



# Safeguarding Policy

## Benefices of Ashwell & Baldock

*St Mary the virgin Baldock; St Mary the virgin Ashwell; St Nicholas Hinxworth;  
St Vincent Newnham; St Margaret of Antioch Bygrave*



*Committed to best practice in work with  
children, young people and vulnerable adults*

## **Introduction**

In the Ashwell and Baldock benefices we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual, which is God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all persons using our church facilities or having dealings with representatives of our church community. It is the responsibility of every member of our church communities to respect children, young people and vulnerable adults as unique individuals and protect their physical, sexual and emotional well-being.

The churches in the Ashwell and Baldock benefices recognise the principles of the Children Act 1989 and that the welfare of the child is paramount. We follow the recommendations of the national House of Bishops Policy Document on Child Protection. A copy of the Policy Statement is displayed in our working centres.

All persons having contact with children and young people in the church community, and using church premises are responsible for acting in compliance with the policy statement and procedure as outlined in this document. Please read it in full, ensuring you are familiar with it and understand it. If you have any questions, please contact one of the safeguarding officers (see below). When you are finished, please sign the declaration of agreement and return this copy of the Safeguarding Policy.

All regular hall hirers working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, must comply with this Policy, and sign a declaration to that effect.

This policy will be reviewed annually for approval at meetings of the P.C.C.s of both benefices.

***Your Safeguarding Officers are:***

Jo Adams (Ashwell): 01462 742090

Della Freeth (Baldock): 01462 895672

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## **Policy Statement:**

- 1) These benefices accept the principle of the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child (a person under 18 for most purposes) is paramount. It also accepts the implication that the Act is there for the protection of adults who work with children. We also follow the recommendations of the Church of England's Child Protection guidelines.
  - Clergy and laity that work for the benefices in a paid or voluntary capacity need to exercise the greatest care in their use of power. They must never take advantage of trust.
  - The highest standards will be maintained in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational circumstances.
  - The exploitation of any relationship for self-gratification will not be tolerated.
  
- 2) In line with government recommendations, all those volunteering or applying to work with children or young people will be safely recruited for the post in accordance with the diocesan recruitment policy. All applicants called for interview must complete a Confidential Declaration Form, and appointment to the post will be subject to a satisfactory enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau. Members of the clergy (priests) and readers are appointed by St. Alban's Diocese subject to a satisfactory enhanced disclosure; while churchwardens, who are elected by their respective parishes, are encouraged to apply for one. Records of those who have obtained disclosures are kept by the benefices' Safeguarding Officers.
  
- 3) All those working with children or young people will be given a copy of the benefices' Safeguarding Policy, receive relevant training and sign a declaration of agreement. They will also be given practical advice as a means of protecting themselves and the children they work with. All those working with children and young persons' groups will aim to meet regularly to discuss concerns and share good practice.
  
- 4) All children's and young person's activities should always have at least two adults present, preferably one of each sex, to ensure that the group need never be left unattended.
  
- 5) In general, situations where a child is alone with an older person should be avoided unless they can be easily observed by others nearby.
  
- 6) Allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and these benefices will collaborate fully with statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with child abuse. It will not conduct its own investigations. The clergy will initiate pastoral care as appropriate.

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- 7) Adequate insurance cover will be provided for all children's and young person's activities. Approval will be required from the relevant incumbent before any group can hold an activity away from the church premises, although regular offsite activities can be approved for a period of up to one year. Written parental consent must be obtained from all children taking part in activities away from church premises.
- 8) The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

## **Code of Best Practice:**

The following is a guideline for anyone working with children (persons aged 18 or under) or vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

These guidelines are for YOUR protection as well as the protection of those under your care. Please read them carefully, and if you have any questions contact your Safeguarding Officer (see p. 2).

