



Parish 'E-Safety Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Parish of St Cuthman's, Whitehawk's policies on Safeguarding and Whistleblowing.

This policy applies to all staff, including clergy, paid staff, PCC members and any volunteers working in any part of the church ministry.

The purpose of this policy to protect children and young people who are ministered to by St Cuthman's and who make use of information technology (e.g. mobile phones, tablets, game consoles, the Internet) as part of their involvement with the parish. This policy also provides staff, volunteers, and parents with the principles that guide our approach to e-safety and guide everyone as we seek to equip the children and young people whom we ministry to be safe, discerning and wise users of information and communication technology.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the children and young people who come into contact with the church and parish is paramount and our approach to the use and management of electronic communication technologies and online behaviour should hold this as the most important factor.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.
- In order to help young people be responsible in their use of electronic communication technologies, working in partnership with the children and young people themselves, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential.
- The use of information technology is essential to how we gather and store information as a church, as well as how we communicate with those we minister to. It is an important part of the lives of our children and young people and we should seek to manage it well, rather than try to eliminate its use. However, it can present challenges in how we use it responsibly, and if misused by an adult or young person can be potentially or actually harmful.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Treating any child protection concern arising from an online location in the same way as concerns arising from the offline world.
- Ensuring that our parish safeguarding officer has access to up-to-date training regarding online safety.
- If staff or volunteers need to communicate with young people electronically, doing so using group chats that contain more than one DBS-checked staff member/volunteer to ensure individuals are held accountable.

- Taking the use of private communication between staff or volunteers and young people as seriously as one-to-one contact between adults and children without another responsible adult present. It is always the responsibility of the adult staff member/volunteer to put in place appropriate boundaries in their relationships with the children and young people that they minister.
- Avoiding any form of inappropriate content in what the church, our staff or our volunteers post online, including (but not limited to) sexual content, racist, sexist or other bigoted content, or content promoting illegal activity such as drug use.
- Providing age-appropriate awareness material to children and young people with regards to online safety.
- Encourage the children and young people that we minister to speak up if they are concerned about behaviour online or are worried about things they have seen.
- Maintaining electronic versions of sensitive personal data securely stored, according the principles of the Data Protection Act.