

# SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

## Statement of Safeguarding Principles

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland is committed to working in partnership with other Orthodox Jurisdictions, other Christian communities, and with relevant secular agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, in order to promote and maintain the emotional, physical, sexual, mental and spiritual wellbeing and safety of all children, young persons, and all adults committed to our pastoral care. The Archdiocese implements its safeguarding duties exactly as set out by the safeguarding Christian charity: "Thirtyone:eight". What is "Thirtyone:eight"? this is from their website: <https://thirtyoneeight.org/>. *"We are an independent Christian charity which helps individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. Our vision is a world where every child and adult can feel, and be, safe, and to achieve this vision we work together with a network of thousands of organisations across the UK, helping them to create safer places."* Much of the information, policies and procedures are open access on the website above and is deliberately not reproduced here since that would constitute unnecessary duplication and breach of both copyright laws and the licence under which the Archdiocesan Safeguarding function operates. Anything you cannot find on the website will be in a separate part of the site accessible only to the Archdiocesan licensees who, with effect from 10 March 2023, are the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officers, Father Mark Shillaker and Mr Dušan Radunovic.

### **The Archdiocese is committed to ...**

- Pastoral ministry based on the loving, respectful care and nurturing of all children, young persons and all adults.
- Prioritising the issues of safeguarding and protecting all children, young persons and all adults in our care.
- Taking all necessary steps to establish safe, caring communities which provide a loving and compassionate environment where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse, and where they can find support and care delivered in accordance with the standards set by recognised best practice in this area.
- Developing the necessary pastoral resources at diocesan and parish levels in order to foster an appropriately informed ministry that can recognise and respond to the unique needs of those who have been abused.

### **In the Archdiocese and in fulfilment of these commitments ...**

- We will carefully select, support and train all those with any pastoral responsibility within the Church, in line with both existing statutory requirements and in line with standards set by best practice in this area, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration/membership of the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that any adult, young person or child may have been harmed, or is at risk of harm, cooperating with police and local authorities in any investigation(s).
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse.
- We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm or abuse.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust and/or authority.
- We will seek to offer appropriate pastoral care and support to any member of our church community suspected or convicted of having offended against a child, young person or adult at risk of harm.

In all these principles, we will follow existing legislation, guidance from competent authorities, and recognised good practice in the area of safeguarding.

## Structure of Safeguarding within the Archdiocese

While safeguarding is the responsibility of every member of the Church, certain specialised roles have been created to ensure the safe and effective implementation of "thirtyone:eight" safeguarding policies and practices.

If a complaint or disclosure is made against one of these officers, that person will be suspended from duty for the duration of any investigation and subsequent resolution, their deputies standing in for that role.

*These officers are:*

### **Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer (ASO)**

*[Appointed by the Metropolitan Archbishop]*

- with the Board -

**Role:** - to liaise with the Metropolitan Archbishop and Archdiocesan institutions at parish and archdiocesan level in safeguarding matters. The ASO is the first contact in matters raised by the parishes and other communities in the Archdiocese where implementation of "thirtyone:eight" policies have a national rather than just a local implication. The ASO is also the first of two investigating leads in any disclosure or complaint made at any level.

### **Archdiocesan Safeguarding Administrator (ASA)**

*[Appointed by the Metropolitan Archbishop]*

- With the Board -

**Role:** - to liaise with and support parishes and other communities, their clergy and officers in the fulfillment of their safeguarding responsibilities. The primary contact for the ASA will be the parish or community Safeguarding Representative (SR). All DBS searches are facilitated by the ASA. The ASA is also the second of two investigating leads in any disclosure or complaint made at any level, working alongside the SR.

### **Parish or Community Safeguarding Representative (SR)**

*[Appointed by the Parish Priest and Parish Council]*

**Role:** - to ensure with others locally that "thirtyone:eight" policies and procedures are followed exactly in all aspects of Church life and work. This will include regular audits of church workers for DBS checks to be referred to the ASA, community education on safeguarding issues and the monitoring of all activities that have a safeguarding aspect. Any complaint or disclosure must be immediately shared with the ASO and the ASA.

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## Collective and Shared Responsibilities between the ASO and the ASA

1. To coordinate safeguarding education and practice throughout the Archdiocese for those involved in pastoral ministry.
2. To act as direct support for Parish or Community SR's.
3. To hear any concerns relating to safeguarding, including any disclosures or allegations of abuse, and take responsibility for managing the diocesan response to that concern or disclosure.
4. To report all instances of suspected or disclosed abuse, where there are reasonable grounds for concern, to local authorities, to the police, and to the Bishop.
5. Where the ASO or ASA are unsure if a concern raised meets reasonable grounds for concern, they may consult informally with the Duty Social Worker from the area in which concern has been raised.
6. To also refer all instances of suspected or disclosed abuse relating to parish personnel to the relevant Church authorities.
7. Out of office hours and in the case of an emergency, where a child is at serious and immediate risk, to report the matter to the police without delay.
8. To coordinate pastoral services to both those who raise allegations of abuse and those implicated by allegations of abuse.
9. To ensure that the person raising a concern, disclosing abuse, or making an allegation, and any member of Church personnel who is implicated by that, are regularly informed about the progress of the inquiry process.
10. To record all steps undertaken as part of these procedures.
11. The Bishop must appoint a Deputy ASO or ASA, who can act in the event that the ASO or ASA is unable to deal with a concern/allegation for any reason. In any Safeguarding matter, both routine and exceptional, the Bishop must be kept fully informed at all times.

# SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH/COMMUNITY SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE (SR)

1. To make themselves familiar with all aspects of the safeguarding procedures and know where parishioners might access the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Information.
2. To keep a record of all under 18 activities within the Church and those who run them.
3. To keep a record of all activities involving adults at risk from harm within the Church.
4. To be willing to participate in safeguarding training and ongoing training. According to the requirements of the Insurance Company, there must be an approved training event for each eligible person at least annually.
5. To assist the parish in raising awareness to the issues of Safeguarding by:
  - promoting or arranging suitable and relevant training in consultation with the ASO and ASA.
  - ensuring that all volunteers working with young people understand and adopt a safe code of conduct.
6. To inform external organisations eg sports clubs who use Church facilities, of the need to have their own safeguarding policy.
7. To assist the parish priest with the implementation of Archdiocesan Safeguarding Policies
8. With the parish priest ensure that the Archdiocesan recruitment process takes place:
  - asking all volunteers to complete appropriate application forms;
  - arranging for references to be taken up;
  - interviewing prospective volunteers in the parish working with children and adults at risk from harm;
  - identifying volunteers who require a DBS check and liaising with the ASA.  
***ALL DBS checks must be completed and assessed BEFORE the person takes up the role, post or office. In respect of clergy, both major and minor, this must be before ordination takes place.***
9. The SR will be responsible with the Parish Priest or Abbott for the effective, efficient and smooth operation of Safeguarding in the parish/community by:
  - ensuring that all searches, training requirements and other safeguarding duties are undertaken locally within ***4 weeks of notification or identification***; excepting unforeseen or extenuating circumstances. Emergency situations must be dealt with immediately.
  - Any delay or variation must be cleared with the ASO and /or ASA first.

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10. Assist the parish priest in monitoring the work of new volunteers. This can be achieved through the following:

- reviewing new volunteers after an initial 6 month probationary period;
- being available to discuss matters of concern with volunteers;
- showing an interest in the work being done with children, young people and adults at risk from harm within the parish.

11. To act as a recognised contact point for adults and young people who need to report concerns about safeguarding issues.

12. To refer any concerns about a child or adult at risk of harm to the appropriate agency according to Archdiocesan policy and then immediately to the ASO and ASA.

13. To assist the parish priest in the management/monitoring of known sex offenders in the parish, if the need arises.

### PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Parish or Community Safeguarding Representative will need:

1. to be a trusted person within the parish community and have skills of tact, resilience, communication and understanding to undertake this vital role;
2. to have basic skills in observation and listening;
3. a clear commitment to the protection of children and adults at risk from harm based on a belief in the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God;
4. the ability to put the principle of the paramount welfare of the child (or adult at risk from harm) first in any decision making about children or adults at risk from harm and not to be swayed by external pressures to depart from this principle;
5. the ability to refer child protection or adults at risk from harm protection issues to the appropriate statutory or police authorities;
6. the ability to record child and adult at risk from harm protection concerns, in writing and to collect and record data about activities in the parish involving children or adults at risk from harm;
7. to be sensitive to the concerns of volunteers, in particular in relation to aspects concerning form completion and ongoing supervision and monitoring and be able to explain the requirements of volunteers to comply with the policy;

# SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

## ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PARISH CLERGY, PASTORAL WORKERS OR VOLUNTEERS

### ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

#### ALLEGED INCIDENT(S) REPORTED TO THE SR



Document details of allegation(s), including name(s), date(s), location, person(s) present, context in which alleged incident(s) occurred.



IS THE CHILD/ADULT IN ANY DANGER OR AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM AND THEREFORE IN NEED OF URGENT PROTECTION?



YES



IF THE CHILD/ADULT IS IN URGENT NEED OF PROTECTION: CONTACT THE POLICE AND AMBULANCE IF REQUIRED.

**DIAL 999 FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES.**

THEN CONTACT THE ASO AND ASA.



NO



CONTACT THE ASO/ASA

- Providing information on allegations as detailed above.
- Provide details of actions taken so far.



THE ASO AND ASA WILL ADVISE ON:

- THE APPROPRIATE PERSON/AUTHORITY TO REPORT INCIDENT TO.
- DECIDE ON THE IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED TO SAFEGUARD ANY PERSONS AT RISK.
- WILL SEEK FURTHER ADVICE FROM "THIRTYONE:EIGHT" AS AND WHEN NECESSARY.



Where it is deemed necessary to report the incident to local authorities, the ASO and ASA will support the SR in making the appropriate referral to either:



**[Allegation against a CHILD or about a staff member who works with CHILDREN]**

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO) for the area where the incident is alleged to have taken place.



**[Allegations against an ADULT or a member of staff who works with ADULTS]**

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE in the area where the incident is alleged to have taken place.

If there is any police or social services involvement in an allegation, then it would be one of these agencies who would be the LEAD AGENCY, and they will inform the cleric/pastoral worker/volunteer of the allegations made/investigation details. The ASO and ASA should request details of the investigation and allegations to determine what action should be taken by the Archdiocese.

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# **ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND IRELAND**

## **APPENDICES**

### **What about other Orthodox Dioceses?**

Of course, we are one Orthodox Church, not several. Multiple “jurisdictions”, where they occur, only refer to the oversight of each bishop in his diocese within any given see. Therefore, this Archdiocese will work as closely as possible with all the other Dioceses and their bishops to ensure the safety of *ALL* our children and adults at risk from harm. We need to share best practice and that might include our policies subject to each bishop’s oversight and instruction. Furthermore, in level 1 infractions of our Safeguarding Policy, our Metropolitan will undoubtedly wish to share appropriate safeguarding information with other Orthodox bishops in the same way that he does when dealing with any clergy who have been suspended for other reasons. In these ways our actions for the safety of our children and adults at risk from harm will be both consistently and universally applied across the Church as a whole.