

Statement of Policy: Volunteering within Central Hartlepool Group of Parishes

A church volunteer is a responsible position of trust. We have high standards. It is a privilege, not a right. Like a paid job, people must earn this position, with the right attitude as well as having the right skills. Everyone will be given the chance, but there may be times when a volunteer will be asked to step down. Everyone is welcome to come to church as a member or visitor or guest, but to be a volunteer in directly supporting church activities, especially those that involve working with children and vulnerable adults, these are the requirements:

Respect the leaders: Volunteering is part of the work and mission of the Church 'owned' by the Parochial Church Council (PCC), which is accountable for everything that happens in the Parish and beyond, including Group Parish activities which involve shared working across parish boundaries. The PCC delegates responsibility to individuals and subcommittees, including the clergy, paid staff, church officers and members of the PCC, and volunteers. The Communities of Hope Committee also includes representatives from all Group Parishes who make both strategic and day to day decisions about the running of the Communities of Hope project. Church leaders working under the authority of the PCC and CoH Steering Committee are deserving of the respect and support of volunteers.

Respect others: Respect must *always* be shown to church members, the public, guests and other volunteers. There will be times when people might not show respect to us, due to the nature of the issues they face. However, volunteers must never respond to challenging behaviour with violence, anger or raised voices. This may be extremely difficult at times, but it is essential. **ALWAYS work to defuse aggression and avoid confrontation, walking away if necessary.** If violence, aggressive language or bad behaviour increases, try to de-escalate it. Do not become part of the problem. Remember you are representing the Church.

Respect the building and facilities : Church buildings and equipment belong to the church community, and have been donated and looked after, in some cases, for generations. Be good stewards of the Resources that the Church entrusts to you as a volunteer. Treat them with at least the same care that you give your home and possessions.

Be prepared to do any job: We need willing volunteers prepared to step up, if asked, ready to do any task that is reasonable and within their physical and emotional ability, subject to any specific training required for Data Protection, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, food hygiene or specific use of specialised equipment. This includes unseen tasks such as preparation, cleaning and tidying. If you are asked to do a job for which you lack training or feel unsuited for, please discuss your concerns with a Church officer or one of the Group Parish clergy.

Keep confidentiality: Volunteers must not disclose personal information about people they come into contact without their express permission, unless there is an overriding Safeguarding or safety concern. Please make sure you have read the safeguarding and data protection policies and know whom to speak with (Parish Safeguarding officer) , if you are worried about something you see or hear.

Have excellent relationships: Church is about loving and caring for each other and our community. All relationships should be carried out in a caring way. Volunteers must always be polite to Church members, visitors, guests and other volunteers (regardless of how they are feeling). Please be welcoming and courteous to all.

Show generosity: Volunteers should be kind and generous to others and must not take personal advantage of their role, e.g. for personal gain. If there is a way we can say 'yes', we will always try to do so.

Show good behaviour: Volunteers should set a good example to Church members, visitors and guests by demonstrating good attitude and behaviour and should never raise voices in anger.

Threats, verbal abuse or acts of violence will never be tolerated and may result in sanctions or being reported to the Police.

If a volunteer breaks this code of conduct this may result in a verbal warning, written warning, or, in some cases, a period of suspension from volunteering. This will not however prevent that person from accessing church as a member or guest.

I agree to abide by this Policy (signed) Date

Review: this policy will be reviewed annually from the date of adoption