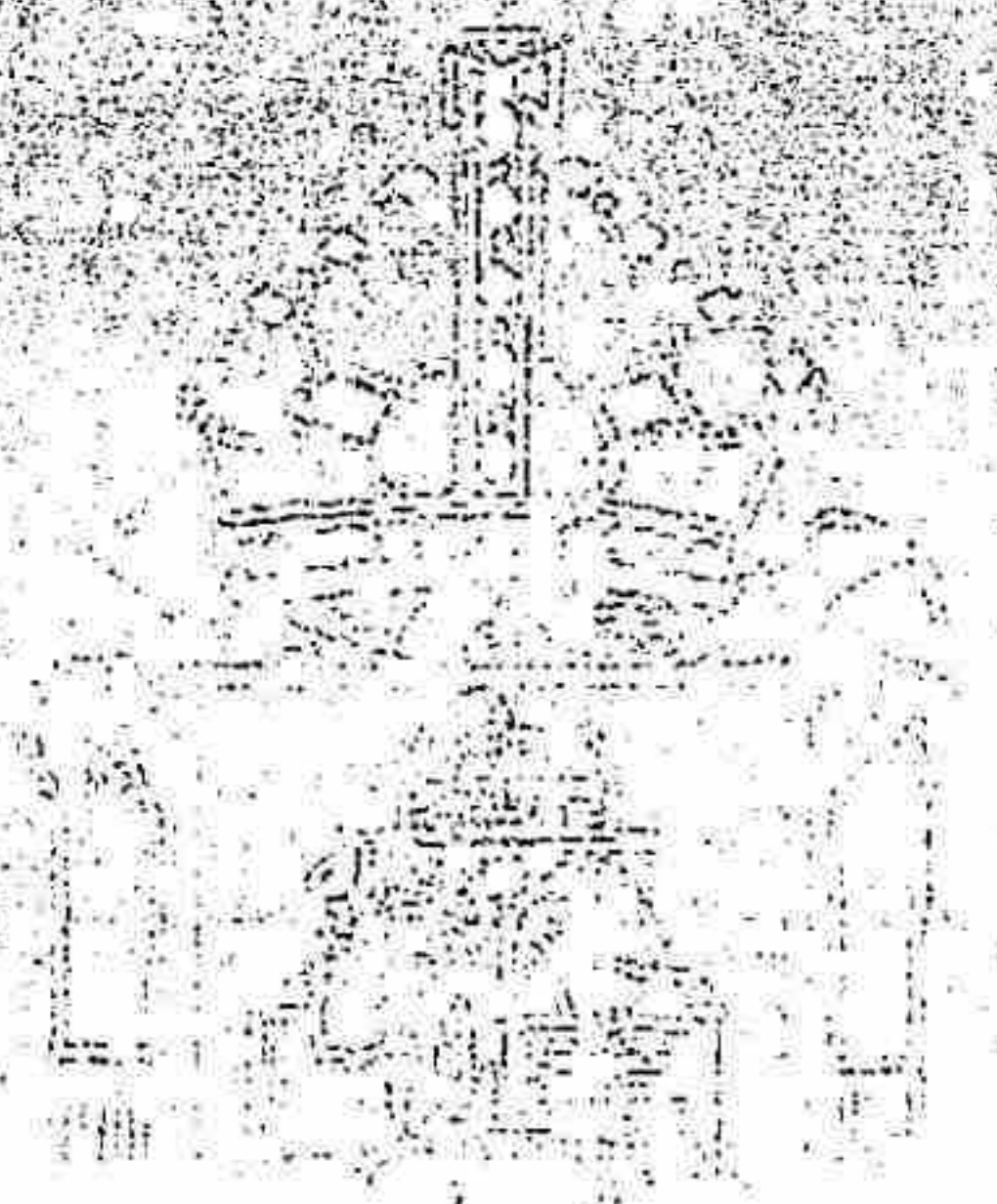


The Protection of Children

Diocesan guidelines for the
prevention of child abuse

Diocese of
Chichester



First edition: September 1997

This document will be revised.

All allegations of child abuse involving the church community will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily. As stated in the Children Act, the welfare of the child is our paramount concern.

- The Diocese will make arrangements as necessary for the emotional and spiritual support of the child and its family, the accused person and his or her family, and the parish community.
- Any allegation of abuse against a church worker, clerical or lay, or any relevant incident in any way to do with the life of the parish or church organisation, should immediately be referred to the Diocesan Child Protection Advisor. The Advisor will consult with the bishop and agree a plan of action.
- The Diocesan Advisor, if appropriate, will make sure that a referral has been made to the local social services office and will liaise with that department and the police during any child protection investigation.
- The Diocesan Advisor will inform the Diocesan Communications Officer who will handle media relations. All media contacts must go through the Communications Officer.
- The Advisor will make sure that the parish's insurance company has been informed. The Diocesan Registrar will also be informed if necessary.
- During child protection investigations it is normal practice for the accused person to be withdrawn from any contact with children or young people.
- Following the outcome of the investigation appropriate disciplinary procedures will apply.
- The result of an investigation may be inconclusive, there may or may not be a prosecution, or it may be decided that a person's behaviour has been ill-advised and foolish rather than criminal. The bishop or employer may need, after taking advice, to put restrictions on a person's future employment, or to require them to undertake counselling, supervision or spiritual direction.
- The Diocesan Advisor will be responsible for informing the Department of Health Consultancy Service of any information that needs to go on to its register.
- Allegations may be shown to be unfounded or malicious. In these cases the Diocesan Advisor will find appropriate means to make clear that the person has been exonerated.

When an allegation of child abuse is made

All allegations of child abuse involving the church community will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily.