

# The Parish of Dunstable

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

For

St. Augustine's, St. Fremund's,  
St. Katherine's and St. Peter's  
Churches, Halls & Churchyards

### **Contact Address**

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## INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the regulations made under it.

The Policy is in three sections:

- A. General Statement of Policy
- B. Organisation and Responsibilities
- C. Arrangements

Note: Instructions and Guidance are in italics

## NOTE TO ALL EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTARY HELPERS AND CONTRACTORS

It is a legal requirement that you read this document carefully and understand your role and the overall arrangements for health and safety.

## **SECTION A**

### **GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

This policy is binding in respect of St Augustine's, St Fremund's and St Peter's Churches. In relation to St Katherine's Church, which is separately constituted and not under the direct jurisdiction of the Parochial Church Council, it can only be advisory.

Our policy, so far as is reasonably practicable, is to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, casual labour and voluntary helpers, and to provide such information training and supervision as they need for this purpose.

We will also endeavour to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all members of the congregations, contractors, visitors and others who may visit the churches, churchyards and any associated buildings.

The allocation of duties for safety matters and the particular arrangements which we will make to implement the policy are set out below.

The policy will be kept up to date, particularly in the light of any changes to legislation, buildings or activities. To ensure this, the policy and the way in which it has operated will be reviewed annually and the appropriate changes made.

In order to ensure that health and safety matters are kept constantly under review an item on 'Health and Safety' will be on the agenda for all meetings of the Parochial Church Council, District Church Councils and the Ecumenical Church Council. Employees and voluntary workers will be consulted as a matter of routine in order to seek their views on health and safety matters.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ on behalf of the Parochial Church Council

Date:

## **SECTION B**

### **ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **1. Responsibility of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)**

Overall responsibility for Health and Safety in the three churches is that of the Parochial Church Council. At St Katherine's Church, responsibility rests with the Ecumenical Church Council. The PCC will appoint a Health and Safety Officer (H&SO) who will report to them.

#### **2. Responsibility of the Parochial, District and Ecumenical Church Councils**

The District Church Councils (DCCs) shall have general responsibility to ensure that the 'Health and Safety' policy is implemented, taking all practical steps in their locality to ensure local compliance. The Parish Churchwarden in each church, in consultation with the appropriate District Churchwardens, shall be responsible for ensuring that the PCC is kept informed about Health and Safety matters coming before the DCCs and the Ecumenical Church Council (ECC). The DCCs will each appoint a Deputy Health and Safety Officer (DH&SO) who will report to them and the H&SO. The DCCs shall be responsible for the implementation of any Risk Assessments that have been undertaken. It is recommended that the ECC follows the same procedure.

#### **The Responsibilities of the H&SO and the DH&SOs are, where appropriate, to:-**

1. Be familiar with Health and Safety Regulations as far as they concern church premises.
2. Be familiar with the 'Health and Safety' policy and arrangements and ensure they are observed.
3. Ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe systems of work are in place.
4. Ensure the churches and halls, if applicable, are clean and tidy.
5. Ensure the churchyards are properly maintained including the safety of Monuments, tombstones and trees, and that grass is kept cut.
6. Ensure that safety equipment and clothing is provided and used by all personnel where this is required.
7. Ensure that all plant, equipment and tools are properly maintained and in good condition and that all operators have read the appropriate operating manual and signed the Plant Log to this effect.
8. Ensure that adequate access and egress is maintained.

9. Ensure adequate fire fighting equipment is available and maintained.
10. Ensure contractors have complied with Section 14 of this Policy.
11. Keep appropriate records and produce appropriate reports.
12. Ensure the success of this policy by maintaining good liaison with each other.
13. Undertake the Fire Risk Assessments for the Church buildings that they are responsible for.

### **3. Responsibility of employees and voluntary workers**

All employees and voluntary helpers have a responsibility to co-operate in the implementation of this health and safety policy and to take reasonable care of themselves and others whilst on church business or premises.

