing acute embarrassment and distress, a recent change in the law now makes it a criminal offence to take, possess or share explicit photos of somebody who is under 18 – even if they are of oneself. Young people need to understand that they could be charged with child pornography and be put on the sex offenders register for sending explicit photos of themselves or anyone on their phone.

- ✓ Report it immediately.
- ✓ Be prepared to talk about sexting in the wide conversation about relationships.
- ✓ Make it clear that it is a criminal offence.
- ✓ Explain it is still illegal to hold or take indecent images of anyone under the age of 18, even if the pictures are not shared ("sexted").
- ✓ Encourage children and young people to 'Think before they post' in all forms of social media.

- ✗ Never promise confidentiality.

ONLINE GROOMING

Someone making contact with a child with the motive of preparing them for sexual abuse either online or offline. Someone who grooms a child is breaking the law.

- ✓ Be vigilant.
    - o A young person is hiding their emails or texts.
    - o A young person is being contacted by unknown adults or receiving gifts from people they don't know.
- ✓ Report it immediately.

- ✗ Never promise confidentiality.

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is no different from ordinary bullying except that the child in question uses digital technologies to bully another. If an adult bullies a child however, it is defined as cyber-stalking and is taken even more seriously. Cyber bullying may involve the use of visual images, texts, phone calls and hits on social networking profiles.

- ✓ Be vigilant.
- ✓ Report it immediately.

- ✗ Never promise confidentiality.

CONCERNS

Communication and behaviour online should be no different from offline and/or in person. If you feel uncomfortable about any communication or behaviour, whether it be online or offline, contact the Children's or Youth worker as soon as possible. Matters for concern may include:

- What has been said by a young person suggests they are in danger or at risk (NB – you need to take immediate action – see "What to do" below).
- The content of messages/e-mails suggests some form of abuse (NB – you need to report your concerns as soon as possible, within 24 hours at the latest).
- You are concerned by the mental well-being of a young person (act quickly).
- The content of what a young person has said online or by text seems inappropriate.
- Inappropriate images of youth or leaders have been shared.
- A young person has become too dependent on you through frequent and extended online, text or face-to-face contact.
- A young person is hiding their emails or texts (could be an indication of online grooming).
- A young person is being contacted by unknown adults or receiving gifts from people they don't know (could be an indication of online grooming).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED

If you become concerned about the content of conversations on social network sites, you should take the following actions:

- DO NOT CLOSE DOWN THE CONVERSATION. This will potentially lose any evidence.
- If you believe a young person to be in immediate danger or at risk, call 999. If you are not sure, seek online advice on the CEOP website http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre.
- Inform the Youth and/or Children's workers immediately.
- Ensure you preserve any 'paper trails'. If necessary copy and paste any conversations and have these witnessed, signed and dated.
- Save any instant messages or texts that might relate to a cause for concern to a password encrypted file.

- Seek help and advice – seek help and advice from CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

THE ROLE OF THE ST PAUL'S CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH TEAM IN SUPPORTING YOU

We undertake to:

- Help you to work this policy into your relationships with the youth and children – through training and ongoing catch-ups.
- Ask you regularly which young people and/or children you have contact with online and offline.
- Challenge you, if we feel that something on your social media is inappropriate or doesn't reflect the Christ-like modelling we are striving for.
- Support you in and through any incidents.
- Revise and update this policy annually.
- Incorporate this policy into the ethos of the Youth and Children's work at St Paul's.