### **Working With Groups:**

1. Premises must be safe and hygienic and must be covered by insurance. All premises should be assessed regularly for risks (a risk assessment form is included in appendix F)
2. Ensure you know where the first aid kit is located, and who on site or nearby is first aid trained (a list of those with first aid training should be provided).
3. You must have an incident record book, and write in it any incident involving physical harm to a person, or any serious misconduct. This should be dated and co-signed by another adult.
4. Contact & consent forms (see appendix E) must be obtained for each child, and kept somewhere accessible to all adult helpers while the group is in session. These forms include details of any allergies or conditions, whether the child is allowed to walk home alone etc, so be as familiar as possible with these details. *(While a young person is on site you are legally 'in loco parentis': this means you have a duty of care to that young person, however you DO NOT take over the fundamental responsibility of the parent. Parents should know where their child is at all times, and are the first point of contact in any emergency. You may only make decisions regarding the child's welfare in the event that the parent or other contact named on the consent form cannot be contacted in an emergency situation).*
5. A register must be taken of all those present.
6. The following ratios of adults to children must be observed (PTO):

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### On-Site Activities

**Up to 2 yrs:** 1 adult for every 3 children

**2 to 3 yrs:** 1 adult for every 4 children

**3 to 8 yrs:** 1 adult for every 8 children

**8 and over:** 2 adults for the first 20 children

+ 1 adult for every extra 10 children

**13 and over:** 2 adults for the first 20 children

+ 1 extra adult for every extra 10 children

### Off-Site Activities

**Up to 2 yrs:** 1 adult for every 3 children

**2 to 3 yrs:** 1 adult for every 4 children

**3 to 8 yrs:** 1 adult for every 6 children

**8 to 13 yrs:** 2 adults for the first 15 children

+ 1 extra adult for every extra 8 children

In each case there should be a minimum of two adults, preferably one of each sex.

Young leaders (aged 16-18) will be counted in the adult ratio, but will not be given overall responsibility for a group.

### 7. PRINCIPLES OF BEST CONDUCT:

- Do not be alone or 'shut away' with children at any time; where possible leave doors open, remaining in sight & sound of another adult at all times.
- Be aware that you are in a position of power over children, which may be intimidating, so aim to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.
- Everybody working with children and young people should treat them all with respect and dignity befitting their age, and should watch their language, tone of voice and body language, avoiding negative forms of control such as shouting and belittling.
- Do not allow any racially or sexually provocative comments, even as a joke.
- Do not allow inappropriate or overt physical contact, even in fun – e.g. wrestling.
- Regarding general physical contact (e.g. hugs, pat on the back) this should only be initiated by the child, and kept to a minimum. Be aware that contact that is entirely appropriate from your perspective may have different connotations for others.
- Establish professional boundaries. These will vary depending on the situation (e.g. whether you choose to divulge your home telephone number). But keep in mind professional distance and encourage healthy relationships.
- Romantic and/or sexual relationships between a child and an adult (including young leaders) to whom their care has been entrusted are never appropriate, no matter what the age difference, and will not be tolerated.

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8. Children travelling in cars should always wear a seatbelt, and only sit in the front seat where absolutely necessary. Legal requirements for the use of booster seats etc must be complied with (The law states that all children up to 135cm tall or under the age of 12 – whichever comes first – must travel in the correct child restraint for their age in any vehicle). Drivers should ensure that they have the correct insurance. It is preferable that there are two adults in every car with children.

### **Residential Outings and overnight activities:**

1. No minibus or coach should be used that does not have seatbelts for all passengers. Seatbelts must be used at all times when in the vehicle. There must be at least two adults in each bus carrying children.
2. Respect the privacy of children in their sleeping quarters, and when toileting or showering. Always ensure another adult is present if, for instance, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be washed.
3. There should be separate sleeping quarters for boys and girls in any overnight stay. At least one adult of each sex should be nearby to supervise respectively. Sleeping arrangements for adults should be separate from that of the children, but near enough to be on hand at all times to cover any incidents or emergencies. Adults should never enter children's sleeping quarters without permission, unless there is an emergency.
4. Approve all residential centres before the trip takes place: where possible a leader should visit beforehand; or a recommendation should be obtained from someone with first-hand experience of the centre. Ensure any facility meets safety and hygiene regulations.
5. Remember to take with you consent forms, including emergency contact details for each child. Special parental consent **MUST** be obtained for any outing or overnight stay. A first aid kit should also be on hand at all times.
6. Ensure that everyone knows and understands the rules of the residential, and is provided with a list of equipment and/or clothing they must bring.
7. If the outing involves specialist activities, make sure they are covered by appropriate insurance and that trained instructors are employed where necessary, along with appropriate equipment.



