



Westminster Safeguarding Service

Diocesan Safeguarding Policy

1. This policy should be read in conjunction with Diocesan Procedures and Guidance
2. Any abuse of children and/or vulnerable adults under the supervision or care of clergy, religious, Church volunteers, employees or persons involved in Church activities will not be tolerated. Such behaviour is contrary to the Gospel and to the Church's mission, stated values and ideals, which require that everyone must be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.
3. The Diocese:
 - Acknowledges and will comply with all its responsibilities to safeguard children and vulnerable adults;
 - Reports all allegations of abuse, to the police within one working day;
 - Recognises that everyone has the right to live free from violence, fear and abuse;
 - Is fully committed to supporting children and vulnerable adults to achieve their full potential in an environment where they are protected from exploitation, abuse and maltreatment;
 - Publishes details of who to contact if there are concerns about the welfare or safety of a child in churches or other settings in which Church activity occurs.
4. This policy must be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a member of the Clergy or Religious Community, a lay person, or a volunteer:
 - has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or a vulnerable adult;
 - has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or a vulnerable adult;
 - has behaved towards a child(ren) or a vulnerable adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults;
 - has behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults
 - has behaved in such a way that, by actions or omissions, his or her conduct has been intended to interfere with or avoid civil investigations or canonical investigations, whether administrative or penal, against a cleric or a religious.

5. If an allegation is made indicating that a child and or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger the allegation must be reported to the police and the local authority children’s department immediately.
6. All allegations of abuse of children and/or vulnerable adults reported to anyone volunteering as a Parish Safeguarding Representative, or working or ministering within the Diocese, must be reported to the police and, in respect of those with children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO) within one day.
7. Anyone who reports allegations, provides information or articulates concerns about abuse will be listened to seriously, with respect, courtesy, and sensitivity.
8. Any allegation of abuse or information or concern about possible abuse will be processed in accordance with all the Diocese’s statutory obligations, with any associated good practice guidance, all CSSA Policies and Practice Guidance, and with this Diocesan Procedures on the Management of Allegations, Information and Concerns.
9. Any person against whom an allegation is made (a respondent), or about whom information is received or a concern is raised, will be treated with respect, courtesy, and sensitivity. No assumption will be made as to the guilt of the respondent.
10. The Diocese will act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with the police, the LADO, health agencies, the Probation Service and other relevant agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults, to assist in bringing to justice anyone who has committed an offence.
11. Anyone acting in the name of the Catholic Church in the Diocese has a responsibility to act in accordance with the Apostolic Letter “Vos Estis Lux Mundi” and the associated Vademecum (handbook), the CSSA Guidance, this Policy, and the Manual, when it appears that any child has suffered or is at risk of abuse.
12. All those who have a role within the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Westminster (the Diocese) whether in paid employment, in voluntary work, or as clergy or religious must comply with the requirements of this Policy.

Policy prepared by:	Safeguarding Service
Third Party Policy:	No
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