#### **Employees and voluntary workers must therefore:**

1. Comply with safety rules, operating instructions and working procedures.
2. Use protective clothing and equipment when it is required.
3. Report any fault or defect in equipment immediately to the appropriate person.
4. Report all accidents (however minor), injuries, near misses or other potential safety hazards immediately to the building's DH&SO, as set out in Section C.
5. Not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

# **SECTION C**

## **ARRANGEMENTS**

(Implementation of the Policy)

This section sets out our arrangements to minimise as far as is reasonably practicable risks to the health and safety of employees, voluntary workers, members of the congregations, visitors and contractors.

### **1. ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID**

The location of the relevant

First Aid boxes, Accident Books, Plant Logs and Property Maintenance Books is notified in the entrance foyer of all associated buildings.

All accidents must be recorded in the appropriate Accident Book.

### **2. GENERAL FIRE SAFETY**

Our policy is to fulfil our obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In order to achieve this, we undertake the following:

1. An assessment of the fire risks in the churches and associated buildings.
2. A check that a fire can be detected in a recommended time and that people can be warned.
3. A check that people who may be in the buildings can get out safely by the means of clearly marked and designated fire exits.
4. To provide reasonable fire fighting equipment.
5. To check that any person responsible for a group ensures that those in the buildings know what to do if there is a fire.
6. A regular check that our fire fighting equipment is in place and is serviceable, and that annual maintenance contracts are place with reputable companies.

### **If You Do Discover a Fire (No matter how small)**

1. Immediately raise the alarm.
2. Telephone the emergency services.
3. Evacuate the building, ensuring that all doors are shut on the way out. Persons responsible will then conduct a head-count of occupiers.
4. Any discrepancies will be notified to the Rescue Services.
5. The general rule is 'People before property'.
6. Ensure clear access for the emergency vehicles.

It has been agreed that under the above Regulations that the Health and Safety Officers will undertake the Fire Risk Assessment as the competent person and that the DCCs for each church will be deemed as the "Responsible person" as they have control of the buildings.

### **3. ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

1. All portable electrical appliances, including Plugs, cables and extension leads will be inspected and test annually by a qualified electrician. The electrician will provide a report of all equipment tested showing if it has passed or failed the test.
2. As part of the DH&SO annual general inspection, plugs, cables and sockets will be inspected for any loose connections, worn flexes or trailing leads. Any repairs needed, will be carried out by a qualified electrician.
3. Every five years, our fixed electrical systems will be inspected and tested by a qualified contractor who is a member of the NICEIC, ECA or other approved body. Any necessary remedial work will be carried out.
4. At intervals of not more than five years the lightning conductor systems will be examined and tested by a qualified firm of engineers.
5. Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill. All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following: -
  - i. Visually check all electrical equipment before use.
  - ii. Report all faults immediately to the appropriate DH&SO
  - iii. Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment.
  - iv. Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods.

- v. Flexible cables should be so positioned and so protected that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to mechanical damage.

#### **4. GAS EQUIPMENT SAFETY**

Ensure that the gas boilers and any other gas equipment is maintained and checked annually by a qualified contractor who is a CORGI registered gas installer. Any necessary work required for safety is implemented immediately.

#### **5. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**

Where at all possible, we have eliminated the use of hazardous substances. Where this is not possible, hazardous substances are locked away and only used by persons with the appropriate experience. Personal Protective Equipment must be used where appropriate.

Do not mix chemicals.

Do not store chemicals in unmarked containers.

#### **6. SAFETY OF PLANT AND MACHINERY**

1. Employees and voluntary workers must not operate plant or machinery that they are not trained and authorised to use.
2. Employees and voluntary workers must not ride on any parts of machinery not intended for that use.
3. Machinery must be isolated from the supplies before any adjustments are made.
4. After carrying out maintenance and adjustments, all guards must be replaced before the machinery is used.
5. Before using any item of plant or machinery, a check must be made to ensure it is in a safe working condition, correctly adjusted, and that there are no loose nuts, bolts or other defects.
6. The appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn when operating any item of plant or machinery.
7. Persons under the age of 18 may use hand tools only and are not permitted to operate any power driven item of plant or machinery.
8. Ladders may only be used when they can be safely secured. This may necessitate the use of ladder ties or two people operation.

