

Risk Assessment Policy and Guidance

Risk assessment Policy

St James Church is committed to keeping all its activities safe and we work within our existing Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies (including Safer Recruitment).

To do this, we need to make our risk assessments effective and not merely exercises in filling out documentation that is difficult to use. We will keep risk assessments simple. We will use generic assessments wherever possible rather than reinventing the wheel on every occasion. We will avoid putting numbers on risks as this gives a false sense of objectivity and can be misleading as to which are the most likely risks.

Generic risk assessments

Various risks that are common to more than one activity are covered in a number of documents, which leaders should refer to as necessary:

- The Health and Safety Policy covers a wide range of risks and gives detail about the reasoning behind our approach to dealing with each risk. This policy is reviewed annually by the PCC.
- The Safeguarding Policy covers all risks associated specifically with activities involving children and vulnerable adults. This is a diocesan policy which the PCC has adopted. The Parish Safeguarding Officer advises the PCC when the policy is updated by the diocese.
- A two-page Safe Working Reminders document is issued to all church members in January each year. This summarises the key points from the Health and Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Policy. It is issued to all members because a high proportion of them are involved in leading church activities.
- The churchwardens have an aide memoire covering various aspects of running church services.
- The Parish Safeguarding handbook (copy on Safeguarding noticeboard) is the standard reference guidance for various activities and situations

Specific Risk Assessments

A number of risk assessments have already been completed. They are listed in Annex A to this policy. You may find that one of them records aspects of your activity that you can adopt into your risk assessment. Contact the owner for further information. In due course we will set up a digital repository.

Procedure

Our insurers advise: "You need to ensure that reasonable precautions are in place at your church to keep it safe for those who use it. To do this, you need to think about what might cause harm to people. You will then need to decide if the precautions already in place are adequate. If they are not, you may need to identify further action to prevent any danger. When done formally, this is known as a risk assessment. Completing risk assessments is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork - it is about identifying sensible precautions for your church." For off-site events, we are covered for normal events held anywhere in the UK. We only need to report to our insurers unusual activities that may carry a higher risk.

Complete the risk assessment form below in your own words and pass it to the churchwardens and the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

St James Church Taunton

Activity Risk Assessment form

1. For instructions about using this form, see the “Risk Assessment Policy and Guidance Document” on the website.
2. Please read the Safe Working Reminders and follow the guidance therein.
3. More details are available in the Health and Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Policy.
4. If the activity you are involved in falls outside the scope of the above policies, please complete this risk assessment for the matters not covered by those policies and email it to the Wardens and Parish Safeguarding Officer (jennywakefield@btinternet.com)

Date of Event:						
Title or description of the event:						
Location:						
Leaders:						
What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to manage this risk?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done

Extend this table as required.

Annex A

Church activities where risk assessment is necessary

Category	Activity	Job description in place Y or N	Risk management in place	Addition RA needed Questions to be asked if Additional risk assessment needs to be completed. - Always consider whether teams are sufficiently staffed and resourced, space necessary, heating and who is responsible for overseeing - Equipment safety - Unusual usages – e.g candles,	Risk Owner/ Team Leader Vicar/Wardens & PCC have generic legal responsibility)
Services a.m	Warden's oversight and welcomers		H&S policy SWR/Aid memoire		Wardens/Welcome Team
	Creche Area	Y	H&S policy SWR/ C&YP guidelines/ job specific guidelines/ Warden Aide mme		Children's Pastor (no longer staffed on a Sunday, but Rachel has oversight – checked by wardens on duty Sunday am)
	Children's Church	Y	H&S policy SWR/ C&YP guidelines/ job specific guidelines		Children's Pastor Sunday Club Leaders on duty
	Children's tables (If set up during AAW)	Y (as for Sunday Clubs)	H&S policy SWR/ C&YP guidelines/ job specific guidelines		Activity Leader / Children's pastor
	Youth Church	Y (as for Children's Church)	H&S policy SWR/ C&YP guidelines/ job specific guidelines	Risk assessment completed for Social events where there is an offsite or unusual activity	Youth Church leaders/youth pastor /PSO
	Coffee Team / Hospitality team	N	H&S policy/ SWR/ job specific guidelines		Ruth Crooks
	Communion	?	H&S policy SWR/ job specific guidelines/		Wardens/Vicar

			job specific guidelines		
	People on agreement supervision	Y	H&S policy SWR / Diocesan guidance/specific agreements/ supervision in place		PSO (JW)/Vicar/ wardens
	Prayers	Y	H&S policy SWR	Prayer protocol	Prayer Coordinator
	E mail prayer team	Y	H&S Policy / SWR safeguarding policy	Protocol written down	
	Sound team	Y	H&S policy SWR	Are there unusual circumstances for this service, making risks greater than normal e.g extra trp hazards, electrical equipment	Richard C
	Worship Team	Y	H&S policy SWR	Are there unusual circumstances for this service, making risks greater than normal e.g extra trip hazards, electrical equipment	Ray, Worship Coordinator leader for service & Richard C
Services pm Hymn and Tea	Opening up / Warden oversite	Y	H&S policy SWR	Is there a specific protocol for entry – Keys, heating check with Leaders	Warden/ Jane Price / Catering Coordinator (rota for refreshments)
The Room or other worship services			H&S policy SWR	Are there unusual circumstances for this service, making risks greater than normal e.g extra trip hazards, electrical equipment	Service leading team Ensure locking and unlocking protocol
“	Hospitality	N	H&S policy SWR Hygiene protocol	Is Protocol written down	Catering coordinator to recruit
	Special events		H&S policy SWR	Each event needs to be assessed on own merits	Wardens/ Worship Co
	Alzheimer's communion (Does this happen)	Y (lay reader agreed by DBW)	H&S policy SWR	H&S oversight remains responsibility of Alzheimer's leaders	Vicar/ Alz gp leader
	Home Communion	Y (minister)	H&S policy SWR	Needs protocol written down, especially if reserved communion being taken	Vicar / Licensed Readers

