

Document A - Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland

Safeguarding Policy

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REVIEW CYCLE	ANNUALLY	Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer
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1. Introduction

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland (hereafter, 'the Archdiocese') seeks to create an embedded culture of safeguarding through ministry, prayer, pastoral support, and activities delivered by lay members of the Church. As such, all members of the Archdiocese should feel safe and supported, and proactively support the Church to ensure that those around them are protected from harm as far as possible. However, in addition to our Christian responsibilities and day to day work we have statutory responsibilities under UK law in relation to protection of children and adults at risk (below).¹ . This policy is designed to ensure that the Archdiocese can meet those responsibilities, including identification of those in positions of trust², and those who are undertaking regulated activity³ and require a DBS certificate.

a. Definitions

Within the context of the Safeguarding Policy, children and adults at risk are defined as follows:

Children	Adults
A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.	An adult 'at risk' is defined by legislation as someone who has care and support needs, is experiencing (or is at risk of) abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves due to their care and support needs.

¹ As defined in the Care Act 2014, Section 2

² As defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003

³ As defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Chapter 47, and subject to amendments in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, Chapter 1

This also includes 16 and 17 year olds ⁴ . A safeguarding concern should be raised if a child is at risk of harm or abuse.	
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2. Legislative Framework

Statutory Safeguarding responsibilities are contained within a long list of legislative Acts and guidance documents, including, but not limited to:

- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty Guidance 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation, and the Data Protection (processing of Sensitive Personal Data) Order 2000
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Mental Capacity Act 2005, and the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019
- HM Government: *Working together to safeguard children. A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* 2018
- Charity Commission: *Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees* 2017, updated 2022

Within the Archdiocese responsibility for compliance with Safeguarding legislation and guidance sits with the Safeguarding Committee, supported by the Archdiocesan Board.

3. Archdiocesan Safeguarding Function and Associated Procedures

a. Leadership and Monitoring

The Metropolitan Archbishop and the Archdiocesan Board have oversight of statutory Safeguarding matters and delegate day to day responsibility to a Safeguarding Committee. The Safeguarding Committee comprises:

- an Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer,
- an Archdiocesan Safeguarding Administrator;
- no more than four Safeguarding Committee members.

Each Parish within the Archdiocese must appoint a Parish or Community Safeguarding Representative.

⁴ This seemingly obvious information is included as 16-17 year olds can sometimes have adulthood attributed to them informally during safeguarding praxis due to a perception of maturity. They are, however, for statutory purposes, children.

Role descriptions and terms of reference for the Safeguarding Committee members can be found in **Document B - Safeguarding Reporting Structure, Roles and Responsibilities**

The Safeguarding Committee will maintain a register of responsible persons within the Archdiocese by parish or Archdiocesan institution, including responsibilities held and training undertaken.

b. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

The Archdiocese requests a DBS check in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for roles which include regulated activity, and for other positions where it is appropriate to do so. Checks are requested by the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer or the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Administrator, following notification from a Parish Safeguarding Representative that a member of the Church requires a check. The Safeguarding Board undertakes checks with Parish Safeguarding Representatives at least twice per year to confirm that records are up to date.

c. Training

The Safeguarding Committee will ensure that relevant and appropriate training, based in context of a Christian Church, will be available to all members of the Archdiocese who require it including, but not limited to: trustees; clergy; those working with children; and those with safeguarding responsibilities and Parish representatives or Committee members.⁵ The training refresh cycle will be three years with ad hoc training offered as may be required.⁶

Following completion of initial training for all who need it, additional or refresher training will be offered where appropriate due to the nature of a role, or where legislative changes need to be communicated and considered.

The Safeguarding Committee will keep Archdiocesan members up to date with their training requirements, will make arrangements for training to be attended, and will keep records of attendance.

Members of the Safeguarding Committee will endeavour to support individuals in sourcing and booking training at a time suitable for the individual. In cases where individuals fail to complete Safeguarding training within reasonable timescales, and where there is no apparent justification for the failure to complete, the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer will raise the issue with the Metropolitan Archbishop, or nominee from the Archdiocesan Board, who will in turn work with the individual to identify barriers to completion of training and support or further action needed.

d. Parish Responsibilities

The Parish Representative will work closely with their Priest and Church Council, or equivalent body, to ensure that Safeguarding obligations are met. While core policy and documentation are produced by the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee it is vital that Parish groups are able to consider Safeguarding obligations at a local level to reflect the nature and demographic of the Parish. Templates for Parish documents will be provided by the Safeguarding Committee and guidance can be given where necessary.

Each Parish will create and hold the following documents:

⁵ Training is currently provided by Thirtyone:eight

⁶ e.g. in the case of a major legislative change.

- A list including details of members of the Parish who undertake regulated activity and/or who are in positions of trust.
- A **Safeguarding Risk Assessment (Document C)**. Building a risk assessment encourages Parishes to identify risks, consider actions which can mitigate those risks, and provide a framework for an annual review of Safeguarding within the Parish.
- A Safeguarding information document (possible proforma to be made available) for display within each Church, this will identify the Parish Safeguarding Representative and advise members of the Parish how to raise a concern.
- A **Safeguarding Case Escalation Process (Document E)** to outline how concerns will be dealt with, who will be alerted, and routes of escalation within the Parish and to the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee.

Parish Safeguarding Representatives are responsible for leading an annual review of documentation and updating documents as necessary between review periods.

e. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

The Archdiocese seeks to promote an environment in which concerns can be raised confidentially, however where it is believed that a person poses a risk to themselves or others, it is the responsibility of the person receiving the information to escalate the issue to the Parish Representative, Priest, or the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee. The person receiving the information should explain clearly that they have a duty to report the concern, and to whom, while providing reassurance that information will only be shared with those who need it. **If this relates to a child then the person who raises the concern will be the person to make contact with statutory agencies but CAN and should be assisted to do this by the parish safeguarding representative in conjunction with the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer or delegated Safeguarding Committee member.**

Factual records must be kept of Safeguarding concerns using the **AOCAD⁷ Safeguarding Report Form (Document D)**, and initial records must be kept updated with follow up action.

The processing of sensitive personal data will be in accordance with the principles of the relevant Data Protection Act.

4. Reporting to the Charity Commission.

The Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. If a serious incident takes place within the Archdiocese, it is important that there is prompt, full and frank disclosure to the Commission. The Archdiocese will need to report what happened and, importantly, let the Commission know the incident is being dealt with, even if it has already been reported to the police, donors or another regulator.

⁸ A serious incident is defined in the current Charity Commission safeguarding guidance.

5. Third Party Organisations.

The Archdiocese expects that all third party organisations engaged in regulated activity and which may from time to time become involved in activities organised by the archdiocese will have their own suitable

⁷ AOCAD: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

safeguarding policies in place. This may include, but is not limited to, other registered charities or Community Interest Organisations (CIO).

Fr Mark Shillaker, on behalf of the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee
August 2023 and January 2024