

Society of the Sacred Heart CIO

England Wales Province
Charity Number: 1179288



Society of the Sacred Heart Safeguarding Policy

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	CONTENTS	Page
1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	SCOPE	4
3	TRAINING	5
4	DEFINITIONS	5
4.1	What is safeguarding?	5
4.2	Definition of a child	5
4.3	Adult at risk of harm	5
4.4	Harassment	6
5	Types of Abuse	6
6	Roles and Responsibilities	6
6.1	The Society of the Sacred Heart Trustees	6
6.2	The Provincial	6
6.3	The Safeguarding Lead	6
6.4	RLSS	6
6.5	All other roles	7
6.6	General	7
7	Practice Guidance and Procedures	7/8
7.1	When to report.	9
7.2	Making a referral to the statutory authorities	9
7.3	In the case of a child referral	9
7.4	In the case of an adult - a person over 18	10
7.5	Conduct	10
8	Whistleblowing	10

Society of the Sacred Heart CIO

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Charity Number: 1179288



9	Recording and Storage of Safeguarding Concerns and Case Files	10
10	Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance	11
11	Policy Review	11
	Appendices	
1	Safeguarding Form	12
2	Signs and Symptoms of Abuse taken from SCIE (Social Care Institute of Excellence)	14



1. INTRODUCTION

The Society of the Sacred Heart is committed to safeguarding all children and adults. For The Society of the Sacred Heart this commitment directly relates to the fact that we are all made in the image of God and the Church's common belief in the preciousness, dignity, and uniqueness of every human life. We start from the principle that each person has a right to expect the highest level of protection, love, encouragement, and respect. Following on from the safeguarding reviews in 2020 we are committed to the One Church Approach to safeguarding by implementing the changes needed and ensuring we respond to victim/survivors promptly and compassionately.

The Society of the Sacred Heart is an international order of women in the Catholic Church, founded in 1800. Sisters live in diverse settings in England and Wales, and in diverse configurations of community. Some members of the province also serve in other countries. We all share our desire to make known God's love, with the many people with whom we work.

We aim to serve with the hearts of educators, and within this we have a variety of ministries. We work in schools, parishes, dioceses, hospitals, retreat centres, chaplaincies, community centres, universities, and many other places. We work as teachers, counsellors, health professionals, spiritual directors, chaplains or befrienders; others as writers or in workshops for sacred dance; others again in local projects, administration, social outreach or youth work.

The Congregation has a Safeguarding Policy which is supported by specific additional policies and procedures for its Retreat Centre at Llannerchwen and its Care Home, Duchesne House in Roehampton.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedures applies to all workers within the Society of the Sacred Heart, Religious, Lay, Voluntary or Employee, regardless of their role or the activities they undertake.

It is the responsibility of all Society of the Sacred Heart members to prevent, whether by action or omission, abuse. Abuse in this policy refers to: physical; sexual; emotional; spiritual; neglect; self-neglect; organisational; material; psychological; financial; domestic or verbal. Additionally, behaviour which effectively results in modern day slavery or where there is evidence of discrimination or radicalisation, needs to be recognised and addressed as a safeguarding issue, in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 7.



3. TRAINING

All Society of the Sacred Heart members will undergo Safeguarding Training in relation to both Children and Adults relevant to their role. The list below outlines the minimum standards for training in each role:

Provincial /Superior / Leader – RLG Lead Training (equivalent to Level 2)

Safeguarding Lead – Safeguarding Lead Training (equivalent to Level 3)

Trustees – Trustee Training (equivalent to Level 2)

Community Members who work with public – Advance Safeguarding Training (equivalent to Level 2)

Community members who don't work with public – Basic Safeguarding Training (equivalent Level 1)

Care Home staff- Advance Safeguarding (Level 2)

The Society of the Sacred Heart members and Trustees will undertake refresher training every two years.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the life and ministries of the Society of the Sacred heart to ensure the protection of children and adults at risk of harm.

4.2 Definition of a child.

Child is a person under the age of 18.

4.3 Adult at risk of harm.

Adult at risk of harm is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or being exploited. This may include a person who:

- Is elderly and frail
- Has a mental illness including dementia
- Has an intellectual or physical disability
- Has a severe physical illness



- Is homeless
- Is a substance misuser

4.4 Harassment

Harassment encompasses a range of behaviours including but not limited to:

- Physical, verbal, written or psychological abuse
- Bullying
- Racial and religious slurs
- Unwelcome touching and inappropriate behaviour

5.0 TYPES OF ABUSE

5.1 The different types of abuse include (see appendix 2 for signs and symptoms of each)-

Physical abuse
Domestic violence or abuse
Sexual abuse
Psychological or emotional abuse
Financial or material abuse
Modern slavery
Discriminatory abuse
Organisational or institutional abuse
Neglect or acts of omission.
Self-neglect

6.0 ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The Society of the Sacred Heart Trustees

The Trustees have a duty to maintain appropriate governance and oversight of safeguarding in accordance with this policy and national guidelines. Certain functions of the trustees will be delegated to staff members, as indicated below.