	Art Group	N in process	H&S policy SWR	Needs protocol written down, e.g. numbers policy, gate and lock procedure, number of helpers, safer recruitment etc	Vacant
	Home Groups	Y for HG Leaders not hosts	H&S policy SWR Home Group leaders Guidance / training?? Parish SGH/ Lone working	Risk assessment might be needed if there are vulnerabilities special circumstance. Venue in Home/ Church premises	Discipleship Coord - Vicar
	Thursday Fellowship	N?	H&S policy SWR	Needs protocol written down, e.g. numbers policy, gate and lock procedure, number of helpers, safer recruitment etc	Vicky Dykes / Carole Whitaker and Committee
	Alpha Groups	?	H&S policy / SWR	Training for leading ?	Vicar discipleship Coord
	TLG / Reader in school	School	H&S policy SWR/ C&YP guidelines/JDs/ School protocol	School responsible for Risk Assessments but volunteers need to know what they are. School provides training	TLG Coordinator – David Jordan
	Bellringers	Y	H&S policy SWR/ Bellringers C&YP guidelines if appropriate / Tower guidelines	Risk assessment for open events	Marian G
Special events	Public performance or other dramatic events	Specific one off	H&S policy SWR	Risk assessment needed for rehearsals and performance. Policy protocol for situations where under 18s present Follow appropriate data protection rules for internal and external booking	Designated Director / producer
	Catered events e.g cooked meals, buffets	N	H&S policy SWR	Risk assessment needed	Catering Coordinator
	Special services e.g. joint services, baptisms, confirmation	Roles in place	H&S policy SWR / Wardens memoire/ C&YP guidelines if appropriate	Additional Risk assessment needed or could a line be added to existing aide memoirs	Wardens/MinTm Worship Co

	Exhibitions	Specific one offs	H&S policy SWR / Wardens memoire/ C&YP guidelines if appropriate/ Tower protocol	Risk assessment needed could be generic to cover all?	Organiser of event /Out Co Wardens/PCC
	Fun days	Specific one offs	H&S policy SWR / Wardens memoire/ C&YP guidelines if appropriate/ Tower protocol	Risk assessment needed could be generic to cover all?	Organiser of event /Out Co Wardens/PCC
Pastoral Visiting	Formal e.g. Home communions / Vicar visiting/ PV's visiting	Y	H&S policy SWR / Job specific guidelines	Protocol needed Diocesan policy	Vicar
Pastoral Visiting	Informal	“	H&S policy SWR/ Job specific guidelines	Protocol needed / Diocesan policy; D of Salisbury policy document could be adopted	?
Outside events	Group Trips children or adult	Specific one off	H&S policy SWR / Wardens memoire/ C&YP guidelines if appropriate	Risk assessment needed for each event and PCC approval if organised church event	C&YP Co/ Group organiser
	Special events Church outside church premises		H&S policy SWR / Wardens memoire/ C&YP guidelines if appropriate	Risk assessment needed could be generic to cover all?	Organiser of event / PCC agreement
Hirers Homegroups events	Regular	N/a	Policy and Hirers agreement. Safeguarding policy and Insurance requirements		Administrator oversight
	One off hirers	N/a	Policy and Hirers agreement. Safeguarding policy and Insurance requirements		Administrator oversight

Miscellaneous	Chair and Furniture Moving		H&S policy SWR	Protocol needed?	Wardens/ caretaker
	Annual Church Working Party or Group Maintenance		H&S policy SWR	Risk assessment needed for each task if not covered by existing policies and guidance e.g drains, gulleys	Facilities Co / Wardens
	Decorating Projects		H&S policy SWR		Facilities Co / Wardens
	Caretaker	Y	H&S policy SWR – Lone working policy / JD		Line manager
	Office Staff	Y	H&S policy SWR – Lone working policy / JD		Line Manager
	Treasurer & team	N?	H&S policy SWR –	Protocol needed?	Vicar/ Wardens/ PCC
	Premises Team Activity		H&S policy SWR – Lone working policy		Premises Coordinator with Warden and PCC
	Flower arrangers	N	H&S policy SWR – Lone working policy		Flower Team
	Lone working (any staff or church member)		H&S policy SWR - Lone working policy		Wardens with PCC
	Car lift scheme	Not active at present but lifts are being organised on friendship basis	H&S policy SWR - Lone working policy	JD / Insurance document – process for ensuring this is done.	Vacant Wardens / Past co-ord PSO

Specific Risk assessment for activities that involve and specific activity not covered by generic agreement

e.g. – A new project being set up

A new activity being used in a children's group

Risks are identified at the outset and quantified as Low, medium, high

Acronyms:

SWR – Safe working reminders

JDs Job description

H&S Policy – Health and Safety Policy

Parish SGH – Safeguarding Handbook

Updated 17.11.2025 JW