



# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY STANDARD**

## **Policy Standard for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults**

February 2021

Authorised for distribution by the Board of Trustees, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of London

# Foreword

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of London (the Diocese) is wholly committed to safeguarding every member, especially our children and vulnerable adults, and is resolute that every person is entitled to being safe and protected from harm to enable him or her to safely enjoy and benefit from all its services and activities.

To continue to achieve this objective we are committed to ensuring that all clergy, servants, paid and unpaid staff, volunteers (hereinafter referred to as Servants) who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults are aware of their responsibilities and the applicable policy standards (this document) and that there are appropriate protection and reporting procedures in place.

These procedures will only be effective if all Servants in each parish recognise their importance and know what they say.

A checklist is included at the end of this document to help with this process.

All parishes in the Diocese will adopt these procedures and regularly monitor their performance against the checklist at the end of this document to ensure that the parish continues to comply with these procedures, particularly after staffing and other organisational changes.

Section 5 contains a detailed explanation of the procedure to follow where there is alleged or suspected abuse by a Servant. If you are concerned that a child or other person might be at risk or is actually suffering abuse in any other context, outside the remit of the parish or the Diocese, you should tell a member of the clergy.

**If you wish to report a concern, however, prefer not to report through your parish, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead at [safeguardinglead@copticorthodox.london](mailto:safeguardinglead@copticorthodox.london) . This is currently Mr Sami Gabriel who can also be reached via the Diocese admin office. A full list of parish safeguarding leads can be found in Annex 3.**

This document outlines the policies and procedures for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of London and is divided into the following sections:

1. Safe recruitment
2. Training Policy
3. Recognising signs of abuse
4. Good Practice
5. Response and Investigation Procedures
6. Annex
  - a. Outline of the Training resources available (Training pack is separate)
  - b. Implementation checklist
  - c. Safeguarding Leads and Contacts

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

## Contents

1. Safe Recruitment .....	3
2. Training Policy.....	4
2.1 Training and development policy outlines .....	4
2.1.1 Promoting a safer environment and culture .....	4
2.1.2 Safeguarding training and development in the church context .....	4
2.1.3 Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church.....	4
2.1.4 Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of harm and other affected persons.....	4
2.1.5 Safe working practice.....	5
2.1.6 Needs of participants in the training .....	5
2.2 Core safeguarding training .....	5
2.2.1 Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.....	5
2.2.2 Elements of safeguarding training .....	5
3. Recognising Signs of Abuse.....	7
3.1 Physical Abuse .....	7
3.2 Emotional Abuse.....	7
3.3 Neglect.....	8
3.4 Sexual Abuse.....	8
4. Good Practice.....	9
4.1 Safe Environment .....	10
4.2 Safe Conduct.....	12
4.3 Safe Communication.....	13
5. Response and Investigation Procedures.....	15
5.1 Procedure for investigation of any allegation. ....	15
5.2 Internal Church Investigation .....	16
5.2.1 Part 1: Formation of the Investigation Panel.....	16
5.2.2 Part 2: Conduct of the investigation panel .....	17
6. Annex .....	18
Annex A - Training resources .....	18
Annex B – IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST.....	19
Annex C – CONTACTS.....	20

## Safe Recruitment

The following standards should be followed:

- All prospective Servants who will be serving Children and/or Vulnerable Adults in any capacity should:
  - have a new Enhanced DBS clearance before they start service – anyone who refuses to do so should not be permitted to serve with children and/or vulnerable adults;
  - be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and perceptions of acceptable behaviour;
- Servants should not start before references have been received. Referees should be reminded that references should not misrepresent the candidate or omit to say things that might be relevant to their employment;
- All appointments to work with children or vulnerable adults should be subject to an agreed probationary period;
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description;
- These guidelines should be available to all Servants and discussed as part of an induction process.

# Training Policy

The care and protection of all who are involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the services of the Church has a role in promoting a safer Church for all. This policy highlights specific safeguarding training requirements for all Servants who will be serving Children and/or Vulnerable Adults in any capacity, concerning the care and protection for children and vulnerable adults in the Church context so to ensure that the Church is and is seen to be a safe place.