6.2 The Provincial

The leader is responsible for ensuring appropriate policy, procedures and best practice are in place for the effective delivery of safeguarding, including any related due diligence checks. Certain functions of the leader will be delegated to staff members as indicated below.

6.3 The Safeguarding Lead

The Safeguarding Lead has direct oversight of The Society of the Sacred Heart safeguarding policy and guidance, including management and oversight of documentation, case progression/management and the secure, legally compliant storage of safeguarding reports



and related material as well as oversight of the relationship with and input in the work of the RLSS.

6.4 The RLSS

The Safeguarding Lead may delegate some of this responsibility to the RLSS by referring the case to them but will remain as key contact for the case duration unless another individual is identified to assume responsibility.

6.5 All other roles

All members, volunteers and staff have an obligation to ensure they know how to respond to safeguarding concerns by being familiar with the content of this policy and the procedure contained within it and any other associated policies/procedures.

6.6 General

Everyone involved in the work of The Society of the Sacred Heart has a duty to disclose to the Safeguarding Lead /Provincial or Chair any safeguarding concerns that have been raised about them.

7.0 PRACTICE GUIDANCE and PROCEDURE

In accordance with Article 19 of Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter, "Vos Estis Lux Mundi", 7 May 2019 [3], It is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, as agreed by the Bishops Conference, April 2020, to report to the statutory authorities, all allegations of abuse made against those working in the name of the Church, regardless of whether the allegations or concerns relate to a person's behaviour in relation to their role within the Church or another setting. This policy must be applied in all situations where it is alleged, or there are reasonable grounds to believe, that a member of the Religious Community, lay persons, or associated volunteer or employee, has acted in one of the following ways:

Has behaved in a way that has harmed or is likely to have caused harm to a child or an adult at risk of harm. This would include any adult at risk of harm irrespective of the cause of that vulnerability or whether the vulnerability is temporary or permanent.

Has or is suspected to have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or an adult at risk of harm.

Has behaved towards a child or an adult at risk of harm in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults at risk of harm.

Has behaved in a way or made statements indicating that they may not be suitable to work with children or adults at risk of harm.

Has behaved in such a way that, by actions or omissions, their conduct has been intended to interfere with, prejudice, undermine or avoid a criminal, civil or canonical investigation, against any person associated with or who is a member of a contracting congregation.



The behaviours above are to be considered within the context of the different categories of abuse outlined above and further detailed guidance is specifically provided in relation to sexual offences against children, including both recent and non-recent offences, and possession and distribution of indecent images of children.

Additional guidance is provided by the CSSA in relation to the sexual and criminal exploitation of children by organised criminal networks.

Additional guidance is also provided in relation to adults disclosing abuse outside the context of the Church. If a competent adult explicitly refuses the making of a referral about abuse that occurred outside of the Church, consideration must be given to whether the accused person has access to children who may be at risk. In these circumstances, the name of the accused and details of the allegation must always be referred to the statutory authorities. This can be done without disclosing the name of the victim/survivor where they have refused consent to do so, or where it is not possible to obtain consent.

It is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales to report to statutory authorities where a child or an adult is at immediate risk of harm, or there is concern that a child or adult is suffering or is likely to be suffering from significant harm or abuse, from somebody who does not hold a role within the Church. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Someone who is at serious risk of harm from self or others.
- Someone who poses a serious risk of harm to someone else.
- A concern about a child or an adult at risk of harm from someone else
- Concerns over someone's mental capacity.

Procedure

If The Society of the Sacred Heart team becomes aware of a safeguarding issue, they should contact the RLSS Safeguarding Team and pass the concern and all associated documentation immediately. You should ensure the person who made you aware of the concern knows you are doing this.

The RLSS or Safeguarding Lead at The Society of the Sacred Heart who takes the case should:

- Inform the leadership (either Executive Director or The Provincial) that there has been a new safeguarding referral.
- Ensure the victim/survivor has been informed of the next steps.
- Explain what will happen, give them options if possible and an indicative timescale.
- Contact any relevant bodies.
- Complete the Society safeguarding form (Appendix 1) and ensure appropriate record keeping of all communications including phone calls, meetings and discussions in relation to the case.
- All referrals / reports outside of the RLSS should be made within 24 hours of receiving the information, unless there are exceptional circumstances to postpone making this referral/report.



