

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF
LORETO AND ST WINEFRIDE'S, KEW**

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY,
GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES**

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND
VULNERABLE ADULTS**

OUR LADY OF LORETO AND ST WINEFRIDE'S CHURCH, KEW

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IN A NUTSHELL: FOUR KEY STEPS SHOULD YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT ABUSE

- 1. Always follow the guidelines in this Parish Policy scrupulously.**
- 2. Do not investigate the matter yourself.**
- 3. Make a written note of the facts and reasons that have given rise to your concern.**
- 4. Refer your concern to a member of the Parish Safeguarding Team as soon as you can.**

URGENT ACTION:

If a child is suspected to be at risk of immediate harm, is physically injured or it is thought that sexual abuse has occurred within the last 24 hours, contact Police and Social Services immediately, giving full information. There should be staff available from either agency who can respond at any time of day or night. Seek medical help where necessary. Give medical staff relevant information about the allegation or concern.

<u>In immediate danger, call the police:</u>		999
Children's Social Services:	Mon-Fri; 8am – 5.15pm	020 8547 5008
	Out of hours	020 8770 5000
Adult Social Care:	Mon-Fri; 9am – 5pm	020 8891 7971
	Out of hours	020 8744 2442

CONCERNS, ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Parish Safeguarding Representative	Mrs Marie Dargelos-Lepage	075 7216 4881
	kewgardenssg1@safeguardrcaos.org.uk	
Parish Priest	Canon John Weatherill	020 8940 3101
Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (COPCA)		020 7630 8220
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (24h Free Helpline)		0808 800 5000
Child-line (24h Free Helpline for children and young persons)		0800 1111
Diocesan Safeguarding Numbers:		
Diocesan Safeguarding Officer	Mrs Christine Acons	020 7261 1606
Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding	Mgr Bill Saunders	020 8876 6467

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

PARISH POLICY, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

1. SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

- a) **Parish Safeguarding Team** - Except in emergency, first contact should always be with the Parish Safeguarding Team, who will in turn involve as appropriate the Diocese Safeguarding Coordinator and / or other Agencies.
- b) **Parish Safeguarding Policy** - A Policy Summary is on noticeboard, the full Policy Statement is held in the Parish Office and on our parish website.
- c) **Episcopal Vicar for Safeguarding** - Fr Steve Wymer, who is supported by the Diocese Safeguarding Office, Helen Sheppard. The Diocese fully cooperates with CSAS and operates under their Guidance and Procedures (see below).
 - <http://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/safeguarding.html>
- d) **CSAS (Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service)**. Their website is very helpful and is constantly updated – look at the Online Manual for Procedures and copy forms etc:
 - CSAS Procedures Manual: <http://www.csasprocedures.uk.net/>
 - CSAS Forms Library: <http://www.csasprocedures.uk.net/chapters/forms.html>
 - CSAS Incident / Concern Reporting Form
- e) **Church of England Safeguarding Policy Manual**. Though not a Catholic Church document, it contains much useful information on Safeguarding Procedures nationally.
 - <http://www.churchofengland.org/media/37378/protectingallgodchildren.pdf>

2. WHY DOES OUR PARISH NEED A SAFEGUARDING POLICY?

The Church, just like our wider society, has grown more aware of the risks children can sometimes face at home and in the community. We have a duty to ensure that our children, young people, and vulnerable adults are, as far as possible, safe from harm.

This requires those who work with, or are responsible for, children, young people and vulnerable adults to observe the best practice. They also need to be aware of what to do if cases of abuse should emerge or be suspected.

Moreover, the whole parish should be aware of and sensitive to these procedures so that they become 'second nature', a normal part of everything we do as a parish community.

The parish policy is outlined in the following chapters. It is being introduced:

- To raise awareness in our parish of the need to protect its most vulnerable members.
- To ensure parishioners are informed of the Parish Child Safeguarding measures and about the team which will coordinate them.
- To implement the guidelines of the Catholic Church in England and Wales for good practice when working with children and young people, and to ensure that these procedures are known about and followed by all volunteers and parish workers.
- To detail the course of action to be followed in cases of concerns or allegations of abuse.
- To ensure that volunteers are responsibly appointed, given support and training, and to help protect them from the risk of false allegations.
- To explain what child abuse is.

THE PARISH SAFEGUARDING TEAM

A Parish Safeguarding Team will assist in implementing and coordinating this policy. Its task will be to ensure confidentiality in the handling of any personal information regarding those who work in the parish with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to assist the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, should any accusation arise. The Parish team consists of Canon John Weatherill and Mrs Marie Dargelos-Lepage. They are available to talk about and offer support on these issues. One of them should always be called in the event of a suspicion of abuse occurring.