## Training and development policy outlines

### *1.1.1 Promoting a safer environment and culture*

Servants should respect all children and vulnerable adults and promote their wellbeing. The Church strives to create and maintain environments that are safe for all, that promote wellbeing, that prevent harm, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children and vulnerable adults. The Church should not be a place where any form of abuse or harm is hidden, or abusers can hide.

### *1.1.2 Safeguarding training and development in the church context*

Christian communities are 'open communities' and families in God. We encourage people to belong and to befriend and care for one another; some of this happens outside the confines of the Church building, in places where Servants have little control. Church communities are vulnerable to those who seek to harm others, because of the opportunities for grooming not just children, but also their families, their priests and leaders, and potentially the whole church community. Training helps to encourage and embed a robust safeguarding culture and should reflect the national requirements for ensuring healthy safeguarding practice and responding well when issues arise. Training for different church roles needs to include safer working practices which emphasise the importance of consistently maintaining proper boundaries. Any response to an allegation of harm should show appropriate sympathy and compassion accompanied by practical and appropriate support.

### *1.1.3 Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church*

The Church selects and evaluates all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church, following the safeguarding policy and practice guidance. It trains and equips Servants to have the confidence and skills they need to care for and support children and vulnerable adults and to recognise and respond to harm appropriately.

### *1.1.4 Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of harm and other affected persons*

The Church endeavours always to offer care and support to all those affected by any form of harm. Safeguarding training needs to address the needs of children and vulnerable adults who may come to the Church for help arising from harm experienced within the Church, the wider community or in families. Training needs to equip leaders to respond sensitively, appropriately and promptly to each person reporting any form of harm or alleged harm, whilst also taking the safeguarding action that is required to protect others. It must address the reality of any misuse of authority within the Church, at any level of seniority and especially clergy.

### *1.1.5 Safe working practice*

Many Servants are volunteers and are therefore not professionally trained to work with children or adults. Servants should be provided with guidance on safe working practice, which includes knowing when they should be concerned, from whom they should seek advice, when and how to refer and the detail of records to be kept.

### *1.1.6 Needs of participants in the training*

Consideration needs to be given to the vulnerabilities, resilience and competence of those participating in any training. Many are volunteers with no previous safeguarding experience, and that some of them may have experienced abuse themselves either directly or indirectly. No one should be unduly distressed or undermined by church training. Participants also need to be allowed to explore with the trainers and one another the complex challenges which they face in their specific ministry and work with children and adults who may be vulnerable. When delivered by a member of the Church body's Safeguarding Team, training provides a valuable opportunity to develop a trusted working relationship.

## **Core safeguarding training**

### *1.1.7 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.*

Core safeguarding training modules aim to promote a safer Church across church communities from members of our congregations to our senior leaders. All Servants must attend core safeguarding training.

### *1.1.8 Elements of safeguarding training*

Taking into consideration the Church context all training needs to: -

- Have the primary objective of reducing the risk of harm and ensuring any potential for harm is spotted and eradicated.
- focus on developing healthy safeguarding practice;
- integrate safeguarding training relating to work with children and vulnerable adults so as broaden knowledge within our church communities;
- equip participants to:
  - **recognise** what might be a safeguarding concern and the signs and symptoms of harm;
  - **respond** well to complainants/victims/survivors of harm and other affected persons as well as those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of harm and other affected persons;
  - **record** safeguarding information appropriately, and
  - **refer** safeguarding concerns on; knowing who they can and should contact, without overloading them with information relevant only to safeguarding professionals;
- include many and varied examples of what harm can look like, particularly within our church communities;

- build on the knowledge base of participants, emphasising the need to work together;
- pay attention to the Servant's own vulnerabilities in the caring roles they fulfil, and how they can protect themselves and others by working safely, and
- provide opportunities for participants to relate their learning to their faith and take responsibility for their own development

## Recognising Signs of Abuse

It can often be difficult to recognize abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only some of the indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children or vulnerable adults may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child or vulnerable adult by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or over the Internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to the abused or by a complete stranger.