When the concern needs to be reported to a statutory agency, the individual reporting the issue must be informed that the information will not be kept confidential, and that the details will be passed on to the police and any other appropriate statutory body. All Staff should be supportive of the individual making the disclosure but should not seek more details than necessary for an initial statutory referral.

7.1 When to Report:

Allegations or safeguarding concerns – When abuse is suspected, witnessed or a disclosure of abuse is received by The Society of the Sacred Heart there is a requirement to report these allegations of abuse, and other relevant safeguarding concerns to the appropriate statutory authority including social services/the police within 24 hours.

In case of emergency – If a child or adult is in immediate danger, at imminent risk or requires medical attention, the relevant emergency service must be contacted via 999. Local Social Services should also be contacted at the earliest opportunity in the case of a child or an adult at risk of harm.

In case of non-emergency – In a situation when there is no immediate risk to a child or an adult at risk of harm and no requirement to make a statutory report, The Society of the Sacred Heart or the RLSS on their behalf will work with the individual to agree desirable outcomes in line with this policy.

7.2 Making a referral to the statutory authorities:

Safeguarding bodies (not exhaustive)

- Internal Safeguarding Structures within the Catholic Church
- Local authority Safeguarding team – Adults
- Local authority Safeguarding team – Children
- Police 999
- Police 101
- GP
- Crisis Team
- RLSS Out of Hours Team
- Community Psychiatric Nurse
- Charity Commission
- CSSA
- Local Safeguarding Commission
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- NSPCC
- DBS



7.3 In the case of a child referral –

Referrals should be made to children's social care for the area where the child is living or is found. If a crime has also been committed, the police in that area should also be contacted. The referrer should confirm any verbal and telephone referrals in writing, within 48 hours, and obtain social care /police report reference details for inclusion on the relevant case file.

7.4 In the case of an adult - a person over 18.

Referrals should be made to the relevant body. If a crime has also been committed, the police in that area and if applicable the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), should also be contacted. The referrer should confirm any verbal and telephone referrals in writing, within 48 hours, and obtain any report references for inclusion on relevant case file.

7.5 Conduct

When a person's conduct towards a child or an adult may impact on their suitability to work with or continue to work with children or adults, the allegation must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer for safeguarding within 24 hours. Additionally, restrictions may need to be placed on the person's role and remit while the matter is investigated for example they may be 'stepped down' from ministry or other conditions may be imposed pending the outcome of an investigation.

Where it is believed that a criminal offence may have taken place, regardless of whether the accused person is living or deceased, the allegation should be referred to the police within 24 hours.

8.0 WHISTLEBLOWING

The Society of the Sacred Heart will encourage and enable anyone with a serious concern, to raise that issue without fear of victimisation, or disadvantage.

If that concern is raised regarding malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions, at the Society of the Sacred Heart or other religious institution relating to safeguarding, then the RLSS should be made aware.

The action taken by the RLSS will depend upon the nature of the concern referred. However, an investigation will be undertaken if appropriate, followed by appropriate action and written feedback will be provided, including a rationale documenting the reasons why identified actions have been taken. This can be delegated to the RLSS.

9.0 RECORDING and STORAGE of SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS and CASE FILES

Primary responsibility for the management of documents and safeguarding case files lies with the Safeguarding Lead / RLSS, who will ensure an accurate, auditable, and secure record of



any safeguarding concerns or allegations referred to The Society of the Sacred Heart are maintained.

This record will include:

- Relevant contact details
- Details of how/when the concern or allegation was received.
- Details of the concern itself
- Relevant historical information
- Identified past and present risk factors.
- Any actions or investigation undertaken including those by The Society of the Sacred Heart or RLSS and from statutory agencies.
- Rationale for actions and or outcome of case

All records are potential evidence in a criminal proceeding, civil case or statutory/public inquiry and must be stored in a suitable and retrievable format with an auditable record of provenance and integrity.

10. SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The Society of the Sacred Heart will ensure that staff are subject to the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (including enhanced DBS) in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements.

Appointments will be based on the person's experience, skills, and ability to meet the set criteria and job specification for the specific role. It is essential to ensure that all documentation relating to the applicant is stored in a secure place and remains confidential.

Appointment to a role will not be confirmed until a satisfactory DBS Disclosure check has been received and previous employment references confirmed as being acceptable.

On appointment, all new employees should be provided with and sign to say they understand all relevant policy and procedures, including a copy of this document and their responsibilities within it highlighted.

All persons seeking to work with children or adults whether in a paid or unpaid capacity must be provided with the opportunity to self-disclose relevant conviction information. This is a DBS Code of Practice requirement and applies to anyone being asked to have an Enhanced Disclosure.

11. POLICY REVIEW

This policy is approved by the Society of the Sacred Heart Trustee's and was subjected to an initial review in November 2023 and then every other year or sooner, where there is a significant change to the organisational infrastructure, processes or to relevant legislation.



