

Safeguarding

Policy and Procedures

A reference for all volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Holy Rood Catholic Church

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Ruth Barrett Youth Ministry Officer & Safeguarding Representative

Contact Information

Holy Rood Catholic Church

2 Groundwell Road

Swindon

SN1 2LU

Priest: Canon John Cunningham (Safeguarding Lead)

Tel: 01793 522062

Email: john.cunningham@cliftondiocese.com

Safeguarding Rep: Ruth Barrett

Tel: 07585227725

Email: ruth.barrett@cliftondiocese.com

Clifton Diocese Safeguarding Team

Coordinator: Becky Cawsey

Tel: 0117 954 0993

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Background and Context

(Text in italics taken from the National Safeguarding Commission policy documents available on the website csas.uk.net)

The Catholic Church has in place a National Catholic Safeguarding Commission (NCSC), which is an independent body working within the framework of the Church in England and Wales. It is mandated by the Conference of Bishops and Conference of Religious Congregations and has accountability across Dioceses and Religious Congregations to ensure that standards are met and policies are implemented. Established in 2008, the NCSC sets the strategic direction of the Church's safeguarding policy for children, young people and adults at risk. It is also responsible for developing quality assurance processes which includes monitoring and auditing the compliance of the Church with safeguarding procedures. The NCSC is leading on the development of pastoral support services on a national basis and is informed by the Survivor Advisory Panel which it has established to ensure that the voices of survivors and victims of abuse informs the work of the NCSC.

The Church seeks to ensure that its parishes, religious congregations and lay associations of the faithful acting in the name of the Church have the confidence to enable vulnerable people to have peace of mind, knowing they will be cared for and loved by their Christian community. All churches, faith communities and lay associations that are working in the name of the Church with children and adults at risk, are expected to have in place arrangements which include:

- *Procedures to respond to and report concerns and allegations*
- *Codes of conduct*
- *Safer recruitment procedures*
- *Information sharing arrangements*
- *Support and supervision of staff and volunteers*
- *Training on safeguarding*

Holy Rood Church belongs to the Diocese of Clifton, so our policies and procedures reflect those of the Diocese and the wider Catholic Church. The full working document is available to view and download from the CSAS website www.csas.uk.net

The purpose of this document is to make available a concise guide for all volunteers working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults at Holy Rood.

We have a safeguarding team in post and this is who you should contact if you have any concerns regarding the health and welfare of someone you are working with. Contact information can be found at the front of this document.

The team operates under Diocesan guidelines and with their support, work to ensure that Holy Rood Church is a safe place to worship for all.

What is Safeguarding?

Every human being has a value which we acknowledge as coming directly from God's creation of male and female in his own image and likeness. We believe therefore that all people should be valued, supported and protected from harm. We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable people towards whom the Church has a special responsibility.

The Catholic Church and its individual members will undertake appropriate steps to maintain a safe environment for all, by practising fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and adults and responding sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm. This is demonstrated by the provision of carefully planned activities for children, young people and adults, caring for those hurt by abuse and ministering to and robustly managing those who have caused harm.

Promoting and ensuring the well-being of all our worshipping community is the responsibility of everyone. As people of God, we are entrusted to proclaim His word and show His love to all.

The Church has pledged to:

- support children to achieve their full potential in an environment where they are protected from exploitation, abuse and maltreatment
- act within the guidance as set out in the policy documents Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, and acknowledges that the Church must work in partnership with other agencies and not act alone
- act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with Children's Social Care Services, the Police, Health Agencies, Probation Providers and other agencies to safeguard children and assist in bringing to justice anyone acting in the name of the Church who has committed an offence against a child
- respond sensitively, respectfully and seriously to anyone who reports concerns or allegations. All concerns and allegations will be dealt with within the national procedures and in a timely manner
- provide pastoral care to children and their families and to other relevant people where there have been concerns and allegations of some form of harm or maltreatment of a child
- put in place safeguards to manage the risk of an adult who has previously acted to harm a child, harming another child
- actively promote the empowerment and well-being of adults throughout the church
- recognise that adults have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation

- recognise that everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse
- recognise that adults have the right to independence that involves a degree of risk
- act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with Adult Social Care Services, the Police, Health Agencies, Probation Providers and other agencies to safeguard adults and assist in bringing to justice anyone acting in the name of the Church who has committed an offence against an adult

Safeguarding Representative

Each Parish and Religious Congregation must ensure that it has a safeguarding representative in place. The Safeguarding Representative has responsibility for promoting good and safe practices in all activities involving children, young people and adults and for providing advice on child and adult safeguarding matters within the Parish or Congregation.