Parish Safeguarding Representative	Mrs Marie Dargelos-Lepage	075 7216 4881
	kewgardenssg1@safeguardrcaos.org.uk	
Parish Priest	Canon John Weatherill	020 8940 3101

3. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

DEFINITION OF "CHILD"

The legal definition of a child is a young person under the age of 18 years (Children Act 1989). This policy relates to the protection of all children from harm.

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse of a child may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill-health to a child whom they are looking after.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, the activities may involve physical contact including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving child in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Source: "Working Together to Safeguard Children", HMSO 1999.

4. HOW CAN WE MINIMISE THE RISK OF ABUSE TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE ADULTS WITHIN OUR PARISH?

All who work with children and vulnerable adults in our parish must follow these guidelines (for example, those who conduct the Children's Liturgy, or who work with the Servers, those engaged in preparing the sacraments, bringing Communion to the Sick and Homebound). We must maintain the highest professional standards in work and relationships with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

I) GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE ADULTS.

(a) Before somebody is allowed to begin working with children, young people or vulnerable adults:

- All volunteers and employees working with children, young people or vulnerable adults must complete a volunteer application form giving their personal details, documentary proof of identity, and supplying two references. They must also complete a form which requires information on criminal convictions and gives permission for a check to be made about any relevant criminal convictions.
- The necessary satisfactory Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks and references should be received before a volunteer is engaged to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults of the parish.
- The Parish Safeguarding Representative, together with the Parish Priest, will need to be satisfied, in some cases by formal interview, that the person has the necessary personality and integrity for the particular work. This is especially important if the person is new to the parish.
- The Parish Safeguarding Representative will be responsible for this procedure and ensure the confidentiality of the information given.
- There will be a trial period of three months for all new volunteers, at the end of which both parties (the volunteer and the leader) review the situation.
- All volunteers will be given clear guidance about their roles and responsibilities. Supervision and training will be provided for inexperienced parish workers and volunteers.
- New parishioners who have already been vetted by a previous parish will also be required to undertake this procedure.

(b) Essential general principles of good practice:

You MUST:

- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Treat children, young people or vulnerable adults with appropriate respect.
- Respect a child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's right to personal privacy.
- Encourage children, young people and adults to feel sufficiently comfortable to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like.
- Bear in mind that even well-intentioned actions might be open to misinterpretation.
- Be ready to challenge inappropriate behaviour on the part of others, and follow the procedures outlined below when there are suspicions or allegations of abuse.
- Give guidance and support to new or inexperienced helpers.
- Have other adults present, or at least within sight or hearing of others if you are planning any activities in relation to children or young people.

You MUST NOT:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Respond to children's inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour.
- Show favouritism to, or cultivate, any particular individual.
- Take a chance when common sense, or the parish guidelines, suggest a more prudent approach should be followed.
- Exaggerate or trivialise child or vulnerable adult abuse issues.
- Pre-judge, rationalise, dismiss or minimise information given to you.
- Believe that an accusation 'could never happen to me'.
- Imagine that your good name, or the Church, will protect you from any misunderstanding or accusation.

(c) Physical contact guidelines when working with children:

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of the group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child not the worker. 5
- Allow children to determine the degree of physical contact with others, except in exceptional circumstances such as when they need medical attention. Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Do not engage in any physical contact which is, or could be construed as, sexually stimulating.
- Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to challenge a colleague constructively if necessary. Concerns about physical abuse should be reported.

II) CHECKLIST FOR PARISH GROUPS:**(a) When preparing to work with a group of children in the parish:**

- Anyone working with children must possess and have read their own copy of the Parish Policy, and know the procedures to follow in the case of suspected or alleged abuse.
- Leaders need to think about what is involved in the activities for which they are responsible, so as to plan carefully to avoid any situations which could lead to difficulties, embarrassment, accusations or temptations.
- As far as possible, small group activities should take place in an open environment, or with doors left open. [An example of such a situation to avoid would be where one leader or worker and one young person are together 'in private' – whether that be in a 'counselling situation', on a residential weekend, or driving someone home in a car.]
- The parish will undertake Safeguarding Awareness sessions from time to time.

