



CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

ENGLISH PROVINCE



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## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY OF THE ENGLISH PROVINCE OF THE MISSIONARIES OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, at risk adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused due to their coming into contact with a member of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS). This includes harm arising from: The conduct of staff or personnel associated with MSFS, The design and implementation of MSFS pastoral ministry and priestly activities

The policy lays out the commitments made by the Missionaries of St Francis de Sales (MSFS), and informs member and associated personnel of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

### **This policy does not cover:**

Safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by MSFS or associated personnel

### **What is safeguarding?**

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect, to feel in a safe space and secure in a church setting. In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our members or their pastoral work. Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary below.

### **Scope**

All members of MSFS living and working in the English Province.  
Associated personnel whilst engaged with work or visits related to MSFS, including but not limited to the following: members of other MSFS Provinces.

### **Policy Statement**

Missionaries of St Francis de Sales believe that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Missionaries (MSFS) will not tolerate abuse and exploitation by any member or associated personnel.

This policy will address the following areas of safeguarding: child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, the elderly and vulnerable adults and protection from sexual exploitation and

abuse.

MSFS are committed to addressing safeguarding in every aspect of its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

### **Application of this Policy**

This policy sets out the essential principles and procedures for safeguarding within the Province. It is not intended to replace or duplicate more detailed and comprehensive norms that exist at Universal, national, diocesan, or local level. Where applicable, those norms are to be consulted and followed appropriately.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the relevant provisions of the Code of Canon Law, national safeguarding policies, diocesan safeguarding procedures, and applicable civil legislation.

Furthermore, any new norms or directives issued by the Catholic Church, whether at Universal, national, or diocesan level, as well as any changes in civil law relating to safeguarding, are to be observed from the time they come into effect. Even if this document has not yet been formally updated to reflect such changes, the most recent and applicable norms shall always prevail and must be followed.

## **PREVENTION**

### **Missionaries of St Francis de Sales - responsibilities**

MSFS will:

- Ensure all members have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy with regard to Safeguarding.
- Design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with any member of MSFS. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our pastoral ministries is gathered and communicated
- Implement stringent safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying new members to the Province (England and Wales) and associated personnel and lay workers.
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role, Follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process

### **Staff responsibilities**

#### **Child safeguarding**

MSFS members and associated personnel must not:

- Engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 Sexually abuse or exploit children
- Subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
- Engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

#### **Adult safeguarding**

- MSFS members and associated personnel must not: Sexually abuse or exploit at risk adults
- Subject an at risk adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect

### Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

MSFS members and associated personnel must not:

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
- Engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, MSFS members and associated personnel are obliged to:

- Contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an MSFS member or associated personnel to the appropriate authority - Provincial Superior, Safeguarding Lead.

### ENABLING REPORTS

MSFS will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to people and the communities we work with.

Any member reporting concerns or complaints through formal whistleblowing channels (or if they request it) will be protected by MSFS's Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblowing) Policy.

MSFS will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

### How to report a safeguarding concern

Members who have a complaint or concern relating to safeguarding should report it immediately to their Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Lead [as appropriate] or Provincial Superior. If the member does not feel comfortable reporting to their Safeguarding Focal Point (for example if they feel that the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) they may report to any other appropriate member of the Provincial Council.

The safeguarding lead will contact the RLSS Safeguarding Team and pass the concern and all records of it to them immediately. Ensure the person who made you aware of the concern knows you are doing this.

The safeguarding lead and the RLSS will

- Ensure the victim/survivor or individual has been informed of the next steps
- Explain what will happen, give them options if possible and an indicative timescale
- Contact any relevant bodies within 24 hours
- Complete the safeguarding paperwork and ensure appropriate record keeping of all phone calls, meetings and discussions in relation to the case are documented.
- Update the relevant people at MSFS and offer any support needed

## OUR CONTACT DETAILS

1. You can call the safeguarding lead on 1285 652087 and the Provincial Superior on 01666822195 and your complaint will be documented.
2. You can email the Safegaruding lead ([Maria.Alexander@Cliftondiocese.com](mailto:Maria.Alexander@Cliftondiocese.com)) or the Provincial Superior [[provincialmsfsengland@gmail.com](mailto:provincialmsfsengland@gmail.com)]
3. You can write to us at our Head Office [26 Cross Hayes, Malmesbury, Wilts, SN169BG]

## RESPONSE

MSFS will follow up safeguarding reports and concerns according to policy and procedure, and legal and statutory obligations (see Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns in Associated Policies).

MSFS will apply appropriate disciplinary measures to any member found in breach of policy.

MSFS will offer support to survivors of harm caused by any member regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an internal investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the survivor.

## WHISTLEBLOWING

The MSFS will encourage and enable anyone with a safeguarding concern, to refer the concern without fear of victimisation, or disadvantage.

If that concern is regarding malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions at the MSFS or other religious institution in relation 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.

## RECORDING AND STORAGE OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND CASE FILES

MSFS has a responsibility to ensure that all case files held are accurate, up to date and stored securely, in accordance with the privacy policies.

Where RLSS is responsible for the management of a case, RLSS will ensure records are accurate, auditable, and secure and all records of any safeguarding concerns or allegations referred will be properly maintained.

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

The MSFS will ensure that congregation members, lay staff and volunteers are subject to the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (including enhanced DBS) in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements.

As most of the MSFS priests work in the parishes, within a diocese, the DBS and training are normally looked after by the diocese. But the safeguarding lead will make sure that this is done, and up to date.

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 applicants are kept in a secure place and are 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.

Anyone who is 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.

### **Confidentiality**

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management should be shared on a need to know basis only, and should be kept secure at all times.

### **Associated Documents**

- Code of Ethics (Safeguarding policy which governs the entire MSFS Congregation)
- Anti Bullying and Harassment policy
- Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace (Whistleblower) policy
- Child Safeguarding policy
- Adult Safeguarding policy
- PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by staff) policy
- Complaints Policy
- Procedures for reporting and response to safeguarding concerns
- Procedures for safeguarding in staff recruitment
- Privacy Notice for the English Province of the MSFS
- Privacy Notice for Victims and Survivors of abuse
- Code of Canon Law
- Safeguarding Policies of each diocese where MSFS are serving
- Other policies as appropriate

## **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy is approved by the Provincial Congress held at Kairos Center London, from 13-14 April 2023 and will be subject to review every three years or sooner, if a need is identified.

Date of next review: 3-4 March 2026

Date: 14 April 2023

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Beneficiary of Assistance:** Someone who directly receives goods or services from [NGO]'s programme. Note that misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that the NGO serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

**Child:** A person below the age of 18

**Harm:** Psychological, physical and any other infringement of an individual's rights

**Psychological harm:** Emotional or psychological abuse, including (but not limited to) humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation

**Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA):** The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)

**Safeguarding:** In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect

In our sector, we understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes. One donor definition is as follows:

Safeguarding means taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. This definition draws from our values and principles and shapes our culture. It pays specific attention to preventing and responding to harm from any potential, actual or attempted abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability, especially for sexual purposes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty.

Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

**Sexual abuse:** The term 'sexual abuse' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

**Sexual exploitation:** The term 'sexual exploitation' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. This definition includes human trafficking and modern slavery.

**Survivor:** The person who has been abused or exploited. The term 'survivor' is often used in preference to 'victim' as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however it is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

**At risk adult:** Sometimes also referred to as vulnerable adult. A person who is or may be in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.