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### Communication and the Internet:

1. In all communication remember professional boundaries and maintain them.
2. Try to avoid discussing personal or sensitive issues over the telephone or internet.
3. Be accountable (never have 'secret' conversations). Always tell another appropriate adult about any significant communication, including the nature of the conversation (though you do not have to go into detail).
4. As a general rule, do not have children as your 'friend' on social networking sites, unless you have a separate account that is accessible to others. Restrict communication to 'groups' which are visible to other adults.
5. Be aware of the information you are making available and the way you portray yourself on the internet; children and young people often display very personal information or photographs – we should try to help them to understand what is appropriate and set a good example.
6. Never send personal information about children over the internet. Photographic images including children should only be shared on secure sites; they should be appropriate (e.g. no pictures of children in swimsuits), and permission must be obtained from a parent or guardian. Ideally use group photos.

### Working with individuals:

1. When meeting with an individual child for any reason, try to meet in a public place (e.g. Starbucks). If this is inappropriate, ensure another adult is nearby – e.g. in the next room.
2. Let another adult know when, where and why you are meeting. Ensure the child has informed their parent or guardian of their whereabouts.
3. Keep a written record somewhere of the date & time of the meeting (e.g. in a diary).
4. Respect the privacy of the child, however do not promise confidentiality (explain that you will only pass on information if it is necessary to protect the child or another person from harm of any kind).

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5. If you are entering into a mentoring relationship with a child, make sure there is an agreement from both parties regarding the purpose of the relationship, and the boundaries within it (including when you expect the period of mentoring to end).
6. Be accountable to another appropriate adult. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you feel the situation is beyond your experience or ability to advise.

### Guidelines on spotting signs of abuse in children and young people:



The following is a brief summary of national guidelines outlining different kinds of abuse those working with children and young people should be aware of, and possible symptoms:

**Physical Abuse:** This includes deliberate harm, and the use of force with children leading to physical harm. Symptoms may include:

- Frequent or recurring injuries – especially if they are not typical of accidental injury.
- Improbable or conflicting explanations for injuries.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Fear of parents or guardians being contacted.
- Keeping arms and legs covered even in very hot weather.
- Aggressive or violent behaviour towards others.

**Emotional Abuse:** Persistent or frequent belittling, blaming, and/or ignoring of children leading to low self-esteem, anxiety and a negative self-image. This can be very difficult to spot. Signs to watch out for are:

- Child is introverted, withdrawn, or depressed.
- Over-reacting to mistakes; expectation of punishment.
- Social isolation and/or desperate attention seeking behaviour.
- Self-harm and/or eating disorders
- Continual self-depreciation.

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**Sexual Abuse:** Includes inappropriate touching and any form of intercourse (penetrative or non-penetrative); exposing children to sexual activities or involving them in any way; using provocative or overly-explicit sexual language with children. Symptoms may include:

- Demonstrating sexual knowledge or behaviour that is unusually explicit for the child's age.
- Being reluctant to undress (e.g. for sport activities)
- Showing unexplained fear or dislike of a particular adult or adults.
- Urinary infections, soreness or bleeding in the genital area; also soreness or bleeding in the throat.
- Decrease in self-esteem, or self-hatred.
- Regressive behaviour (e.g. bed wetting, thumb sucking) or
- Compulsive behaviour (constant need to wash etc)

**Neglect:** This is an important and often overlooked form of abuse. It includes failure to provide adequate care for children, including clothing, washing, food & drink, shelter, supervision and attention etc. Possible signs of neglect are:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene; clothes too small or threadbare,
- Untreated medical problems
- Constant lateness; truancy from school.
- Low self-esteem and/or poor social relationships
- Tiredness; listlessness.

**\*Please Note:** the above are merely a few possible symptoms of abuse. Any unusual behaviour, or sudden changes in the behaviour of children, should be noted and brought to the attention of the youth worker in charge or a member of the clergy.

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### Dealing with an allegation:

The following section outlines the procedure you should follow should an allegation be made to you or come to your attention regarding misconduct or abuse of any kind towards a child in your care. Allegations may be made by children, parents, or carers on their behalf; early recognition of abuse and neglect can prevent serious harm to children. Please read the procedure carefully, so that you know how to respond appropriately:

#### From Children

- a) If a child makes an allegation to you about a member of the church, their family, or someone else, you should, as far as possible, adhere to the following basic principles:
  - i) Listen to the child and do not question them any more than needed to establish whether abuse has taken place. Do believe the child.
  - ii) Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
  - iii) As soon as you can, make a note of the meeting, taking care to record the timing, setting and personnel present, as well as what was said. A comprehensive record of all facts, events and conversations must be made on the same day as they occur. Known facts should be distinguished from allegations and opinions. This information may be required for legal purposes.
  - iv) Never agree to keep anything secret. If a child asks you to do this, explain that you are not allowed to, but that you will only share information with other adults who need to know so that they can help.
- b) The overriding consideration must be to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. If a report of abuse is received by a volunteer or paid member of staff, he or she must follow the guidelines above, and take the report straight to either the appropriate incumbent, or to the youth worker in charge (whoever seems most appropriate). You must explain to the child that you are going to do this; they may wish to have a say in who you speak to (e.g. if it is a girl, she may wish that you speak to an appropriate female representative). This person should know the child, and have a good knowledge of safeguarding procedures.
- c) He or she (the appropriate adult) must then decide if the report should be drawn to the attention of the appropriate social services department, if available. Out of office hours the police should be contacted. Any delay in doing this, or in alerting the department to any worries or concerns about possible abuse or neglect can increase the risk to the child. Deciding to give parents the 'benefit of the doubt' can be detrimental to the protection and welfare of the child.

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- d) Parents of an abused child may report a case to a church member but be reluctant to take the matter further and involve a child in court procedures. A meeting with members of the Safeguarding Unit and social workers would allow parents to be informed about the procedure involved in pursuing their complaint.
- e) The Bishop's Representative, who must be informed of any report, will inform the Bishop and then discuss the report with the Child Protection Unit of the social services department of the appropriate authority. Social workers will then assume a primary role in caring for the child and his or her family. It is important to remember that the Church will not undertake an investigative role, but act as a reporting agency.
- f) The appropriate Safeguarding Officer should be informed if any allegation has been made.

### **From Perpetrators**

- a) If an abuser discloses that they have abused children or young people, the person making the disclosure should be encouraged to report the abuse to social services or to the police. If they are unwilling to do this, the person hearing the disclosure must be aware that the responsibility to report the abuse remains with the person who heard the disclosure.
- b) Should a priest receive a 'confession' from someone who has abused a child, whilst the seal of the confessional remains absolute, in law the interests of the child are paramount. Although the perpetrator's right to confidentiality is of the utmost importance, it is not absolute. It may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if the person threatens harm to him or herself, or other people in the community at large.

### **Rumour**

A person may report a rumour about a particular individual rather than a specific allegation. This should be reported to the appropriate vicar/ rector, and the youth worker in charge should be made aware. If possible, the person who expresses unease should be asked about the reasons for their concern. They should be asked to think very carefully about the implications for children and for the suspected individual of what they have said. If rumours persist, a report will be made to the Bishop's Representative who will discuss the matter with social services, and also inform the Bishop.

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### **False Allegations**

People who work in isolated settings with children and young people are sometimes vulnerable to untrue allegations. If you are uneasy about your dealings with a child (e.g. you are worried you may have crossed a boundary, or that a child is developing an unhealthy attachment to you), or you are concerned about comments being made (even if those comments are in jest) you should make a record of events, including the dates & times, and seek advice and support and, where appropriate, supervision, as soon as possible. Volunteers should refer difficult situations to the youth worker in charge or clergy.

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### **Working with vulnerable adults Policy Statement:**

In work with vulnerable adults, the principles of this safeguarding policy still apply. However as Baldock and Ashwell benefices, we are committed to the following statement:

- 1) We recognize that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.
- 2) As members of these benefices we commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.
- 3) We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of the Church.
- 4) We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.
- 5) These benefices commits themselves to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.
- 6) It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- 7) We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.
- 8) These benefices are committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.
- 9) Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by the guidelines established by these benefices.