9. Any defect and damage found to any item of plant or machinery must be reported to The DH&SO via the Property Maintenance Book.
10. All plant and machinery will be regularly maintained and a schedule kept of maintenance requirements.

## **7. SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS (Condition of floors, steps and paths)**

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, regular inspections will be made by the DH&SO of all floors and stairs in the churches and halls, and all paths and steps in the churchyards. Particular note will be made of moss, algae and leaves on paths. Any defects will be reported and repairs carried out.

## **8. LIGHTING**

In order to ensure that the churches are adequately lit, regular inspections will be carried out by the DH&SO to ensure that all lights in the churches, halls and churchyards are working and are replaced as necessary. The necessary safety precautions will be followed for replacing bulbs at high levels.

## **9. WORKING AT HIGH LEVELS**

Work at high levels is subject to the necessary safety provisions being in place.

## **10. PREPARATION OF FOOD**

1. Where practical, we ensure that we follow the appropriate regulations governing the preparation and storage of foodstuffs.
2. Where practical, we ensure that all food handlers have received adequate supervision, instruction and training.
3. All surfaces coming into contact with food should be washed down and disinfected, but must not be bleached. They must be left clean after use.

## **11. MANUAL HANDLING (Lifting, carrying and moving loads)**

1. Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as is reasonably practicable.
2. Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, an assessment will be carried out and use made of lifting aids, including trolleys, lifts and hoists as far as possible.

3. The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to undertake manual handling.

## **12. HAZARDOUS BUILDINGS/GLAZING**

1. Our policy is to ensure that our buildings are safe and without risks to the health, safety and welfare of all who work in and use them. In order to achieve this, the buildings are regularly inspected and any defects noted are immediately reported and the procedures put in hand for repairs.
2. Where necessary, temporary measures are taken to ensure that there is no risk of accident or injury until permanent repairs can be carried out.
3. A check is made of all glazing in the buildings to ensure that any glass in windows below waist height and in doors and beside doors below shoulder height is of a safety material or is protected against breakage.

*A faculty application may be necessary. Archdeacons can often sanction temporary repairs pending permanent arrangements being approved.*

## **13 NO SMOKING POLICY**

There will be a No Smoking Policy in all Churches, Halls, and associated buildings.

## **14. CONTRACTORS**

Anyone entering church or associated premises for the purposes of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following: -

1. Have their own health and safety policy (where required by law) and be able to provide a copy of the same, which shall be kept at the Parish Office in Chew's House.
2. Produce evidence that they have appropriate public and employer's liability insurance in place. A record of this evidence will be maintained with the Church's Public Liability Certificates, in the church office.
3. Comply with all the requirements of this 'Health And Safety policy and co-operate with the clergy, church wardens and / in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of operation.
4. Where plant and machinery is brought onto the church premises by contractors, they must be able to show, where necessary, that the equipment has been inspected and tested to ensure its safe operation.

4. Contractors may only use sub-contractors or persons other than their own direct employees with the express permission of the PCC or the ECC. However, accountability will remain with the contractors.

## **15. Lone Working**

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to avoid lone working where reasonably practicable. Areas of risk are; remote locations of churches, halls and home visits. However, where lone working is considered acceptable, additional emergency procedures are to be developed and implemented.

*We display the HSE poster "Health and Safety Law - What you should know." This is available from HSE Books Tel: 01 787 881165 or HMSO bookshops ISBN 0 7176 2493 5*

## **16. Asbestos Policy**

Prior to any building work taking place the builder must be made aware of any known asbestos by reviewing the Asbestos register. The builder must be made aware that, if in the course of their work they come across any asbestos, they must

- Stop work immediately;
- Contact the parish office on 01582-477401 or the vicar or Health and Safety Officer
- Show the Vicar or H&S officer the area where asbestos is located;

The vicar or H&S officer will then contact the parish H&S officer, who will advise what the next steps should be.

The Parish shall have a more detailed policy on managing Asbestos in all of its church buildings including halls.

**The basis of this document has been prepared by Ecclesiastical Insurance Group plc as a service to its customers.**

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