

Health and Safety Policy

St Peter's, Colchester

Adopted by the PCC: [tbc]

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Policy owner: The Parochial Church Council

Charity number: 1163262

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1. Purpose

This policy explains how St Peter's seeks to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff, volunteers, congregation members, visitors, hirers, contractors and others who use or visit church premises or take part in church activities.

The Parochial Church Council has responsibility for the governance and oversight of St Peter's, including health and safety, risk management, safeguarding, fire safety, buildings, staff, volunteers and the use of church premises.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we seek to be faithful in all that we say and do. That includes taking reasonable care of one another, protecting the vulnerable, stewarding buildings and resources wisely, and ensuring that church life is carried out in a safe, responsible and well-ordered way.

This policy is intended to help health and safety be managed practically, proportionately and responsibly at St Peter's.

2. Statement of general policy

St Peter's will seek, so far as is reasonably practicable, to:

- provide control of the health and safety risks arising from church activities;
- provide safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for employees and volunteers;
- provide necessary information, instruction, training and supervision;
- consult with employees on matters affecting their health and safety;

- ensure the health, safety and welfare of members of the congregation and others who visit or use church buildings;
- maintain church premises, plant, equipment and tools in a safe condition;
- ensure safe access and egress;
- provide and maintain appropriate fire safety arrangements;
- ensure that food hygiene procedures are followed;
- record and report accidents, incidents and near misses appropriately;
- review and revise this policy and related arrangements at appropriate intervals.

3. Scope

This policy applies to health and safety in relation to:

- church services and worship;
- church activities, ministries, groups and events;
- staff and volunteers carrying out duties on behalf of St Peter's;
- church premises, including the church, hall, churchyard, kitchens, offices, vestry, storage areas and external areas;
- congregation members, visitors, hirers, contractors and members of the public;
- food preparation and hospitality;
- manual handling and practical tasks;
- cleaning, maintenance and equipment use;
- fire safety, first aid and emergency arrangements;
- risk assessments and accident reporting.

This policy should be read alongside St Peter's Safeguarding Policy, Governance and Risk Management Policy, Risk Assessment Procedure, Fire Risk Assessment, Fire Evacuation Plans, Food Hygiene Policy, Manual Handling Policy, Lone Worker Policy, Volunteer Policy, Staff Handbook and relevant Ministry Role Descriptions.

4. Christian foundation

The church is called to love and serve others, not carelessly or recklessly, but with wisdom and responsibility.

The Apostle Paul writes:

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."
– Philippians 2:4, ESV

Health and safety is therefore not simply a legal or administrative matter. It is one practical expression of love, stewardship, good order and care for those whom God brings into the life of the church.

5. Organisation and responsibilities

5.1 The PCC

Overall responsibility for health and safety rests with the PCC as charity trustees.

The PCC is responsible for ensuring that appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place and that this policy is implemented.

Specific responsibilities may be delegated to individuals, staff members, officers, governance groups, Ministry Area Leaders or volunteers, but the PCC retains overall accountability.

The PCC should ensure that:

- health and safety is considered as part of governance and risk management;
- suitable policies, procedures and risk assessments are in place;
- significant risks and incidents are reported and reviewed;
- appropriate resources are made available where needed;
- health and safety actions are followed up;
- statutory, insurance and Church of England responsibilities are considered;
- this policy is reviewed at appropriate intervals.

5.2 Health and Safety Officer

Mick Kavanagh acts as the Health and Safety Officer and carries responsibility for day-to-day implementation of the arrangements outlined in this policy.

The Health and Safety Officer should seek to:

- be familiar with health and safety regulations as far as they concern church premises;
- be familiar with this policy and related arrangements;
- encourage observance of health and safety arrangements;
- ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place;
- help ensure that the church is clean and tidy;
- help ensure that plant, equipment and tools are properly maintained and in good condition;
- help ensure that operators have received appropriate training where needed;
- help ensure that adequate access and egress are maintained;
- help ensure that adequate firefighting equipment is available and maintained;
- help ensure that food hygiene procedures are observed;
- report significant concerns to the Vicar, churchwardens, Church Administrator, relevant governance group or PCC as appropriate.