Policy last updated: September 2025

Name: Liz Jones

Date of next review: September 2027

APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Safeguarding Cause for Concern

Society of the Sacred Heart-Safeguarding Log

Name of the person the
safeguarding concern has been
reported to:

Role:

Telephone number:

Email address:

Date/Time of report:

Location:

Name of person at risk of harm:

Child or Adult:

Telephone number:

Email Address:

Home Address:

Date/time reported to
Safeguarding Lead:

Society of the Sacred Heart CIO

England Wales Province
Charity Number: 1179288



Details of Safeguarding concern reported (using facts): Please use additional sheet if needed and attach.

Signed:

Date:

Safeguarding Lead Advice (SG Lead to complete this section with agreed actions):

Signed:

Date:

Safeguarding Lead Actions

To be completed by the Safeguarding Lead Only

Reported to	YES/NO	Date/Time
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Police:

Social Services:

RLSS:

CSSA:



Agreed Action Plan: -

To be completed by the Safeguarding Lead

Agreed Actions: Lead: Review Date:

[Redacted area]

[Redacted area]

Appendix 2- Signs and Symptoms of Abuse taken from SCIE (Social Care Institute of Excellence)

Types of physical abuse

- Assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing.
- Rough handling
- Scalding and burning
- Physical punishments
- Inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint
- Making someone purposefully uncomfortable (e.g., opening a window and removing blankets)
- Involuntary isolation or confinement
- Misuse of medication (e.g., over-sedation)
- Forcible feeding or withholding food.
- Unauthorised restraint, restricting movement (e.g., tying someone to a chair)

Types of domestic violence or abuse

- Domestic violence or abuse can be characterised by any of the indicators of abuse outlined in this briefing relating to:
- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional.

Types of sexual abuse

- Rape, attempted rape or sexual assault
- Inappropriate touch anywhere
- Non- consensual masturbation of either or both persons
- Non- consensual sexual penetration or attempted penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth
- Any sexual activity that the person lacks the capacity to consent to
- Inappropriate looking, sexual teasing or innuendo or sexual harassment
- Sexual photography or forced use of pornography or witnessing of sexual acts.



- Indecent exposure

Types of psychological or emotional abuse

- Enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends.
- Removing mobility or communication aids or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance.
- Preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs
- Preventing the expression of choice and opinion
- Failure to respect privacy
- Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation, or activities
- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse.
- Addressing a person in a patronising or infantilising way
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Cyber bullying

Types of financial or material abuse

- Theft of money or possessions
- Fraud, scamming
- Preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits, or assets
- Employees taking a loan from a person using the service.
- Undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence put on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions.
- Arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance.
- Denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs.
- Denying assistance to access benefits
- Misuse of personal allowance in a care home
- Misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home
- Someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress.
- False representation, using another person's bank account, cards or documents.
- Exploitation of a person's money or assets, e.g., unauthorised use of a car
- Misuse of a power of attorney, deputy or other legal authority.
- Rogue trading – e.g., unnecessary or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs or poor workmanship.

Types of modern slavery

- Human trafficking
- Forced labour.
- Domestic servitude
- Sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution, and pornography
- Debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to.

Types of discriminatory abuse



- Unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation (known as **'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010**)
- Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic.
- Denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer, or lip-reader
- Harassment or deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- Denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment, and criminal justice relating to a protected characteristic
- Substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic.

Types of organisational or institutional abuse

- Discouraging visits or the involvement of relatives or friends.
- Run-down or overcrowded establishment.
- Authoritarian management or rigid regimes.
- Lack of leadership and supervision.
- Insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care.
- Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service.
- Inappropriate use of restraints.
- Lack of respect for dignity and privacy.
- Failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour.
- Not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating.
- Not offering choice or promoting independence.
- Misuse of medication.
- Failure to provide care with dentures, spectacles or hearing aids.
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious, or ethnic needs.
- Failure to respond to abuse appropriately.
- Interference with personal correspondence or communication.
- Failure to respond to complaints.

Types of neglect and acts of omission

- Failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care.
- Providing care in a way that the person dislikes.
- Failure to administer medication as prescribed.
- Refusal of access to visitors.
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs.
- Not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs.
- Ignoring or isolating the person.
- Preventing the person from making their own decisions.
- Preventing access to glasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc.
- Failure to ensure privacy and dignity.

Types of self-neglect

- Lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety.
- Neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings.
- Inability to avoid self-harm.

Society of the Sacred Heart CIO

England Wales Province
Charity Number: 1179288



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- Failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs.
 - Inability or unwillingness to manage one's personal affairs.