

St. Mary's Church

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Mary, Riverhead with Dunton Green

PASTORAL POLICY

GOOD PRACTICE

- Arrange visits in advance. Ask permission to visit.
- If the person is a little difficult, or has some kind of issue, make sure you let other people know when and where you will be visiting them. If some difficulty arises during the visit, make a note of the visit and tell someone what happened as soon as possible.
- Have boundaries in place with regard to frequency of visiting and length of time of a visit; the visitor should always be the one who arranges the day and time.
- Always knock on the door before entering a room or home; announce who you are as you enter.
- When visiting vulnerable adults, always treat them with respect. Always refer to them by name. Make a point of listening and always wait for them to reply without interrupting.
- Respect their home and possessions.
- Respect differences – be it in appearance, ability or ideas.
- Have a proper conversation using appropriate language. Ask about interests and hobbies. Don't be patronising. Don't assume the person doesn't know much more than they are able to communicate. Be aware that they are interested in a very wide range of things.

BAD PRACTICE

- **DO NOT** help with physical needs, washing and toileting. If they ask, politely refuse and ask who they usually get to help with such things. You might find out who does help in such cases and ensure they visit.
- If accompanying the person shopping, or taking them for coffee, do not offer to pay for them or allow them to pay for you. Pay your own way.
- Do not assume that a person with a disability has to be served and cannot help themselves or express a choice or preference. Ask them what they would like you to do to help.
- Do not touch or move personal possessions without permission. Many people rely on familiarity as navigational aids around their homes.

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- Do not tidy up without permission.
- Do not attempt to change someone's appearance to a more acceptable style.
- Do not impose 'ministry' on vulnerable adults without their informed permission.
- Do not assume that everyone shares your Christian values.
- Do not ignore people that are below your eye-level by only talking to their companions, who may be on your eye-level. Standing whilst talking to someone in a wheelchair assumes you are talking down to them (even if you aren't) and makes two-way communication difficult.
- Do not use euphemisms, irony and some kinds of jokes with some vulnerable adults. Be discerning. You can sometimes be misunderstood and your true meaning might not be grasped, or it may be felt to be offensive. Just because someone has a disability it doesn't mean they can't hold an adult conversation with you – it's important not to talk in childish language.
- Do not hug people without asking. This can cause distress; people who have disabilities have preferences too. However, be aware that leaving a disabled person out of 'hugging' or handshakes can be very rejecting and hurtful. Vulnerable adults sometimes welcome physical contact, but remember to ask first.
- **PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS**
- Exercising any kind of ministry involves workers developing an understanding of themselves and how they relate to others, how they increase the well-being of others and how they ensure their own well-being and safety. People in positions of trust necessarily have power, although this may not be apparent to them, therefore respecting professional boundaries is particularly important. Many pastoral relationships can become intertwined with friendships and social contacts, making this guidance even more necessary.
- Church workers should exercise particular care when ministering to persons with whom they have a close personal friendship or family relationship.
- Church workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise.
- Church workers should recognize their limits and not undertake any ministry that is beyond their competence or role (e.g. therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling

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victims of abuse and domestic violence, or their perpetrators, or giving legal advice).

NOTE: In such instances the person should be referred to another person or agency with appropriate expertise.

- Church workers should avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships.
- Pastoral relationships may develop into romantic attachments and such situations should be handled sensitively. Workers need to recognize the possibility of such a development and make it clear to both the person concerned and a supervisor or colleague. Alternative arrangements should be made for the ongoing pastoral care of the person concerned.
- Church workers should not undertake any pastoral ministry while they are under the influence of drink or non-prescribed drugs.
- At all times seek supervision and advice and never keep visits and conversations to yourself.
- **NOTE: If someone being visited says they wish to tell you something in complete confidence you must inform them that if what they are about to tell you relates to something illegal or involves some form of inappropriate behaviour then you cannot promise. You may have to inform someone else - a trained professional or a Minister - of the matter.**