5.3 Vicar, churchwardens and Church Administrator

The Vicar, churchwardens and Church Administrator have important practical roles in supporting the implementation of this policy.

This may include:

- receiving and escalating health and safety concerns;
- ensuring issues are logged and followed up;
- liaising with contractors, advisers or insurers where appropriate;
- supporting risk assessments and action plans;
- communicating relevant information to staff, volunteers, hirers and building users;
- ensuring urgent hazards are addressed promptly;
- reporting significant matters to Standing Committee or PCC.

5.4 Ministry Area Leaders, event organisers and activity leaders

Those responsible for ministries, groups, events or activities should ensure that activities are planned and carried out safely and in accordance with relevant policies, risk assessments and procedures.

They should:

- consider health and safety as part of planning;
- ensure relevant risk assessments are completed or reviewed;
- communicate relevant precautions to volunteers and participants;
- report hazards, incidents, accidents and near misses promptly;
- seek advice where risks are unclear or significant;
- ensure volunteers act within their role and competence.

5.5 Employees and volunteers

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

Employees and volunteers should:

- comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures;
- follow relevant risk assessments and guidance;
- use protective clothing and equipment when required;
- report faults, defects or hazards promptly;
- report accidents, injuries, near misses or potential safety hazards as soon as possible;
- record accidents and incidents in the appropriate accident log or reporting system;
- avoid activities they are not competent, trained or authorised to undertake;
- seek help if they are unsure whether something is safe.

6. Risk assessment

Risk assessments will be carried out for areas of church premises and for activities that carry significant risk.

Risk assessments should be completed, checked, shared, reviewed and stored in accordance with St Peter's Risk Assessment Procedure.

An annual risk assessment of the church building should be undertaken by or on behalf of the PCC.

Annual risk assessments of regular activities should be completed as appropriate.

Additional risk assessments should be completed for one-off high-risk activities, unusual events, trips, days out, weekends away or activities involving additional hazards.

Safeguarding-related risk assessments must be consistent with St Peter's Safeguarding Policy and handled with appropriate confidentiality.

7. Accidents, incidents, near misses and first aid

St Peter's will take reasonable action to prevent accidents to employees, volunteers, visitors and others who may use or visit church premises.

First-aid boxes are kept:

- in the cupboard adjacent to the North Hill entrance in the church;
- in the kitchen in the church hall.
- The first-aid boxes are maintained by Wendy Whitfield.
- The risk of injury to employees and attendees is generally considered to be low, but all accidents, incidents and near misses should be taken seriously.

Leaders should be reminded annually that accidents, incidents and near misses must be recorded using the Accident, Incident & Near Miss form. If first aid has been administered, a record must also be written in the accident logbook.

[Insert ChurchSuite Accident, Incident & Near Miss QR code]

The logbooks and QR codes are kept with the first-aid kits.

All major accidents, incidents and cases of work-related ill-health which are reportable must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive as required.

The PCC is responsible for ensuring that reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences are reported to the Health and Safety Executive. In practice, this may be delegated to an appropriate person, but the PCC retains overall responsibility.

In an emergency, call 999.

8. Accident recording and RIDDOR reporting

St Peter's is subject to relevant accident recording and reporting requirements, including RIDDOR where applicable.

Good practice requires all accidents requiring first-aid treatment to be recorded in the accident logbook. This helps St Peter's monitor accidents, identify poor practice and identify higher-risk activities.

The accident logbooks are kept with the first-aid kits:

- in the cupboard adjacent to the North Hill entrance in the church;
- in the kitchen in the church hall.

If a major accident or significant near miss occurs, the responsible person, usually the group leader or activity leader, should inform the church office immediately.

The following occurrences must be recorded in the accident logbook and reported immediately to the church office.