The Safeguarding Representative is the link between the Parish or Congregation and the Safeguarding Coordinator. The Safeguarding Representative will have relevant training and a sound knowledge of the national policies and procedures and know who to contact if a concern or allegation is raised. The Safeguarding Representative has a key role in the administration of the safer recruitment process, including facilitating the DBS Disclosure process at a local level.

Guidance for Volunteers

Your work as a volunteer within the Parish of Holy Rood is valued greatly. We take recruitment and training seriously; this empowers our volunteers to play their part in ensuring the safety and well-being of our parish community.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

When you first volunteer to work with a parish group involving children, young people or vulnerable adults, you will be asked to undergo a UK government DBS check. This is free for all volunteers and once complete, you will receive a certificate through the post which you should retain for as long as you are volunteering in that role. You will be asked to join the online update service also, which again carries no fee – this is not compulsory, but it makes the renewal process much quicker for you when it is time to renew your DBS (this is currently 4 / 5 years at Holy Rood).

To carry out a DBS check, you will be asked to complete some forms, supply the names and contact details of two referees, and provide three forms of personal ID.

Safeguarding Training

Holy Rood Parish asks all volunteers to complete some basic safeguarding training in the form of an online course. This course is provided by Educare: once your DBS check is complete, an online login will be provided for you to complete this training at your leisure. Once you login you will see the titles of different modules – the module you should complete is **Child Protection**, but you are welcome to complete as many extra modules as you like.

In addition to the online training, once a year a team training meeting should include refresher training for all volunteers.

Working with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

The work you are volunteering for is both demanding and rewarding. It is important to always keep in mind safeguarding recommendations, in order to protect both those you work with and alongside, and yourself. At Holy Rood it is general practice not to expect any volunteer to work alone with a child or young person – the definition of alone being out of sight or hearing of others. Therefore, if you find yourself in this situation, you are advised to find a second volunteer to join with you or reschedule if this is not possible.

It is important for the success of the work we do that we form relationships with the children and young people / vulnerable adults: as you begin to build these relationships, it is possible that you may notice a change in behaviour, something may be disclosed to you, or you might notice or hear something else that you are not comfortable with. However minor, it is best to

report it straight away. It is not your responsibility to solve the problem, but it is your responsibility to report anything that you find concerning.

Examples of things you may notice:

- A sudden change in behaviour, for example, more aggressive or argumentative, attention seeking, or more withdrawn.
- Unkempt appearance, for example, dirty, smelly, or badly fitting clothes.
- Inappropriate comments of, for example, a sexual, racist or extreme nature.
- Unexplained injuries or bruises visible or not visible on the body.
- Possession of expensive items, especially if new items are seen regularly, for example, phones, clothes, jewellery.
- Frequent phone calls or text messages being exchanged, which do not cease when asked.
- Individual is 'alone' – arriving and leaving alone and avoided by peers during the sessions.
- Anything about the individual which makes you feel uncomfortable – essentially, **IF YOU THOUGHT IT, REPORT IT.**

Reporting can be done verbally, via a text or email, or in written form. Concern Forms are available for this purpose; as a volunteer you will be given a supply.

Disclosures:

In the event that something is disclosed to you by a young person or a child, record the disclosure accurately and factually, using the words spoken to you where possible. Sign and date the recording and pass it to your Safeguarding Representative as soon as possible. If you feel that there is a present and significant risk to the safety of the individual, call 999 directly.

It is ok to speak to the child or young person privately, however,

- Stay in the main space by moving to a quiet corner – if you do need to go to a different location, take another adult volunteer with you. Try to be as discreet as possible so not to draw attention to the individual.
- Ask open questions (How are you feeling today? How did your face become bruised like that?) and do not lead them (Has someone hit you?)
- Take notes if possible, using the words spoken by the young person / child – do not precis the conversation. Check back for clarity by repeating what you have heard if you need to.
- If something of concern is revealed, **never** promise to keep it a secret. Explain that you need to pass this information on to the Safeguarding Representative or authorities so that the correct action is taken to help them.
- Similarly, do not say you will fix their problems yourself, or try to do anything to 'help'.

