



Safeguarding in the Catholic Church for Young People

Safeguarding: What It Means for You

The Catholic Church wants everyone—kids, teens, and adults—to feel safe. This means making sure people are safe at church, during church activities, and in their daily lives.

If you think someone might be in danger, the Church must work with others to help them. As a volunteer, you share this job. You might notice someone who seems upset or at risk. If you tell the right person, they can step in and help.

How We Keep People Safe

We follow clear rules from the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA):

- **Looking Out for Problems:** We watch for signs of abuse or harm. If we see something worrying, we respond, write down what happened, and report it.
- **Choosing Safe Leaders:** We check that staff and volunteers are safe to work with others. This means background checks, interviews, references, ID checks, and training.
- **Safe Places:** We have clear rules and policies. We use risk checks, volunteer agreements, codes of conduct, and explain what parents are responsible for.
- **Training:** We teach volunteers and church members about staying safe, both in person and online. We share easy guides on what to do.

Types of Abuse or Harm

Abuse means hurting someone or putting them at risk. It can happen in different ways, and sometimes more than one type at once:

- *Physical Abuse:* Hurting someone by hitting, shaking, burning, or poisoning.
- *Sexual Abuse:* Forcing, pressuring, or tricking someone into sexual acts, including sharing sexual images or messages.
- *Neglect:* Not giving someone what they need, like food, safety, care, or medical help.
- *Emotional Abuse:* Making someone feel bad about themselves on purpose. This includes bullying, scaring, isolating, mocking, or letting them see others being hurt.
- *Financial Abuse:* Stealing or cheating someone out of money or things, or pressuring them about money.

- *Domestic Abuse*: Abuse between people who are or were close, like family or partners. It can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or threatening.
- *Modern Slavery/Criminal Exploitation*: Forcing people to work, move, or do things against their will—like trafficking or forced labour.
- *Self-Neglect*: When someone does not take care of their own health, safety, or hygiene.
- *Discriminatory Abuse*: Treating someone badly because of their age, religion, disability, race, gender, or who they love.
- *Spiritual Abuse*: This is when someone uses religion to control or hurt someone else. They might use faith, rules, or authority to scare or control others. This is wrong and goes against church beliefs. It can be hard to speak up, especially if the person has power.

If this happens to you or a friend or if someone else tells you about a problem or you see or hear something that makes you worried for someone else, you should talk to a safe adult who you trust.

What Should You Do if You Are Worried?

- Tell a safe adult you trust. You can talk to your Group Leader, teacher or your parent.
- Adults will listen and support you.
- Talking should not get you into trouble, even if somebody has told you it will. If something has happened that makes you feel uncomfortable, it is never your fault.
- It is always okay to ask for help.

You can get advice and support from Childline via their website: <https://www.childline.org.uk/kids>

Who can I talk to...

- **A Safe Adult at Church**: Your Group Leader, Parish Priest, Assistant Priest, Deacon or PSR
- **Your Parents, Grandparents or Family Members**
- **School**: The teachers or safeguarding staff at your school
- **Childline**: Call 0800 1111
- **Police**: If you have an immediate concern that a child or adult is in danger call **999**.
- **Westminster Diocese Safeguarding Service's Duty**: All the people above or you can contact the Safeguarding Service via  safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk or  020 7798 9352 option 1 (Available Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)