For employees

- any accident which causes death;
- any accident which causes major injury;
- any accident which results in the individual not being able to carry out their normal work duties for seven consecutive days following, but not including, the day of the accident;
- acute illness requiring medical treatment arising from exposure to a substance or biological agent;
- loss of consciousness arising from absorption of a substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin;
- other reportable work-related injury or ill-health as required by law.

Major injury may include:

- fracture, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes;
- amputation;
- dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine;
- loss of sight, temporary or permanent;
- chemical or hot metal burn to the eye;
- penetrating injury to the eye;
- injury from electric shock or electrical burn leading to unconsciousness, resuscitation or hospital admission for more than 24 hours;
- other injury leading to hypothermia, heat-induced illness, unconsciousness, resuscitation or hospital admission for more than 24 hours;
- unconsciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to a harmful substance or biological agent.

For members of the public and non-staff users of church premises

- any accident which causes death;
- any accident which results in the individual being taken to hospital for treatment from the scene of the accident.

Dangerous occurrences

Certain near misses or dangerous occurrences may also be reportable, including:

- collapse, overturning or failure of load-bearing parts of lifts or lifting equipment;
- explosion, collapse or bursting of a closed vessel or associated pipework;
- plant or equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines;
- electrical short circuit or overload causing fire or explosion;
- unintentional explosion or misfire;
- collapse or partial collapse of certain scaffolding or similar structures;
- other dangerous occurrences as defined by relevant law and guidance.

Where there is doubt about whether an accident, incident or dangerous occurrence is reportable, advice should be sought promptly.

9. Fire safety

St Peter's will seek to fulfil its obligations under fire safety legislation and related requirements.

St Peter's will maintain appropriate fire safety arrangements, including:

- assessment of fire risks in the church and hall;
- checks that fire can be detected in reasonable time and that people can be warned;
- arrangements to help people leave the building safely;
- emergency lighting and fire exit signage where required;
- reasonable firefighting equipment;
- information so that those in the building know what to do in the event of fire;
- regular checks that firefighting equipment is in place and serviceable;
- annual maintenance by a reputable contractor;
- Fire Risk Assessment;
- Fire Evacuation Plans;
- Fire RA Action Plan where applicable.

In the event of a fire:

- Raise the alarm manually using the equipment available.
- Evacuate the building to the assembly point at North Hill and High Street.
- Call 999.

Fire safety documents and procedures should be reviewed and updated as required.

10. Electrical safety

The Church Administrator will maintain a list of portable electrical appliances.

All users of electrical equipment should check that the equipment they are using appears to be in safe condition. A quick but thorough visual check will identify many potential hazards.

Faulty electrical items must not be used. They should be removed from use or clearly labelled "Do not use" so that others do not use them.

Faults must be reported to the church office for action.

Portable electrical equipment will be tested by a competent person at appropriate intervals. The existing arrangement is that portable electrical equipment is tested annually by a competent person with appropriate electrical knowledge, experience and equipment.

Unsafe equipment should be repaired where appropriate or safely disposed of.

The fixed electrical system will be inspected and tested by a competent contractor at appropriate intervals. The existing arrangement is inspection every five years by a competent contractor who is a full-scope member of NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT, or another appropriate competent body.

Necessary remedial work should be carried out.

In an emergency, the electrical fuseboards can be found:

- **Church:** in the cupboards on the north side of the porch and in the cupboard under the north gallery stairs;
- **Hall:** in the cupboard above the North Hill exit.

11. Gas safety

The church hall boiler is maintained and checked annually by a competent contractor registered with the Gas Safe Register.

Any safety-related work required should be implemented promptly.

The emergency gas shut-off in the hall is located at the back of cupboard 4, the cupboard immediately to the left as you face the North Hill exit. The back panel of this cupboard is removable.

12. Water leaks and water shut-off

In the event of a water leak, action should be taken to prevent danger, reduce damage and report the issue.

Water supplies can be turned off as follows.

Church

The main supply can be turned off at the meter labelled "Church" on the High Street pavement by the disabled access.

There is also a stopcock in the west toilet, behind the door, and another in the vestry, in the furthest cupboard on the right-hand side.