If you are worried about a child or vulnerable adult it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child or vulnerable adult in order to seek attention; this is called fabricated illness. Symptoms that indicate physical abuse include:

- Bruising in or around the mouth, on the back, buttocks or rectal area
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child
- Bites
- Burn and scald marks; small round burns that could be caused by a cigarette
- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers of scars of different sizes or ages

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse happens when a child or vulnerable adult's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. It usually co-exists with other forms of abuse. Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others, or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else. Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:

- Excessively clingy or attention-seeking behaviour
- Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism
- Excessively withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness; a 'frozen watchfulness'
- Despondency
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders



## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child or vulnerable adult from harm or danger, or failing to access appropriate medical care and treatment when necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse. Symptoms of physical and emotional neglect can include:

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Inadequate nutrition, leading to ill-health
- Constant hunger; stealing or gorging food
- Failure to seek or to follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Inappropriate clothing for conditions

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative, or involve no contact, such as watching sexual activities or looking at pornographic material. Encouraging children or vulnerable adults to act in sexually inappropriate ways is also abusive. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, any sexual activity – contact or non-contact – with a child under the age of 13, is a crime. Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Allegations or disclosure
- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted diseases; urinary infections
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; inappropriately sexualized play, words or drawing
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Repeated sleep disturbances through nightmares and/or wetting

Older children, young people and vulnerable adults may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders; obsessive behaviours
- Self-mutilation; suicide attempts
- School/peer/relationship problems

Allegations may be made by children or vulnerable adults and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has actually taken place;
- Something happens to a child that reminds them of an event that happened in the past – the child is unable to recognize that the situation and the people are different;

- Children can misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else;
- Some children know how powerful an allegation can be; if they are angry with you about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out;
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

## Good Practice

This good practice guide is designed to assist Servants in identifying and avoiding situations giving rise to a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults who are being served by the Diocese.

The risk of harm could relate to any harm, however caused, whether advertently or inadvertently. The guidance is not designed to be exhaustive or legalistic, but the Servant is encouraged to operate with an appropriate degree of intuition to avoid bringing about a risk of harm (actual or perceived) or causing themselves or the service any harm. More importantly, it is to allow allegations or incidents of harm to be identified and dealt with promptly, fairly and transparently.

A Servant should feel confident to carry out their service in a manner which is open, transparent, appropriate, and commensurate to the Servant's responsibilities

It is essential that the risk of any harm, whether actual or perceived, is managed and completely minimised to avoid such risk of harm materialising. Any risk that does materialise must be expeditiously and appropriately identified and dealt with to avoid any further harm to the person being served, the Servant, and the service.

Any Servant who is likely to be on his/her own with a child or children or a vulnerable adult **must** have enhanced DBS clearance.

The Servant will need to take in to account several factors when considering what is appropriate whilst fulfilling their duties to avoid any such harm materialising.

These include but are not limited to:

1. The age of the individual or individuals they are serving. The Servant must be a minimum of five years older than the individuals being served where they are children (under 16). No Servant is permitted to serve who is below the age of 18 years old. Anyone who is younger than 18 years old may be permitted to help in the service. However, this must be done under the supervision of a Servant.
2. The gender of the individual or individuals they are serving.
3. The number of people they are serving and the number of other Servants and their experience in the service.
4. The needs and the personalities of the individuals whom they are serving.
5. The type of service being carried out.
6. The physical safety of themselves and those whom they are serving.

7. Where a Servant is conducting a specialised type of service, the Servant must have attended the appropriate courses as specified by the Diocese or required by law or the relevant professional body to be able to conduct the service in question. For example, this could apply to specialist sports or activities, or working with individuals who have special needs.
8. The Servant should also have regard to their own experience and knowledge. They should also be willing to draw on the support of other servants when needed.
9. Where a servant identifies any risk of harm, they must report it immediately to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer following the procedures set out in this Policy.

The three overarching principles to maintaining good practice for the Servants in the performance of their service with children and vulnerable adults in a way that avoids any harm to them are:

### **SAFE ENVIRONMENT + SAFE CONDUCT + SAFE COMMUNICATION**

Should any one of these principles be missing, then the likelihood is that the risk of actual or perceived harm increases and the Servant needs to consider what they can do to mitigate that increased risk. If more than one of these principles is missing, then the likelihood is that the risk is becoming real and the Servant needs to take immediate steps to reduce the risk and notify a relevant person within the Diocese following the guidance set out in this Policy.

