

The Charity of the Order of The Regular Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord Registered Charity Number 1167869

Safeguarding & Protecting the Welfare of Children – Policy & Procedures

1. The safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Diocese

As Catholics we believe that human life is sacred because, from its beginning, it involves the creative act of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with Him. Accordingly, we recognise that each human being, irrespective of age or circumstance, should be accorded the dignity and respect due to a child of God. The Church, as a community, has a duty to follow the command to love by valuing and protecting the vulnerable. Children are the most vulnerable and have the greatest entitlement to protection.

The Diocese confirms that in matters of the alleged abuse of children the ‘Paramountcy Principle’ will be maintained, that is the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in all matters concerning the safeguarding of children. Legally someone is defined as a child up to his/her eighteenth birthday.

The Charity’s safeguarding policy is written within the context of the above statement.

2. The policy and procedures apply throughout the Charity

‘Everyone who works with children... has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single professional (*or individual*) can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.’

Working Together to safeguard children, HM Government, March 2015, page 9.

This policy applies to all members of the Community staff, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of the Charity.

(n.b. the term child/children refers here to all young people under 18 years of age)

3. The purpose of this policy:

- To protect children and young people who receive the Charity’s services. This includes volunteers under 18 years old, and children of adults using our services.
- To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles which guide our approach to safeguarding, children and young people.
- To ensure that everyone working with the Charity and everyone receiving support from us is aware of the responsibilities they and others have – and knows what to do if harm or injury is suspected or is discovered.

The Charity believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

4. **Descriptions/types of abuse:**

Child abuse is the term used when an adult (or another child/young person) harms a child or young person under the age of 18. There are four main kinds of abuse, all of which can cause long term damage to a child.

The types of abuse:

1. **Physical abuse**

This is when a child is hurt or injured by a child or an adult. Physical abuse includes hitting, kicking, punching and other ways of inflicting pain or injury such as poisoning, drowning or smothering. It also includes giving a child harmful drugs or alcohol.

2. **Emotional abuse**

This is when adults deny children love or affection, or constantly threaten or humiliate them. sarcasm, degrading punishments and ignoring a child are also forms of emotional abuse and undermine a child's confidence and sense of self-worth.

3. **Neglect**

This is when a child's basic need for love, food, warmth, safety, education and medical attention is not met by parents or carers.

4. **Sexual abuse**

This is when a child is used sexually by one or more adults or young person(s). Sexual abuse can include kissing, touching the child's genitals or breasts, vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex.

Sexual abuse may not involve physical contact. Sexual abuse also includes encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines, videos or sexual material on the internet, and other forms of sexual activity online or via mobile phone, including sending or sharing sexual images of children, or encouraging children to share them – photos/videos, 'sexting'.

Bullying, racism and other types of discrimination are also forms of child abuse. Like other kinds of abuse they can harm a child physically and emotionally.

5. **The Charity will seek to keep children and young people safe from harm by:**

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting safeguarding children practices through procedures and codes of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- Sharing information about safeguarding children and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.

6. **Responding to allegations of abuse**

Under no circumstances should any of us carry out our own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following:

- Concerns must be reported as soon as possible to the Compliance Co-ordinator, Professor Michael Alder (michaeldalder@hotmail.com, 01245 363649) who is nominated as the designated safeguarding lead by the Charity.

- In the absence of the Co-ordinator, or if the suspicions in any way involve the co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the Prioress (01206 867296 crssuk@canonesses.co.uk)
- The Charity has a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for its two main sites of operation for Chelmsford. This is Sister Margaret (01245 604108) and for Colchester, Mrs Joy Hopkinson (01206 867296). Concerns at local level can be passed to these individuals if preferred.
- The local Social Services office telephone number between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm is 01245 493622.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Co-ordinator the absence of the Co-ordinator or Deputy co-ordinator should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies.
- The role of the Co-ordinator is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Social Services Department. It is Social Services task to investigate the matter under the 2015 Children's Act.

7. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

If a young person discloses any information to you relating to possible harm or abuse in any form, you should:

- Listen** carefully to what the young person tells you. **Tell** him/her that you must pass that information on to those responsible for Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures within the Charity, so that they can decide what further action is needed. That may then include a duty to inform Social Care and/or the Police.
- Reassure** the young person that you will respond in a way which is intended to safeguard their welfare, and protect him/her and others from further harm.
- Do not** share anything disclosed to you, or any other concerns about possible non-accidental injury or abuse, or any written records of this, with the child's parent(s)/carer(s), or with anyone other than the Designated Lead – Safeguarding. To do so may complicate any investigation, or cause unnecessary distress.
- Where possible, and if it is safe and appropriate to do so, offer to go back to the young person, preferably with the Designated Lead – Safeguarding, to let him/her know what action is being taken.

8. Code of Conduct

You must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- Ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult and/or peer volunteer present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy/ encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Be aware that any physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted

- Recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people
- Operate within principles, guidance and Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.

You should also:

- give guidance and support to less experienced staff and volunteers.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded:

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure that family or carers are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child or young person
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a child or young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child or young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

You must not:

- have inappropriate physical, verbal, phone, text or online contact with children or young people
- allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- make suggestive inappropriate or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or young people, or their parents/carers
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- show favouritism to any individual
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- rely on your good name or that of the Charity to protect you
- believe 'it could never happen to me'
- take a chance when common-sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

9. DBS Checks & Induction

- 9.1 In line with the Charity's Volunteer Policy make sure all volunteers, employees and members of the community who are involved in regulated activity have enhanced DBS checks.
- 9.2 In line with Diocesan policy, make sure all volunteers, employees and members of the community who are involved in regulated activity have enhanced DBS checks.
- 9.3 It is the long term objective of the Charity to have all volunteers, employees and members of the community who are involved in regulated activity registered on the church database.
- 9.4 The Charity will aim to follow good practice and ensure DBS certificates are up to date, i.e. no more than 5 years old.
- 9.5 The Charity will try and ensure that volunteers, employees and members of the community who are involved in regulated activity in overseas countries who are British citizens have basic DBS checks.
- 9.6 The Charity will ensure all new volunteers have induction programmes.

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