Hall

The main supply can be turned off at the meter on the North Hill pavement by the Noodle Bar passageway.

There is also a stopcock in the kitchen, to the right of the door at floor level, and another in the corridor cupboard: the red lever, high up, on the right-hand side.

Water may also be turned off at various points within the toilets, by the sinks and water boilers.

13. Hazardous substances

St Peter's does not normally store or use hazardous substances subject to COSHH, apart from small quantities of domestic cleaning products.

Domestic cleaning products are stored in:

- the cupboard in the church lobby by the North Hill entrance;
- church kitchen cupboards;
- church hall kitchen cupboards.

Cleaning products must be kept in their original containers to ensure clear labelling.

Products should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Any concern about hazardous substances, chemical storage, spillages, inappropriate products or unsafe use should be reported to the Church Administrator.

14. Safe equipment, plant and maintenance

The Church Administrator is responsible for identifying equipment and areas of the building requiring regular maintenance.

The Church Administrator is responsible for ensuring effective maintenance procedures are drawn up and that identified maintenance is implemented.

Any problems with plant, equipment, tools, fixtures, fittings, furniture or building fabric should be reported to the Church Administrator.

Equipment should only be used by people who are competent to use it safely.

Unsafe equipment must not be used and should be taken out of use, labelled or reported promptly.

15. Food preparation and hygiene

All appropriate regulations and procedures governing the preparation and storage of food should be followed.

Food handlers should receive adequate supervision, instruction and training, including as appropriate:

- safe food preparation;
- safe food storage;
- storage at correct temperatures;
- cleaning procedures;
- avoidance of cross-contamination;
- allergen awareness where relevant.

More detailed arrangements are set out in St Peter's Food Hygiene Policy.

16. Manual handling

St Peter's policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as reasonably practicable.

Where it is not possible to avoid moving loads, St Peter's will seek to assess the risk and make use of lifting aids where possible.

Training or instruction should be given to employees and volunteers who are required to undertake manual handling as part of their role.

More detailed arrangements are set out in St Peter's Manual Handling Policy.

17. Display screen equipment

Workstations used by staff should be assessed where appropriate.

Any person identified as a display screen equipment user should receive appropriate information, guidance or training.

Assessments and training should be recorded where required.

Concerns about workstation setup, screens, chairs, lighting, posture or discomfort should be raised with the Church Administrator or line manager.

18. Safeguarding

St Peter's operates a Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding concerns must be handled under safeguarding procedures and reported promptly to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Safeguarding Team, Vicar, diocesan safeguarding team or statutory authorities as appropriate.

Health and safety arrangements must not be separated from safeguarding responsibilities. Particular care should be taken where health and safety risks involve children, young people, vulnerable adults, pastoral care, lone working, one-to-one contact, transport, premises use, external hire or safeguarding-related concerns.

A copy of the full Safeguarding Policy is available from the church office.

19. Emergency information for users of church premises

Emergency information should be available in the entrance foyer of church buildings, providing emergency details and contact information for users of the buildings.

Fire

In the event of a fire:

1. Raise the alarm manually using the equipment available.
2. Evacuate the building to the assembly point at North Hill and High Street.
3. Call 999.

Gas fault

The emergency gas shut-off in the hall is located at the back of cupboard 4, the cupboard immediately to the left as you face the North Hill exit. The back panel of this cupboard is removable.

Electrical fault

To turn the electricity off in an emergency, use the electrical fuseboards:

- **Church:** in the cupboards on the north side of the porch and in the cupboard under the north gallery stairs;
- **Hall:** in the cupboard above the North Hill exit.

Water leak

Water supplies can be turned off as described in section 12 of this policy.

First aid

The two first-aid kits are:

- in the cupboard adjacent to the North Hill entrance in the church;
- in the kitchen in the church hall.

A defibrillator is available across North Hill at the old Age Concern building, Number 63.

All accidents, incidents and near misses should be reported using the Accident, Incident & Near Miss form. If first aid has been administered, a record must also be written in the accident logbook kept with the relevant first-aid kit.