#### **Safe Environment**

The Servant should ensure that they and those whom they serve are being served in a safe environment. This includes but is not limited to: -

1. The Servant considering the type, nature, suitability, and size of the environment they are serving in. For example, are they in church, home, playground, café, park, conference, dormitories, car, coach, etc. The Servant should ensure that the environment is suitable and appropriate for the type of service being provided, including the number of individuals involved.
2. The Servant and those whom they serve are appropriately dressed for their environment.
3. With the advent of virtual communication, which includes the ability to video conference, the Servant should also take account their location/attire as well as the location/attire of the other party receiving the call and ensure that it is an appropriate environment.
4. The Servant should be alive to health and safety considerations, particularly to any outdoor or sports activities where safety equipment is required that all children or vulnerable adults under their supervision, are appropriately equipped. Where equipment is handled as part of the service activity, then it must be handled safely and appropriately.
5. Where the service involves an activity requires specialised supervision or knowledge of the activity, that the Servant has the training required for that activity or is being conducted by someone who has the requisite training and qualifications under their supervision.
6. In any outdoor activity, sports, social or spiritual event, the Servant should check that the event location and transport to and from the event is safe and appropriately staffed. The correct insurance cover must also be in place where needed.

7. If the service involves transportation, then this guidance applies where transport has been formally organised on behalf of the Parish or Diocese. It does not apply to private arrangements between churchgoers, including the informal giving of lifts to and from church events. For the purpose of this guidance, the driver is called an approved driver. They must be recruited according to the Safe Recruitment procedure. The driver will also require a satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance if they are carrying children or vulnerable adults. An approved driver must demonstrate that they have a suitable driving license and adequate insurance. Children and vulnerable adults may not be taken out in transport without the prior consent of their parents or carers. All those who drive children or vulnerable adults on behalf of the Parish or Diocese should generally be over 25 years old and should have held a full current driving licence for over two years. Any person providing or seeking to provide transport on behalf of the Parish or Diocese who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence must inform the Parish or Diocesan Safeguarding officer as appropriate. Any driver who has an “unspent” conviction for a drink driving offence or Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway may not transport children. The Parish Safeguarding officer should consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding officer regarding this person’s suitability to provide transport on behalf of a Parish if in doubt.
8. The number of individuals (other than those being served) who are in the service environment or its vicinity and whether those individuals are known to the Servant or those being served.
9. Whether individuals who have parental or guardian responsibilities are present or are in the vicinity of those being served.
10. The number being served in that environment in proportion to the number of available Servants.
11. It is best that in any environment that there is a minimum of two servants and a servant should avoid ‘working alone’ as much as possible. The servants need not be of equivalent rank or responsibility. This requirement does not override the need for the correct proportion of servants to those being served. Permission must be sought from the Parish Safeguarding Officer in all other circumstances.
12. Personal space should be maintained and respected at all times.
13. A Servant should not be alone with a single person they are serving except in exceptional circumstances. If for any reason, the Servant needs to be in an environment without the presence of another servant, (for example, due to the other individual’s wishes, or to have a private discussion, or because they are the only Servant present) then they need to assess the following:
  - a. The nature of the environment they are in.
  - b. The number of individuals in that environment even if not in the immediate vicinity.
  - c. Any restrictions on entering or leaving the environment. All environments should be accessible in terms of entry/exit access, and the rooms should not be locked.
  - d. Doors should be kept open or slightly ajar, particularly where the environment has no external visibility.

- e. The distance between the Servant and the individual and that personal space is appropriately observed.
  - f. Whether another servant or individual can be in the vicinity if they cannot be in the same environment. (For example: - the room next door or being around in the Church so as not to infringe privacy but proximate to indicate that there is another Servant present).
  - g. Whether the Servant has appropriate consent from the parent or appropriate guardian to be with the individual in that environment. This consent need not be in writing and can be implicit, but if in doubt, express oral consent ought to be sought.
  - h. Whether a parent or appropriate guardian should be informed of where their child or vulnerable adult is. (For example, a text to a parent by the Servant confirming that the Servant is in the car with their child on the way to the child's house from Church, or that they have just arrived in Church if the parent has consented that the Servant can take the child to Church).
  - i. The Servant needs to minimise the time they are in an environment they consider to be at a higher risk or are alone to that which is strictly necessary.
  - j. The Servant needs to consider if these types of situations are likely to recur and the more open the environment that they are serving in with more people present, the less likely there will be of any risk, perceived or real, materialising.
14. In any situation, where the Servant feels that the environment that they are serving in may pose a higher risk than they can tolerate or is appropriate, then they must extricate themselves from that environment straight away and inform either the Parish or Diocesan Safeguarding officer.