- Do try to establish the level of danger / risk present and act accordingly. Any imminent danger should always result in calling the authorities – usually the police.
- Afterwards do make the time to talk the events through confidentially with someone, could be the Safeguarding Representative, but also could be your priest or a helpline service.

Protecting yourself:

Although our aim is to build relationships with the children and young people, it should be appropriate relationships. We are not making friendships. It is important to protect yourself from allegations, which you can do by not using your personal mobiles to have conversations with the young person, and by not accepting friend requests on Facebook or any other social media platforms. Individual communications should be done preferably via a parent or guardian, or the church admin office.

Never offer to give a young person or child a lift home in your car, even if it's pouring with rain, unless this has been pre-agreed with the parents and / or there is another adult volunteer in the car with you.

If you notice a volunteer acting in ways that are not in line with the safeguarding policy, you do have a responsibility to speak up about this. If this is something minor, for example offering to text them with requested information, have a quiet chat to remind them of the policy, but if it's more serious, or if you prefer not to speak to them directly, report this to the Safeguarding Representative.

Similarly, if an allegation is made either to you or to you about another volunteer, this should immediately be reported to the Safeguarding Representative.

If you have concerns about the behaviour of the Safeguarding Representative, you should report this to the Parish Priest.

Reporting Checklist

Do:

- Report anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, however minor.
- Have a conversation with the individual using open questions, if they are agreeable.
- Take notes, recording factually any words spoken by the young person / child.
- Explain what you will do next, that is say who you will pass this information to.
- Call 999 if there is an immediate risk to the health and safety of the young person / child.

Don't:

- Ignore anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, however minor.
- Meet a young person or child in private or take them in your car alone.
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Offer to do anything to help.
- Make assumptions – stick to the facts as they are given to you.
- Tell anyone else about what has been disclosed to you, other than the Safeguarding Representative and / or relevant Authority.

Remember – **IF YOU THOUGHT IT, REPORT IT.**

Useful Resources and Additional Information

Holy Rood Catholic Church Website:	holyroodswindon.co.uk
Clifton Diocese Website	cliftondiocese.com
Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service	csas.uk.net
Stop it Now! – Freephone helpline for confidential advice (child sexual abuse) – website	0808 1000 900 stopitnow.org.uk
Modern Slavery Helpline	08000 121 700
NSPCC	0800 800 5000
GLAA (Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority)	0800 432 0804
Childline	0800 1111
Samaritans	116 123
National Domestic Abuse helpline	0808 2000 247
Anxiety UK	03444 775 774
Mind	0300 123 3393

CSAS – Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service csas.uk.net

For access to the complete National Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Manual

Educare (requires personal login link) myeducare.com

For safeguarding online training

Logging a Safeguarding Concern in Holy Rood Parish

Part 1

Your name:

Contact Details:

(One to be provided) _____

Please record clearly your concern – what are you worried about? Who? What? When? Any witnesses?

Any other relevant information?

Please complete Part 1 then seal in an envelope marked 'Safeguarding' and post through the presbytery door, or pass to the Parish Office. Once received, you will be contacted by a Parish Safeguarding Rep to discuss the matter further.

DO NOT USE THIS FORM if you have an immediate and serious concern for the safety of a child or vulnerable adult. In this case you should phone 999 without delay. Thank you for your help in making Holy Rood a safe parish.

Part 2 (to be completed by Safeguarding Rep)

Date form received: _____

Contact made: _____

Advice sought: _____

Action taken:

Information shared with:

—

Outcome: _____

Follow up: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

When you have read this document, please detach this page, complete and return it to the Safeguarding Representative.

Declaration on Safeguarding Procedures

Parish Name	Parish Name
Name	Full Name
Role	Role
I, ^{insert name}, hereby declare that I have received and understood the procedures on how to deal with allegations or concerns of abuse and will comply with the Church's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.	
Signature	Sign here
Date Form Completed	Date