Church Guidance Note

Health and Safety Policy

Our Health and Safety Policy

Name of Church

St Mary the Virgin, Goldington,

Address

Church Lane, Goldington, Bedford MK41 0AP

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, we know that if we are 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.

Risk Advice Line

Should you have any additional questions on this topic or other risk-related matters, as a valued Ecclesiastical customer you can contact us through our Risk Advice Line on **0345 600 7531** (Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, excluding bank holidays) and one of our in-house risk professionals will be able to assist.

Alternatively, you can email us at **risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com** and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.

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Note on using this template:

A health and safety policy is a legal document. If using this template, you should check that it matches your specific circumstances exactly. If it doesn't, you should amend it to do so.

On the whole, most churches are small, comparatively low-risk environments with few (if any) employees. This template reflects the typical arrangements required and hazards encountered here. It can be used to record the arrangements for managing health and safety in these situations.

For churches that are much larger, with significant numbers of employees, volunteers and visitors or where there are many diverse activities your policy will need more detail. Here, you can use this template to help start to develop this, but you may need to check if there is more that you need to do. We have provided further information at **www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters**. You can also use the guidance prepared by the Health and Safety Executive at **www.hse.gov.uk**

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 employees, 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. To keep matters under review, we will include 'health and safety' as a standing item on the agenda for all meetings of the PCC. We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each employee and 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 their 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 and made available to others on request.

Signed*:

Christopher Scott

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

Date:

3rd February 2026

Organisation and responsibilities

1. The person with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is:

awaits appointment of H&S officer

They will ensure that the arrangements set out in this policy satisfy any health and safety law, seeking specialist health and safety advice if necessary.

2. The following persons have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy. They are:

Colin Last

Nesta Gedrych

They will ensure that the arrangements set out in this policy are carried out.

3. All employees and 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.

Arrangements

This section sets out our general arrangements for managing health and safety and dealing with specific risks. We have removed any points that do not apply to our activities.

General Arrangements

Competent Assistance

Where necessary, we will appoint someone who is competent to assist us in meeting our health and safety obligations. Where such an appointment is made, we will record the details here:

Our person appointed to assist us is:

Risk Assessment

Where necessary, 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 employees and 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 employees and volunteers.

Our first aid box is located in: Hall Kitchen and Church Vestry Corridor

Our person in charge of first aid arrangements is: Kate Groves

Accident Reporting

We will record details of any accidents that occur, (in an accident book if required). We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of certain accidents to employees, volunteers and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Records of any accidents are is kept in: Hall Kitchen and Church Vestry

Monitoring

We will make periodic checks to ensure that our precautions remain effective and adequate. We will also ensure that any 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.

Contractors

If we employ contractors, we make sure that they have their own health & safety policy and Public and Employers Liability insurance by asking to see copies of the relevant documents.

Record Keeping

Our Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept in: Dilworth Room, Church Hall

Specific Arrangements

Asbestos

We will take steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings and, if so, assess any risk from it. We will then implement any plan to manage that risk. We will also provide relevant information to others who might need it (e.g. building contractors). We will keep records of the checks, assessments and plans we have made.

Bell Ringing

We will ensure that adequate precautions are in place to protect bellringers and others who may enter the ringing room and bell chamber. This may include any emergency evacuation procedure; a safe means of heating; the provision of fire extinguishers, the provision of emergency lighting and the notification of safety procedures to visiting bellringers.

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. Where appropriate, we will have trees inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe. Headstones tombs and monuments will be checked regularly to ensure they are properly maintained. Where our churchyard is formally closed, we will report any concern to the Local Authority or Parish Council.

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.

Display Screen Equipment

Where our employees and volunteers regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more we will analyse workstations to identify precautions, implementing these as necessary. We will also provide information, training, eye/eyesight tests (on request) and special spectacles if needed.

Electricity

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine and portable appliances is inspected, tested and maintained by someone who is competent to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made.

Events

Where we intend to hold large or unusual concerts, services or other fund-raising 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.

Heating Systems

We will ensure that any oil or gas heating system is 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.

Hazardous Substances

We only use domestic cleaning or horticultural products and petrol. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking any necessary precautions that are specified.

Lifting Equipment

We will ensure that any lifting equipment 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.

Oil Storage

Where we store large quantities of oil, we will take adequate precautions to ensure that oil cannot leak into the ground or any water course. This may include the provision of a double skinned plastic tank, an adequate bund, regular checks and proper maintenance etc.

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. 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, hand rails, 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.

Tower Tours

Where we plan to run tower tours, we will identify any specific precautions that are necessary. This will take account of the size of the tower; the control of movement within the tower; the number of stewards available; and the ease with which persons can safely evacuate the tower in case of emergency. We will then implement these.

Working at Height

Where possible we will try and avoid the need for work at height. 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.

Work Equipment

Any work equipment (including any hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Where necessary, some equipment (such as, ladders) will be regularly checked to make sure they are safe. We will keep records of any checks we make.

Working Alone

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

Next Steps

Once you have completed your risks assessment, you should be in a position to also complete your health and safety policy if you need one. Please make sure you keep copies of both documents together at an accessible location.

Need more help?

Our website for church customers contains a wealth of information and advice to help you look after your church. This includes health and safety guidance notes and detailed advice on specific topics such as working at height, the safe use of ladders etc.

All this is freely available at **www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters**

If you would like to speak to someone about this topic: Call or e-mail us on: **0345 777 332**
(Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 18.00 - excluding Bank Holidays) or churchteam@ecclesiastical.com

Information in this document

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This guidance is provided for information purposes and is general and educational in nature. It should not be used as a substitute for taking professional advice on specific issues and should not be taken as providing legal advice on any of the topics addressed.

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PD2661 2 07/24