### APPENDIX A:



#### **Diocese of St Albans Recruitment Policy**

- The Diocese of St Albans uses the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess an applicant's suitability for positions of trust. The Diocese of St Albans complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat fairly all applicants for such positions. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

We are interested in creating an 'inclusive' society and are committed to equal opportunity. Therefore, where people have committed an offence, the nature and circumstances of that offence will be taken into consideration. In line with the CRB Code of Practice, diocesan policy states that the following should be considered:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or the other relevant matters
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

#### **Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us.**

- The Diocese of St Albans is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- We actively promote equality of opportunity for all and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualification, experience and potential.



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- A Disclosure is only requested for positions of trust which include direct work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. For such positions, all job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, all applicants called for interview must complete a Confidential Declaration Form. This allows applicants to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the process. The Declaration will be retained by the employer or the parish.
- We ensure that all those in the Diocese of St Albans who are involved in the recruitment process receive appropriate guidance in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or a voluntary post.
- The Diocese of St Albans holds the CRB Code of Practice and this is available at Abbey Gate House.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment or a voluntary post.

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## **APPENDIX B:**

### **ASHWELL & BALDOCK BENEFICES DECLARATION OF AGREEMENT.**

I understand the nature of my role and my responsibilities at:

(Insert Group/Organisation)

.....

I confirm that I have received a copy of the Volunteer Reference Sheet and have read the Child Protection Policy.

I understand the guidelines for safeguarding children and I accept my responsibility to care for the children and young people with whom I come into contact.

Name (Please print) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

## **APPENDIX C:**

### **ASHWELL & BALDOCK BENEFICES VOLUNTEER SUPPORT SHEET.**

Group / Organisation: .....

Name .....

You are joining an organisation that is committed to protecting children and young people.

We welcome your equal commitment to that duty of care.

Your role here is:

.....  
.....  
.....

Your duties include:

.....  
.....  
.....

You will be helped and supported in your role here by .....

Who can be contacted at .....

Working with children and young people is a great responsibility, but it also brings great rewards.

We hope you enjoy the responsibility and thank you for your contribution.

**APPENDIX D:**

**ASHWELL & BALDOCK BENEFICES VOLUNTEER REFERENCE FORM.**

Dear Referee,

The following person ..... has expressed an interest in being a volunteer and has given your name as a referee. This post involves substantial contact with children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we need to be aware if there is any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Please complete the questionnaire below. Any information will be treated in strictest confidence. Information will only be shared with the person conducting the assessment of the candidate's suitability for the post. The person concerned would be working mainly as

.....

We would appreciate you being extremely candid, open and honest in your evaluation of this person.

1. Would you consider the above named person to pose any risk to the welfare of children, young people or vulnerable adults?

**Yes      No      (please circle as required)**

**If you answer Yes, we will contact you in confidence.**

2. How long have you known this person?

.....

3. In what capacity?.....

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4. Please comment on the person's suitability to work with children

.....  
.....

5. Is there anything else you feel we should know about this person?

.....  
.....

Signed: ..... Date .....

Print Name .....

Please send completed form to: 'Youth Worker', The Church Office, The Rectory,  
Hodwell, Ashwell, SG7 5QQ.

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## APPENDIX E:



### ASHWELL & BALDOCK BENEFICES CONTACT & CONSENT FORM.

Your child has expressed an interest in attending youth activities in Ashwell and/or Baldock benefices. In the interest of your child, it's very important that you read, complete and return this form. This is to make us aware of any special care requirements, and to enable us to contact you if necessary.

If you have any questions please contact Jen Brown, our Youth Worker, on 07973 298 475. Or alternatively email [jen@stmarysashwell.org.uk](mailto:jen@stmarysashwell.org.uk).

Name of young person/people: .....

Date(s) of birth: .....

Address:

.....  
.....

Details of any known medical conditions:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Food allergies or dietary requirements:

.....  
.....  
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Your name: .....

Your contact number(s): .....

Alternative contact number (please give the name & number of someone who can be contacted in an emergency if you are unavailable):

Name: .....

Number(s): .....

Family doctor:

Name: .....

Address:

.....  
.....

Number: .....

