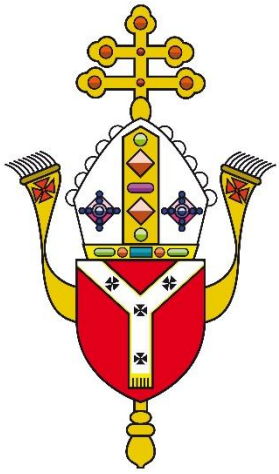
DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER



LOURDES PILGRIMAGE POLICY STATEMENT

SAFEGUARDING ALL PILGRIMS

Policy prepared by:	Pilgrimage Co-ordinator
Third Party Policy:	No
Approval of Lourdes Pilgrimage Review Committee	24 June 2025
Approval of the Safeguarding Committee	3 July 2025
Approval of The Directors of the Trustee	11 July 2025
Review Date	Reviewed May 2026 Additional information added March 2027

The Pilgrimage Director has asked that all pilgrims familiarise themselves with the following statement

As Christians, perhaps the most fundamental principle that governs our lives is that of loving and respecting our fellow human beings. Within this principle, we are keenly aware of the need to ensure and promote the wellbeing of those in our society who are most vulnerable.

The Westminster Diocese Lourdes Pilgrimage (WDLP) takes seriously its responsibility to protect the wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk, and is committed to ensuring that the pilgrimage provides a safe and caring environment for them. It is vitally important that each of us who has contact with children, young people or adults at risk do all that we can to protect them from abuse and maltreatment, and to promote a safe environment for them. The WDLP is committed to establishing high standards of practice in accordance with diocesan safeguarding procedures.

The WDLP is a community, journeying together, and each person on our pilgrimage has the right to expect that they will be treated with respect in a loving, caring atmosphere.

1. The Westminster Diocese Lourdes Pilgrimage:

- Seeks to serve the needs of all pilgrims and in doing so takes seriously the welfare of all who take part in the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.
- Aims to ensure that all are welcomed into a safe, caring Christian environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.
- Recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its pilgrims to prevent all forms of abuse of any pilgrim, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- Acknowledges its responsibility to respond appropriately to any report of abuse by or of any pilgrim.
- Recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which have been designed to minimise the risk of abuse.
- Is committed to Safer Recruitment procedures in line with the policies and practices of Westminster diocese.
- Is committed to supporting and training those who work with children, young people or adults at risk, and to providing appropriate supervision.
- Is committed to maintaining links with the relevant statutory and diocesan authorities
- Is committed to maintain the requirements of the Lourdes Sanctuary Safeguarding guidance 'Charter for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons 2023' and ensure volunteers have signed the annual statement of intent

2. FOR ALL PILGRIMS: WHAT TO DO?

2.1 If a pilgrim discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Do not promise confidentiality. Ensure that the person understands that the matter will not be discussed openly, but other authorities may have to act upon it.
- Take the disclosure seriously.
- Allow the person to speak without interruption, accepting what they say. Do not investigate.
- Listen carefully and do not ask questions which lead or suggest an answer to the person.

- Try to alleviate any negative feelings but do not pass judgement.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in reporting this to you and let them know you are glad that they have shared this information.
- Explain to the person what you will do next (i.e. you will pass on this information).
- Report the matter to the leader in charge of your group and / or to the Pilgrimage Safeguarding Representative.

2.2 If you suspect a pilgrim of being abused in any way or if you receive an allegation about any pilgrim or about yourself:

- Immediately refer the matter to the leader in charge of your group and / or to the Pilgrimage Safeguarding Representative.
- Try to ensure that no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise.

2.3 In all cases:

- The listener must record the conversation as soon as possible. The record should reflect the conversation as accurately as possible, using the person's own words. The record should be signed and dated, noting the time and location at which it took place. The name(s) of anyone else present should also be included.
- Report the facts to the Pilgrimage Safeguarding Representative.
- You must refer the matter on and must not investigate. Do not contact the subject of the allegation.
- Do not promise confidentiality, as information received may have to be acted upon by other parties authorised to intervene.

3. Westminster Lourdes Pilgrimage Identity Badge

ID badges help to identify those people who are participating in the Westminster Lourdes Pilgrimage and are part of the pilgrimage safeguarding arrangements

- All registered pilgrims will be issued with a Westminster Lourdes Identity Badge. Volunteer ID badges will include a photograph of the individual
- ID badges must be worn by the pilgrims and volunteers when participating in Pilgrimage events or activities so that pilgrims and volunteers can be clearly identified
- If you are concerned about someone not wearing their ID badge, please report your concerns to a member of the Pilgrimage management team