### **Safe Conduct**

The Servant should ensure that they and those whom they serve are conducting themselves safely. This includes but is not limited to: -

1. The Servant should observe an appropriate distance and respect for personal space.
2. The Servant should avoid any gestures or mannerisms which would be considered inappropriate.
3. The Servant should avoid engaging in any action or activity which may be considered inappropriate.
4. If the Servant engages in any physical contact, the Servant needs to consider the appropriateness and necessity of that contact given the following: -
  - a) The place they are in and who is present.
  - b) The nature of the conduct involved.
5. Conduct which may be considered appropriate may become inappropriate if practised too often or for prolonged periods or in a different environment.

6. Even where the intention is innocent some conduct may nevertheless be seen as inappropriate.
7. The individual concerned, their gender relative to that of the Servant, their age, personality and characteristics are all relevant factors to determining the appropriateness of the conduct.
8. Safe conduct extends not only to actions between the Servant and those whom they serve but also to ensuring that the Servant does not ask anyone they are serving to engage in conduct which is likely to cause any harm to themselves or another. It also extends to all conduct between those whom they are serving at the time of service.
9. Safe conduct also extends to the photography or videoing of children and vulnerable adults involved in church activities. Whilst these can be very positive, but there are some essential issues to note. These all count as sensitive personal data under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). As with all such data, they should only be used with the consent of the person in the image. For:
  - Children under the age of 13: consent should be gained from their parents;
  - Children aged between 13 and 16: consent should be gained from parents and the children themselves;
  - Children aged 17: consent should be gained from the children themselves.
  - Parents (and children over 13: see above) should be told where and in what context an image may be used – for example, on a public website, through social media or in a printed resource. Consent is not needed if children appear in a wide-angle group photograph in a public space (for instance, a photograph of the church fete). A church is not a public place in this sense. However, there may still be occasions when it would not be reasonable, practical or proportionate to secure consent for every individual child who appears in the photograph.
10. In any situation where the Servant feels that they engaged in conduct which may be interpreted as inappropriate or may cause harm to someone that they are serving then they must extricate themselves from that environment. If they are not sure or are in doubt, then they must report it to the Parish or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
11. In any situation where the Servant witnesses or it comes to their attention that another servant may have engaged in conduct which may be considered inappropriate, then they must intervene if they consider it appropriate to deal with the conduct themselves. If they feel they are not in a position to deal with the conduct or are in doubt, then they should inform the Parish or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable.

### **Safe Communication**

The Servant should ensure that they use appropriate and safe conversation and language with those whom they are serving. This includes but is not limited to: -

1. The Servant respecting those whom they serve.

2. The Servant should avoid any words or conversations which would be considered or construed as inappropriate, embarrassing, over intrusive, disrespectful, or condescending.
3. If the Servant or the individual whom they are serving engages in inappropriate language, the Servant needs to consider the appropriate response to remedy such language quickly.
4. The Servant needs to consider all the circumstances when maintaining the appropriateness of their language. What is appropriate should be considered in light of the following but are not limited to: -
  - a. The place they are in and who is present.
  - b. The nature of the topic and whether there is anything personal, sexual or intimate being discussed.
  - c. Language which may be considered appropriate generally in a particular setting may become inappropriate if practised in a different setting or too often.
  - d. Even though the intention of the Servant may be innocent, the language itself may nevertheless be seen as inappropriate.
  - e. The individual concerned, their gender relative to that of the Servant, their age, personality and characteristics.
5. Safe communication also extends to the Servant not asking others to engage in any conversation or language, which is likely to cause harm to the person being served. It also extends to communication between Servants which may result in harm if witnessed by those being served.
6. In any situation where the Servant feels that they are in a conversation or someone that they are serving engages them in a conversation which may be considered inappropriate then they must extricate themselves straight away. They must also consider whether it is appropriate to inform the Parish or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
7. In any situation where the Servant witnesses or it comes to their attention that another Servant may have engaged in communication which could cause harm, then they must take appropriate action with that Servant. If they consider it inappropriate to deal with the conduct themselves or are unsure, then they should inform the Parish or Diocesan Safeguarding officer.
8. In any situation where the Servant witnesses or it comes to their attention that an individual whom they serve has engaged in communication which may cause harm, then they must take appropriate action with that individual. If they consider it inappropriate to deal with the conduct themselves or are unsure, should inform the Parish or Diocesan Safeguarding officer.