Major accidents, incidents requiring hospitalisation, or significant near misses must be reported immediately to the church office.

Reporting property issues

During office hours, Monday to Friday, 8am-3pm, please report issues to the church office:

- 07947 136048

For non-urgent matters outside office hours:

- office@stpeterscolchester.org

For urgent problems outside office hours, please contact:

- Mark Wallace – 07772 615378

20. Contractors and external users

Contractors working on church premises should be competent and appropriately instructed about relevant site risks, access, emergency arrangements and any limitations on their work.

Where appropriate, contractors may be asked to provide risk assessments, method statements, insurance evidence or other relevant information.

External hirers and regular building users should be given appropriate information about emergency arrangements, first aid, fire safety, accident reporting and any relevant premises restrictions.

Hirers remain responsible for the safe conduct of their own activities, but St Peter's retains responsibility for ensuring that premises-related risks are managed appropriately.

21. Consultation, communication and training

St Peter's will consult employees on matters affecting their health and safety.

Relevant health and safety information should be communicated to staff, volunteers, Ministry Area Leaders, hirers, contractors and building users as appropriate.

Training, instruction or guidance may be provided through:

- induction;
- staff meetings;
- volunteer briefings;
- Ministry Role Descriptions;
- risk assessments;
- written procedures;
- safeguarding training;
- fire safety information;
- food hygiene training;
- manual handling guidance;
- specialist training where required.

22. Records

Appropriate records should be kept in relation to health and safety, including as relevant:

- risk assessments;
- accident and incident records;
- first-aid arrangements;
- fire safety checks and servicing;
- electrical testing;
- gas safety checks;
- equipment maintenance;
- food hygiene training or checks;
- manual handling training;
- display screen assessments;
- contractor records;
- action plans;

- reports to PCC or governance groups.

Records should be stored securely, organised clearly, and retained in accordance with St Peter's Data Retention Policy and any legal or insurance requirements.

23. Related policies and documents

This policy should be read alongside, where applicable:

- Governance and Risk Management Policy;
- Risk Assessment Procedure;
- Risk Register;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Fire Risk Assessment;
- Fire Evacuation Plans;
- Fire RA Action Plan;
- Lone Worker Policy;
- Manual Handling Policy;
- Food Hygiene Policy;
- Volunteer Policy;
- Volunteer Agreement;
- Ministry Role Descriptions;
- Code of Conduct;
- Complaints Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Privacy Notice;
- Data Retention Policy;
- IT Security Policy;
- Staff Handbook and employment policies;
- Buildings, Fabric and Development documents;
- Hire Terms and Conditions;
- relevant Church of England, diocesan, insurer, statutory or professional guidance.

24. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the PCC every three years, or sooner if required by changes in law, guidance, insurance requirements, incidents, parish practice, building use, staffing, governance need or risk assessment.

Some health and safety records, checks, risk assessments and action plans may require more frequent review according to their own review dates or statutory requirements.

The PCC is responsible for ensuring that this policy remains legally responsible, practically useful, proportionate and consistent with St Peter's governance, safeguarding, risk management and ministry needs.

Health and Safety Policy

St Peter's seeks to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff, volunteers, congregation members, visitors, hirers, contractors and others who use church premises or take part in church activities.

The PCC has overall responsibility for health and safety. Mick Kavanagh acts as Health and Safety Officer and supports the day-to-day implementation of health and safety arrangements.

Employees and volunteers are expected to take reasonable care of themselves and others, follow relevant guidance, report hazards, and record accidents, incidents and near misses.

First-aid kits are located in the cupboard by the North Hill entrance in church and in the kitchen in the church hall. A defibrillator is available across North Hill at the old Age Concern building, Number 63.

In the event of fire, raise the alarm, evacuate to the assembly point at North Hill and High Street, and call 999.

Health and safety arrangements include risk assessments, fire safety, electrical and gas safety, first aid, accident reporting, safe equipment, food hygiene, manual handling, safeguarding and emergency information for building users.

Concerns, hazards, property issues, accidents or near misses should be reported promptly to the church office or another appropriate responsible person.