



Health and Safety Policy

St Mary's Church, Haverhill

Policy last reviewed and adopted by PCC: Monday 12th May 2025

Policy due for review: Annually after APCM

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 volunteers, congregation, visitors and others who may use the church, 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.

We will keep health and safety matters under review at appropriate intervals.

We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each member 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 his or her part in its implementation.

Further detail about our organisation and arrangements for managing health and safety is set out in this document or found on our website: <https://stmaryshaverhill.org.uk/>.

A copy of it will be kept in the church and made available to others on request.

Organisation and Responsibilities

The member of the PCC with overall responsibility for implementing our policy is **the Revd Max Drinkwater**.

They will ensure that:

- The standards set out in this policy are implemented and maintained.
- Where necessary, specialist health and safety assistance is obtained.
- Any hazards reported to them are rectified immediately.
- Only competent persons carry out repairs, modifications, inspections and tests.
- Any accidents are investigated, recorded and reported if necessary.
- Relevant health and safety documents and records are retained.
- They keep up to date on health and safety matters relevant to the church.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

The Churchwardens have day-to-day responsibility for implementing our policy. They are **Jane Eccleston**. They are assisted by the buildings and maintenance officers.

They will ensure that:

- All employees and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities.
- Adequate precautions are taken as set out in this policy and related risk assessments.
- Adequate information and training is provided for those that need it.
- Any hazards or complaints are investigated and dealt with as soon as possible.
- Where defects cannot be corrected immediately, interim steps are taken to prevent danger.
- All accidents are reported in-line with the requirements of this policy.
- Advice is sought where clarification is necessary on the implementation of this policy.
- Set a personal example on matters of health and safety.

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.

They will ensure that they:

- Read this policy and understand what is required of them.
- Complete their work taking any necessary precautions to protect themselves and others.
- Comply with any safety rules, operating instructions and other procedures.
- Report any hazard, defect or damage, so that this might be dealt with.
- Warn any new employees or volunteers of known hazards.
- Attend any training required to enable them to carry out their duties safely.
- Do not undertake any repair or modification unless they are competent to do so.
- Report any accident.
- Do not misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Risk Assessments

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 Kits are monitored and updated regularly and are situated:

- in the vestry
- in the kitchen
- in the ringing chamber

Accident Reporting

We will keep an accident book and record details therein. 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. There is only one accident book in the church, but accidents may be recorded elsewhere and submitted for inclusion in the book if the book is not immediately accessible.

Our Accident Book is kept:

- in the 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, Risk Assessments by asking to see copies of the relevant documents before any work commences.

Record Keeping

Health and Safety Risk Assessments, records and other documents are kept in the vestry. Health and Safety at Work notices are displayed:

- in the vestry
- in the community area

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 (for example, 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 bell ringers and others who may enter the tower, ringing room, clock room and bell chamber. This will include any emergency evacuation procedure, a safe means of heating, the provision of a fire extinguisher and the notification of safety procedures to all visiting bell ringers.

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. There are a quinquennial inspection carried out by the church architect who advises on any necessary work to be done.

Churchyard

The upkeep of the churchyard is maintained by The West Suffolk Council. They 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 by them to ensure they are properly maintained as required. As our churchyard is formally closed, we report any concerns to West Suffolk Council or their representative.

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, 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.

Electricity

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machines and portable appliances is maintained so as to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced. We will keep records of the checks made where appropriate.

Events

Where we intend to hold large or unusual concerts, services and fundraising events, we will identify any additional precautions that are necessary and implement these.

When the building and facilities are hired out, risk assessments will be requested and displayed. A copy of this document will be available for their inspection. Notification of Fire Exits and evacuation procedures from the building will highlighted in any agreement made.

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. We will also bring to the attention of our congregation and volunteers the available **Fire Exits** from the building. These are the

- main south front doors
- main north door, through the community area
- vestry door

Fire Extinguishers are located at

- the main entrance
- in the chancel
- in the ringing chamber
- a fire blanket in the kitchen.

These are maintained annually by the Fire Extinguisher supplier and marked accordingly.

Heating Systems

We will ensure that the 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 clean materials and floor sealant. We will ensure that these are stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions taking, any necessary precautions that are specified. COSHH sheets will be kept.

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.

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. We will ensure all those using the kitchen have the qualifying training.

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 or 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. A disclaimer will be completed for all visitors on Tower Tours.

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. Ladder Training will be available for those who may work at heights.

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. Portable Appliance Testing on all electrical equipment is carried out once a year and recorded in the Log Book.

Working Alone

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

Security

The roof has an intruder alarm fitted which is tested monthly and dates logged. A list of key holders is maintained and the procedures for locking and securing the building is displayed on the exit doors. The Police, Fire and Ambulance have contact details in the event of any emergencies. All key holders are made aware of the locking up procedures of the building. These are displayed on the exit doors.