Where there is a regular service of children or vulnerable adults, it is recommended that at the beginning of each academic year the parents or carers are given a brief document outlining who the servants are, their contact details, times of the service, and what the service provides. The document should also specify any types of service where the parent's or the carer's consent will not be sought – conversely where they will be sought. The document will also require the parents or carers to note down anything specific that the servants need to be aware of, such as medical conditions, medication, food allergies, etc.

## Response and Investigation Procedures

Anyone receiving information about or observing a safeguarding concern or allegation, where a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or requires immediate medical attention must call the emergency services on 999 without delay.

The procedure set out below is the protocol to be applied with respect to the internal Diocese response and investigation which will be carried out by the Diocese where any safeguarding concern involving a Servant is raised. If the concern is of a significant or criminal nature or there is any risk of harm to the child and/or vulnerable adult, the Safeguarding Lead of the parish and/or the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead may notify the appropriate authorities if required.

### **Procedure for investigation of any allegation.**

#### **The diocese has zero-tolerance for misconduct by any Servant.**

The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult must come first. A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and/or vulnerable adults and respecting the rights of the respondent.

The rights of the respondent are important and are given due weight, once the immediate safety and protection of children and/or vulnerable adults has been assured.

### **First Response**

Following receipt of a safeguarding concern or allegation by a Servant, that Servant must:

1. As soon as is practicably possible and in any case within 24 hours of receiving a safeguarding concern or allegation of abuse/harm against a Servant refer the matter to the designated parish safeguarding lead, who will then notify the Parish priest and the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead.
2. Respond well to the complainant to ensure they feel heard and taken seriously.
3. Record the details of the concern or allegation, asking permission to do this and explaining the importance of recording all information. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time, or permission is not given, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day.
4. Pass all original records, including rough notes to the parish priest or safeguarding lead. Any copies of retained records should be kept secure and confidential.
5. Explain to the complainant what will happen next. They should be informed that their identity and the identity of the respondent may be shared with the statutory agencies. The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know (e.g. the statutory agencies and appropriate Church roles detailed in these procedures). It is paramount to ensure the anonymity of the identity of the respondent as well as the complainant, until a full investigation is conducted.



When reporting a concern to the safeguarding lead, do not be selective in the information which you have and include details, even those that may seem irrelevant. This may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation and it is important to capture the full sequence of events contemporaneously. If appropriate/possible, the complainant should be shown the record made in order to ensure they agree with the content and meaning. Whether this is appropriate will depend on the circumstances of each case including the age of the child. The record should include details of information provided to that person as well as information received. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the concern or allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter, etc. Please always sign and date the record.

If the complainant disagrees with the content of the note, any agreed changes can be made. If changes are not agreed (perhaps because they refer to additional matters that did not arise during the first meeting) the person should be advised that their comments are noted and will be retained with the notes of the meeting.

**The Safeguarding lead will now take over the response to the investigation and follow the procedure below.**

### **Internal Church Investigation**

The aim of an Internal Church Investigation is to establish whether or not there are ongoing safeguarding concerns and whether the respondent is suitable to fulfil a Church role which carries the potential for engagement with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Within 24 hours of receiving notification of the concern or allegation the Safeguarding lead will

- (a) conduct an initial internal review of the information received to establish if the requirement for referring to the statutory agencies has been reached and refer, as required.
- (b) Report the allegation to the Vicar General, who will consult with the Diocesan Bishop to take a decision as to the necessity of any immediate suspension or other appropriate measures with respect to the respondent.

