



## **The Barnham Broom and Upper Yare Group**

Safeguarding provision:

Standing instructions on conduct in public gatherings

## **Objective**

These instructions do not constitute anything new or innovative in terms of how we act in the public space. They are an attempt to inform those outside the Group what our normative practice is. These instructions also act as risk mitigation in that when correctly followed should lessen the risk of any person being accused. As such they are part of the safeguarding structure of the Barnham Broom and Upper Yare Group.

## **Introduction**

As a part of the Diocese of Norwich we shall at all times comply with the Church of England and Diocesan instructions and policies on safeguarding.

In addition and because of the nature, design and location of the buildings in which our worship and other events primarily take place, we have adopted the following practices to ensure that we not only provide a safe and attractive space for meeting but also that we do not leave ourselves open to any suspicion or accusation of inappropriate behaviour or attitude.

These instructions also apply to our behaviour when engaging in church related activities on non-church premises, termed 'guest' locations below.

At all times we shall see our role as that of ambassadors for all the church stands for and does.

## **Our Practice**

### **In our churches**

Our churches are either wholly or partly modified, medieval structures. There are no chancels, naves, galleries, organ lofts, vestries, ringing floors, belfries or other spaces where either worship or practice dictates or requires these to be locked, closed or otherwise inaccessible during any event or public worship or rehearsals for such. There is no necessity for two or more persons to be located within any closed, locked or otherwise inaccessible space at any time.

Thus we agree together that two or more persons shall not as part of usual services and events, need to be located within any space that is either inaccessible or not visible from any location within the church. Unusually, there may be exceptions to this usual behaviour, but significantly *such will be exceptional*.

It is the clear agreed intention by this rule, that no vulnerable person will need to be found with any other in a closed, inaccessible space within any of our buildings, for any purpose or at any time.

This is our intention and what follows amount to examples of that intention:

- Where there is a need to congregate within a vestry for example for the purposes of witnessing and counting the collection, the door shall be left fully open;
- Where there is a need to offer instruction in for example bell ringing, there shall be at least three persons present in the same location at any time and the access to that location shall be left fully open;
- Where there is a need to offer musical instruction, no door to the gallery or church shall be locked and there shall be at least three persons present at any time;
- During a service or event, no visitor shall be left unattended at any time within the body of the church or other meeting space. (Plainly with many of our churches being left open permanently, it is more than likely that a visitor will be present and unattended *outside service times*. However this example concerns *services and events specifically*);
- Where any form of Sunday school or instruction of younger persons takes place on church premises, these locations shall remain fully accessible and unlocked. In those places where there is a vestry for the purposes of instruction, the door may be closed so that each group in the building may work undisturbed, but there is no need for the place to be inaccessible or locked. Furthermore, one-to-one instruction in the absence say of parents or other people being instructed, *will be counted as exceptional and open to challenge*;
- The Ringing floors of our churches may indeed at times not be visible from all places within the given church however these always remain accessible and where there is a child or vulnerable person present amongst the gathering, they will be part of a group of typically five or more persons. Such a larger group of several witnesses is an adequate defence against any charge. These groups are always attended by an experienced ringer.

## **Guest locations**

The intention of this section is to clarify how the agreement above for conduct on church premises might change as a result of being part of a church-related activity on premises not owned and/or operated by the church.

All the behaviours that hold in the section entitled 'In our churches', shall apply on Guest premises. Furthermore we recognise that we are become recognised ambassadors for all the church is and stands for, and can expect to have our conduct subjected to close scrutiny. Thus we will be particularly careful to consider how what we do and how we do it, might be perceived by others.

On Guest premises the rule-making-authority will necessarily no longer be the incumbent acting in concert with the Group Council but will now be for example the Village Hall Committee or the Governing Board and Headteacher in the case of a school or the householder or tenant in the case of a private dwelling. In all situations where a church activity is taking place on Guest premises, we agree to defer, honour and respect the rules and practices of that rule-making-authority.

This is our intention and what follows amount to examples of that intention:

- When visiting persons in hospital we shall withdraw if the person being visited requests us too; we shall only speak to the particular patient we are there to meet and will not engage in 'bed-hopping' unless specifically invited to address another patient;
- When in schools we will not engage in any activity other than that we are there to do; thus we will not instruct, direct or otherwise address children other than as specifically required to do, say for an assembly. We will fully respect the role of school staff in directing, instructing or disciplining children and refrain from doing so ourselves;
- When on Village Hall or similar premises we will take care to see things as others might in regard to tidying-up after our hire and in use of the facilities.

Document Control

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Date	Version number	Change
201810	V1	Initial draft
20190115	v1.1	Adding words regarding ambassadorial role; examples including schools village halls etc.
20190124	v1.2	Clarifying that our normative behaviour does NOT include exceptional circumstances. Some additional words to provide a defence for bell ringing.