

Health & Safety Policy

As a church, we understand that we owe a duty of care to ensure the safety of those who visit or use our church, hall or churchyard.

We also know that, where we are an employer or control premises in certain circumstances, we have to meet the requirements of health and safety law.

In particular, although we do not have any employees, we know that if we were to be an employer having five or more employees, we are required to have a written health and safety policy. As such, we have drafted this policy to meet our duty under Section 2(3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

General statement of policy

Our policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our volunteers, congregation, visitors and others who may use the church, churchyard or any other building we are responsible for. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) accepts its overall responsibility for this. We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions we make will have due regard for it.

We will appoint a member of the PCC to have specific responsibility for this policy and its implementation. We will keep health and safety matters under review at each PCC meeting. We will monitor and review the effectiveness of the policy annually, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each volunteer to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention. We will try to ensure that everyone involved with the church plays his or her part in its implementation.

Further detail about our organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document. A copy of it will be kept in the church buildings and made available to others on request.

Signed: **Rachael Fox [Churchwarden]**

*on behalf of the Parochial Church Council as agreed at a meeting on:

Date: **7th May 2024**

Organisation and responsibilities

1. The member of the PCC with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is:
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He/she will ensure that:

- The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained.
- Where necessary, specialist health and safety assistance is obtained.
- Any hazards reported to them are rectified immediately.
- Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests.
- Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary.
- Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained.
- They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

2. The Churchwardens have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy.

They are: Gill Pinches and Rachael Fox

They will ensure that:

- All volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities.
- Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments.
- Adequate information and training are provided for those that need it.
- Any hazards or complaints are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible.
- Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger.
- All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy.
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

3. All volunteers have a responsibility to cooperate in the implementation of this policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others while on church business or premises.

They will ensure that they:

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them.
- Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others.
- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other working procedures.
- Report any hazard, defect or damage, so that this might be dealt with.
- Warn any new employees or volunteers of known hazards.
- Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely.
- Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so.
- Report any accident.
- Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

General Arrangements

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks.

Risk Assessment

We will complete risk assessments to identify what we need to do to comply with health and safety law. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

Information and Training

We will provide any necessary information and training for our volunteers in a timely manner. We will keep a record of what is provided. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

First Aid

We will provide adequate first aid facilities including – as a minimum – a suitably stocked first aid box and a person who will take charge of the first aid arrangements. We will also provide relevant information for volunteers and visitors to our premises.

Our first aid box is located in the back hallway outside the kitchen door.

Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is: Gwen Collins

Accident Reporting

We will keep a record of accidents to volunteers and members of the public (that we are made aware of) in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations. We will report to the enforcing authority in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

This means, an incident should be reported using our Report form when:

- a child is involved and their parent/guardian is not present;
- the first aid kit provided by St Giles is used;
- a first aid kit provided by a third party is used;
- the emergency services are called;
- any slips, trips or falls occur;
- the incident involves any damage to or issue with the building/grounds/furniture;
- you are still concerned about those involved in the incident, *e.g. a child has suffered a minor injury, but parents are still present.*

Our blank Accident Record Forms are kept inside the First Aid box, and on the noticeboard in the hall and the digital copy is available at stgilesbramhope.org.uk/incidentreport. All paper records will be digitised and kept securely in our cloud-based storage, in accordance with the data policy, then paper copies will be destroyed.

Monitoring

We will make periodic checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate. We will also ensure that any ladders, steps, lifting, work or electrical equipment and church utilities are inspected as necessary to ensure that they remain safe. We will keep records of the checks we make. Records are kept in the Schedules worksheet of the Fabric Log.

Contractors

If we employ contractors, we ask them to confirm that they have their own health & safety policy and current Public and Employers Liability insurance.

Record Keeping

Hard copies of our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept in the vicar's vestry filing cabinet. Electronic copies are kept on the church's shared Google Drive.

Specific Arrangements

Asbestos

We have taken steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings. Where possible this has been safely removed (boiler house) and where not possible, the area has been sealed off (under-floor voids of the church).

We will provide relevant information to others who might need access to the under floor area of the church (for example, contractors). We have kept records of the work to remove asbestos and we check the security of the access hatches to the under floor areas.

Church Buildings

We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings is regularly inspected to make sure it is safe. Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable bearing in mind that a Faculty may be required. Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made. This will include glazing.

Churchyard

We will ensure that boundary walls and gates are kept in good repair. We will have trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe.

Construction Work

Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these if necessary.

Electricity

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliance is maintained so as to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made where appropriate.

Events

Where we intend to hold large or unusual concerts, services and fundraising events, we will identify any additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.

Fire

We will complete a specific risk assessment to identify what steps are necessary to prevent, detect and take in the event of a fire. We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

Hazardous Substances

We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions, taking any necessary precautions that are specified.

- Domestic cleaning and horticultural products are made available for routine use by our volunteers.
- We use commercial liquid dishwasher detergent which, when in use is stored out of sight and easy reach. Any commercial cleaner we use is kept in a locked cupboard.
- Petrol is kept in a locked external safe store.

Heating Systems

We will ensure that our gas heating systems are suitably maintained and checked annually by a competent person. Any defects found will be corrected immediately and we will keep records of the checks made.

Lifting Equipment

We will ensure that any lifting equipment (e.g. projection screen) is properly maintained and thoroughly examined periodically by a competent person.

Manual Handling

We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practical, we will make use of lifting aids (such as trolleys) or other precautions, including team lifting.

Preparation of Food

We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food, we use a clean and disinfected work surface, utensils and equipment. If we serve hot food, it will be cooked and/or heated on the premises and served within 4 hours. We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination, provide hand-washing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of waste.

Slips and Trips

We will implement suitable precautions to prevent slips or trips, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access. We will make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as handrails or lighting) remain adequate. We will correct any defects identified, keeping records of the checks we make. We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways in winter weather.

Work Equipment

Any work equipment (including any hand tools and gardening tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Ladders and step ladders will be regularly checked to make sure they are safe. 19) We will keep records of any checks we make (e.g. lawn mowers).

Working Alone

We will identify circumstances where our volunteers work alone, and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety.

Working at Height (i.e. anything one step or more above floor/ground level)

Where possible, we will try to avoid the need for work at height. Where it is necessary to step off the floor to reach a position, we will provide suitable steps to do so and require a second person to steady the step(s). (eg portable single steps or small step ladders). Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions. We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used. Users must visually inspect any step(s) for faults before use.