#### *1.1.9 Part 1: Formation of the Investigation Panel*

1. The Safeguarding lead will form an Investigation panel to conduct the investigation.
  - a. The investigation panel will be formed of three members – the safeguarding lead, a member from the Diocesan Safeguarding Group, and a priest who is not dealing directly with the parties involved. Priests of the parish in question cannot be members of the investigation panel because of their pastoral responsibilities for all parties. The group should be diverse and should not include anyone who may be a witness or a family member of either the child/vulnerable adult or the respondent.
2. The Safeguarding Lead will prepare a briefing memo to the Investigations Panel and this will include, as a minimum, the following information:
  - a. Name of the person raising the concern or making the allegation;
  - b. Nature of the concern or allegation;
  - c. Name of the respondent;
  - d. Respondent's church officer position/role in the Church at the time of the alleged abuse/incident.
3. Wherever possible this should also include:

- a. Accurate identifying information of the subject person, as far as it is known. This should include the name, address and age of when the alleged abuse or incident occurred;
- b. Where the person who has raised a concern or allegation is a child, details of their parents/guardians should also be given;
- c. Dates when the concern arose, or when the incident occurred;
- d. The person's own words they used to describe the event or incident. Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of the words used;
- e. Details of any action already taken about the concern or allegation.

#### *1.1.10 Part 2: Conduct of the investigation panel*

1. The Investigation Panel will conduct the investigation taking into account the terms of the Diocese Safeguarding Policy and the commitments set out therein including the commitment that all concerns are to be acted upon promptly fairly and transparently.
2. A chair and a note taker should be appointed.
3. Minutes from all meetings should be taken and circulated to attendees as soon as possible after each meeting. Minutes should be taken in line with the provided template and must be in English.
4. The Investigation Panel may undertake the investigation in a manner it deems appropriate and proportionate to the allegations made including interviewing any relevant witnesses.
5. The investigation panel should complete the investigation process as soon as possible and in any event within 1 month of first being established.
6. The conduct of the Investigation Panel including all documents produced and evidence provided to it are to remain private and confidential.
7. The Investigation Panel will reach a finding of fact based on the information presented to it and communicate the finding to the Diocesan Bishop.
8. The Diocesan Bishop should be kept informed of the process and advised as requested.
9. The Investigations Panel and the Diocesan Bishop will meet to decide on the next steps, outcomes and appropriate communication.

# Annex

## **Annex A - Safeguarding Training overview**

Two in-house training packages are available, the first is mandatory for all.

### **Core training**

All servants are required to attend this training

#### Main objectives

- To learn what is safeguarding and its relevance to the church community
- Understand the challenges and barriers to safeguarding in the church community
- Raise awareness of current safeguarding issues in society
- Learn about best practice guidance
- Learn how to raise a concern
- Learn how to protect our children and ourselves as servants

### **Advanced training**

All Clergy and senior servants are required to attend this training

#### Main objectives

- Address issues specific to vulnerable adults
- Raise awareness of less common forms of abuse
- Discuss church leaders' responsibilities
- The church investigating procedure
- How to connect with outside safeguarding organisations

## **Annex B – IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST**

These safeguarding procedures will only be effective if all clergy, staff and volunteers in the church own and understand them.

This checklist is designed to help you understand and put into practice that process:

1. Identify designated safeguarding lead
2. Add CPO name and contact details to procedure
3. Ensure the safeguarding officer receives training on child protection and updates that training regularly
4. Ensure all clergy, staff and volunteers have a copy of the above procedures
5. Ensure that all clergy, staff and volunteers know what to do if they have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult
6. Ensure all existing clergy, staff and volunteers who have contact with children or vulnerable adults have enhanced DBS clearance.
7. Ensure that new clergy, staff and volunteers who have contact with children or vulnerable adults have enhanced DBS clearance before they start work
8. Ensure that the premises conform to health and safety guidelines

## Annex C – CONTACTS

Parish	Name	Mobile	Email address
<b>St George Cathedral</b>	Maggie Labib	07939225377	Maggie.labib@yahoo.co.uk
<b>St Mark</b>	Michael George	07957167945	mgigeorge@hotmail.com
<b>Archangel Michael</b>	Magid Mansor	07788975767	Magic174@gmail.com
<b>Pope Kyrillos</b>	Bassma Mikhail	07796084368	Bassma.mikhail@smpk.org.uk
<b>St George East London</b>	Salwa Farid	07886201050	s.farid1@btinternet.com
<b>St Shenouda</b>	Ehab Morgan	07931533746	morganehab@aol.com
<b>St Abu Siefen</b>	Marian Alfons	07792188821	Marianalfons75@yahoo.com

### National Support Services

NSPCC Helpline  
0808 800 5000  
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>



ChildLine  
0800 1111  
<https://www.childline.org.uk>

