

English / Scottish Community

Religious Sisters of Charity Safeguarding Policy

1. **Policy Overview** The Religious Sisters of Charity (RSoC) are committed to safeguarding all children and adults. This commitment reflects our belief in the dignity and worth of every human being. We uphold the principles of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) and adhere to the One Church Approach, ensuring that all safeguarding concerns are addressed promptly, professionally, and compassionately.
2. **Scope:** This policy applies to all members of the RSoC, including religious, lay personnel, volunteers, and employees. All members are responsible for preventing abuse, whether through action or omission. Abuse includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, neglect, self-neglect, organisational, financial, psychological, domestic, modern slavery, discrimination, and radicalisation.
3. **Training Requirements:** All RSoC members must complete safeguarding training relevant to their roles:
 - **All Sisters** – RLSS Level 1 Training
 - **Religious Leaders** – RLG Lead Training (Level 2 equivalent)
 - **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** – Safeguarding Lead Training (Level 3 equivalent)
 - **Trustees Members** – Trustee Training (Level 2 equivalent)
 - **Community Members (Public-Facing Roles)** – Advanced Safeguarding Training (Level 2 equivalent)
 - **Community Members (Non-Public-Facing Roles)** – Basic Safeguarding Training (Level 1 equivalent)

Annual refresher training is mandatory for all members and Board representatives.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Board of Trustees:** Ensures safeguarding governance and compliance.
- **Religious Leader:** Maintains oversight of policy implementation and best practices.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Oversees safeguarding processes, documentation, case management, and secure storage of records.
- **All Members and Staff:** Must be familiar with and adhere to safeguarding procedures, reporting concerns as necessary.

5. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns If a safeguarding concern arises:

- Report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- If the DSL is unavailable, escalate to the Deputy DSL or the Leadership Team.
- In emergencies where immediate danger is present, contact police or social services.
- All concerns must be recorded in the Safeguarding Log and securely stored.

Escalation Process

- If concerns are not addressed satisfactorily, they must be escalated to the Trustee Board.
- Matters can be referred to the RLSS or statutory safeguarding agencies if necessary.

6. Practice Guidance as per Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019) and CSSA standards, all allegations of abuse involving Church personnel must be reported to statutory authorities, regardless of where the abuse occurred. This applies when:

- A person has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.
- A criminal offence has been committed.
- A person's behaviour suggests they are unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

In cases where an adult discloses past abuse but refuses to make a referral, risk assessments must be conducted to determine if other individuals may be at risk. If necessary, a report should be made to statutory authorities without revealing the survivor's identity.

7. Procedure for Making a Referral

- **Emergency Situations:** If a person is at immediate risk, contact emergency services (999) and local social services.
- **Non-Emergency Situations:** If there is no immediate danger, the DSL or RLSS will liaise with the individual to determine the appropriate response.

Statutory Agency Referrals:

- **Children's Concerns:** Refer to local authorities, social services, and the police if required.
- **Adult Concerns:** Refer to the appropriate safeguarding body.
- **Criminal Offences:** Report to the police within 24 hours.
- **LADO Referral:** If you have concerns about an individual working with vulnerable persons, inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

8. Whistleblowing Policy The RSoC encourages individuals to report concerns about malpractice, illegal acts, or safeguarding failures without fear of victimisation. The RLSS will investigate and provide written feedback, ensuring confidentiality where possible.

9. Recording & Storage of Safeguarding Concerns The DSL is responsible for securely maintaining safeguarding case files, including:

- Contact details of the involved parties.
- A timeline of reported concerns.
- Risk assessments and actions taken.
- Communications with external safeguarding agencies.

All records must comply with data protection laws and be securely stored for legal and investigatory purposes.

10. Safe Recruitment Practices

- **DBS checks** are required for all staff and volunteers.
- **Employment references** must be verified before appointments.
- **Induction training** includes safeguarding policies and expectations.

11. Policy Review & Compliance: This policy is reviewed annually or earlier if required due to legislative or procedural changes. Compliance is monitored through internal audits and CSSA reviews.

12. Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Barbara Veeramallay- Permaul -
- 07974092866
- Email: bvpermaul@gmail.com

Approved by:

Sister Mary Teresa Clarke

Effective Date: January 2025

Next Review: January 2026