Are you happy for your child(ren) to walk home at the end of activities? Yes / No

(If you answered 'no' to the above, please give details as to how and by whom your child may be collected)

.....  
.....

**CONSENT: (Please sign below if you agree with the statement)**

I hereby give consent for my child/children (named above) to take part in activities run by St Mary's Baldock and St Mary's Ashwell. I understand that this may include some sport-related activities that carry reasonable, minor risk. Separate permission will be required for off-site activities.

Signature of parent/guardian: .....

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I also consent to any necessary medical or dental treatment (including an anaesthetic) that may be necessary in the event of an emergency and/or if I am not contactable.

Signature of parent/guardian: .....

Lastly, I consent to photographic images being taken that include my child, in the understanding that these will only be used in displays, reports and promotions relating directly to the youth activities in these parishes.

Signature of parents/guardian: .....

Date: .....

***Please note that this information will be filed for retrieval at subsequent dates.***

***Separate permission will be required for any off-site trips or activities.***



## APPENDIX F:

### ASHWELL & BALDOCK BENEFICES RISK ASSESSMENT FORM.

Activity: .....

Date: .....

Assessor: .....

Hazard	Effect	Severity	Probability	Risk	Minimise by...	Residual risk

*Severity ratings = 1 (minor, cut/scratch) - 5 (fatal)*

*Probability = 1 (Highly unlikely); 3 (Occurs rarely); 5 (Likely to occur)*

*Risk = Severity x Probability*

## **APPENDIX G:**

### **ASHWELL & BALDOCK BENEFICES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT.**

1. Ashwell & Baldock benefices are part of a Christian organisation committed to social justice and resolutely opposed to discrimination in society. We are committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, life-style, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor. No person requiring services from these benefices will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds.
2. In employment we actively seek to recruit with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation.
3. As an organisation seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, some posts can only be filled by Christians. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post-holders to be Christians. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented in accordance with Employment and Race Directives issued by the government and ACAS guidance.
4. As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, these benefices undertakes to comply fully with the CRB Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. They undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any person on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
5. A Disclosure is only requested if relevant for the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.
6. Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent separately and in confidence to the Recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to, as part of the recruitment process.

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7. Unless the nature of the position allows questioning about your entire criminal record, we only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
8. We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
9. At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.
10. Every person under-going a CRB check will be made aware of the CRB Code of Practice and a copy will be available on request.
11. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

**APPENDIX H:**  
**ASHWELL & BALDOCK BENEFICES HANDLING AND STORAGE OF**  
**DISCLOSURES POLICY.**

In consideration of our use of the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Service, to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, we agree to comply with the CRB Code of Practice, Data Protection Act and other legislation in regard to the correct handling, use, storage, retention, and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information.

**Storage and access**

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant's personal file but stored separately and securely, in a lockable, non-portable, storage container (e.g. filing cabinet), with access strictly limited to those who are entitled as part of their official duties.

**Handling**

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information have been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

**Usage**

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

**Retention**

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, Disclosure information may be kept for up to six months for the resolution of disputes or complaints, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If this happens it will be done in consultation with the CCPAS Disclosure Unit who will seek advice from the CRB giving full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights legislation. The conditions regarding safe handling and storage will continue to apply.

## Safeguarding Policy: Benefices of Ashwell & Baldock

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### **Disposal**

Once the retention period has lapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately and appropriately destroyed (e.g. by shredding, pulping or burning). While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will continue to be kept securely. We will not keep any original documents or copies relating to the disclosure certificate. However, we may keep a record of it, i.e. the name, date, and type of disclosure, the position for which it was requested, the unique reference number and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

### **Our relationship with CCPAS as an Umbrella Organisation**

We accept that the CCPAS Disclosure Unit, as our umbrella organisation, has a responsibility to ensure, as far as possible, that we comply with all the requirements in the CRB Code of Practice, this and other policy statements, and in other CRB procedures and processes. We undertake to keep CCPAS informed of any changes in our organisation, personnel or practices which could materially affect our ability to work within these expectations.

**APPENDIX I:**

**NUMBERS & WEBSITES RELATING TO THE SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN,  
YOUNG PEOPLE & VULNERABLE ADULTS.**