(b) Numbers of children and helpers:

- It is desirable that the gender of parish workers and volunteers should reflect that of the children or young people, whenever possible.
- A minimum of two leaders/helpers must always be present. Leaders should make arrangements in advance for appropriate back up support to be available if possible e.g. from parents.
- It is vital that the ration of adults to children is adequate to ensure safety. Extra help must be obtained with any outings or outdoor activities. Minimum ratios are:
 - 1 adult leader for every 4 children under 4
 - 1 adult leader for every 6 children 4-8
 - 1 adult leader for every 8 children 9-12
 - 1 adult leader for every 10 children 13-18

(c) Routine Group registration procedures:

- An up to date register of information must be kept, with the names of all children, their addresses and home telephone numbers (AND Emergency contact number if different), and written permission to act *in loco parentis*.
- At every meeting, a register must be kept with the names of all present: leaders, helpers / other adults, and children.
- Written information should be given to parents including the purpose of the group, and expectations of parents, including time of drop off / pick up, who to call if ill, the extent / limitations of Group leaders' responsibilities – and specifically that the leader cannot be left on their own with children, and parents may have to wait with their children until a second leader arrives.
- It must be ensured that there is adequate insurance cover, especially for activities away from the normal meeting place. Where minibuses and/or private cars are used there must be adequate insurance and the necessary permits.

(d) Standard health and safety procedures:

- In case of emergencies, leaders and helpers should know the location of the nearest telephone, of fire extinguishers and alarms and how to use them, and how to evacuate using the emergency exits.
- Any premises used are to be safe and well maintained (for example, leaders should check that fire extinguishers have been inspected within the last year)
- An incident log should be maintained for all group activities. The leader should ensure that any accident, or incident which causes concern, is recorded. This log should include the date and details of the accident or incident, the names of those involved, the action taken, and any future action required.

(e) Additional considerations for activities organised away from the normal meeting place:

- The ratio of helpers to children should be 1:5.
- A signed consent form must also be obtained from the child's parent/guardian/carer.
- The leader must ensure that someone else knows where the group is and how to make contact.

III) PRECAUTIONS WHEN AN EX-OFFENDER WISHES TO TAKE PART IN CHURCH SERVICES:

Our prime concern is with the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, but we must also offer pastoral care to the ex-offender. A contract must be agreed with the ex-offender which may detail requirements such as only visiting church at service times, not taking any role of authority, not being involved with any groups or activities likely to have children present, attending only at certain services etc, or taking part in services at another church. The Priest and Safeguarding Representative will discuss this with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

Under NO circumstances should a persona found guilty of any offenses against children have further access to them. In accordance with the paramountcy principle, the same exclusion must also apply where there is any reasonable cause to believe an adult has committed offenses against children, even if not convicted by a criminal court.

5. SPECIFIC GUIDANCE ON VULNERABLE ADULT SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Where Eucharistic Ministers (and other Parish Volunteers) go out into the community to bring support and succour to parishioners in their own homes (or in the care of others), they need to take special care to ensure the safety of vulnerable adults they may encounter.

As with children, we as a Parish need to take extra care over how we safeguard parishioners who by age or infirmity are themselves vulnerable, and indeed how we safeguard ourselves. This process is a necessary one if we are to give credibility and security to our community as a whole.

WHO IS VULNERABLE?

Any adult who may not be best able to make their own decisions, or stand up for their own interests. This includes adults who are infirm, either physically or mentally, through ill health or advancing years. It includes those who are healthy but due to age (or mental ability) may not be up to resisting the will of others, or who may be unduly influenced by pressure from others.

WHAT ABUSE MAY THEY BE EXPOSED TO?

- Physical abuse Assault (evidence of bruising, unexplained injuries, deprivation of necessities)
- Mental abuse
- Harrassment (undue pressure – not necessarily unfriendly)
- Financial abuse (undue gifts, bequests, denial of funds)

WHO COULD BE THE ABUSER?

- a) the Eucharistic Minister
- b) the person's family / friends
- c) care workers / supporters / other workers visiting the vulnerable person

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

- We can protect the community by checking the Eucharistic Ministers
- Eucharistic ministers must operate according to safe working practices
- Eucharistic ministers must pass on concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Team if they ever suspect abuse may be occurring. Eucharistic ministers (and Volunteers) who go out into the community are checked through the national Disclosure Barring Service (DBS), in line with most other voluntary groups and bodies across the country. It is a safeguard for the children / vulnerable adults in our care, but also for themselves too – in the knowledge that they have a certificate of good character, and are following the Parish guidelines of safe working practices

SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

- Be aware – these things DO happen
- Look out for signs of assault; (Unexplained bruising, difficulty in walking / moving, unusual reticence)
- Do relatives / others not want you to be on your own with the person? Why?
- Do not accept gifts (except things of only a token value)
- Tell a member of the Parish Safeguarding Team if you do accept something – the person may later allege that the item has been stolen (albeit in good faith – failing memory)
- Do not agree to advise / be a recipient of any legacy in a will – you MUST tell the Parish Safeguarding Team if you suspect this could become a possibility
- Never promise not to tell anyone what you are told – you must say you will tell the Parish Safeguarding Representative but that it will be confidential
- Consider – are you best on your own? (Male / female mix? Mental state, valuable items in house)
- Any concern MUST be mentioned to team, even if it is just a suspicion – it may protect someone else, including other Eucharistic Ministers!
- If in any doubt talk to your Parish Safeguarding Representative!

DISCLOSURE

If a parishioner wants to share concerns about a possible abuse:

- Remain calm, don't express surprise, disapproval or disbelief
- Be sympathetic
- Reassure the person – they have done right in telling you, you are treating it seriously, its not their fault
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Do not contact the alleged abuser / witnesses
- Tell one member of the Parish Safeguarding Team immediately, even if you are not sure how serious / genuine your fear is
- Don't discuss with other Eucharistic ministers

6. INITIAL CONTACT: ACTIONS UPON RECEIPT OF INFORMATION

(Applicable to ALL ROLES, but except in very urgent cases these actions will only be undertaken upon the direction of the Parish Safeguarding Team who will seek advice from Social Services, Diocese Safeguarding or other agencies as needed)

KEY PRINCIPLES

If any person reasonably suspects that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being, has been or is likely to be abused, they must take action (see Initial Contact). To do nothing is never an option. The actions of those who first handle allegations and concerns are most important. They will sometimes dictate the effectiveness of a subsequent enquiry.

Under no circumstances should the alleged abuser be alerted at this stage, whether directly or indirectly. Important evidence may be lost. If an enquiry is frustrated at this early stage, the result will be the failure to acquire sufficient information upon which to base decisions to protect children, young people or vulnerable adults from harm.

The aim of the process which follows is to reach a point where the fullest possible information has been gathered. Formal investigations will be carried out by the Police or Social Services.

The guiding principles for any person in receipt of information about a concern or an allegation should be:

- 1. LISTEN**
- 2. RECORD**
- 3. REFER**

Sometimes information will be in the form of observations made by the person recording the allegation or concern.

GENERAL PROCEDURE

LISTEN

The following is GUIDANCE about listening to those who give information about child, young person or vulnerable adult abuse.

- Where information is given in person, listen and accept what is said seriously.
- Do not prejudge, rationalise, dismiss or minimise.
- Do not make judgemental statements about any person involved.
- Be aware that a person's ability to recount his or her concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, nationality and upon any disability which may affect use of language and range of vocabulary.
- Do not suggest words, but use theirs.
- Adopt a listening style which is compassionate, calm and reassuring.
- If the information given to you shocks, disgusts or distresses you, do not allow these feelings to show. If you do, you may inadvertently dissuade the person from giving any further information.
- Avoid statements about your belief or otherwise of the information given. Use phrases like "I will take what you say seriously."
- Never promise total confidentiality. If this is proposed as a condition of giving information about possible child abuse, such confidence must be refused.
 - Ask an adult: "In whose best interests is it to keep this secret?"
 - Explain to a child: "I will only tell people whose job it is to keep children safe."
- Do not make any promises about future events. Explain what will happen next (see REFER section below.)
- Indicate who will be made aware of the information which has been given by them.
- Leave contact details of yourself and any other appropriate person in case the referrer needs to ask questions later.
- An adult who provides information should be encouraged to share their information, where appropriate, with the Statutory Authorities. Support should be offered in doing so. Where this is refused, explain that you will have to report the matter on his or her behalf and give reasons.
- If those who give information ask if it is possible to remain anonymous, explain that this may affect how seriously information is taken by the Statutory Authorities and what use may be made of it. Such Authorities will respect a request that the identity of an informant be kept confidential, but cannot guarantee that other parties will not deduce it in the course of an investigation.

RECORD

Whenever possible and practical, take notes during the conversation. Always ask permission to do this and explain the importance of recording all information. Where it is not appropriate to make notes at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards and in any case before the end of the day. Download a blank reporting form from CSAS Website (Form Library - R Alleg 1) <http://www.csasprocedures.uk.net/chapters/forms.html>

This initial recording will form the first entry in a file of information about the case which will be retained by the Diocese Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

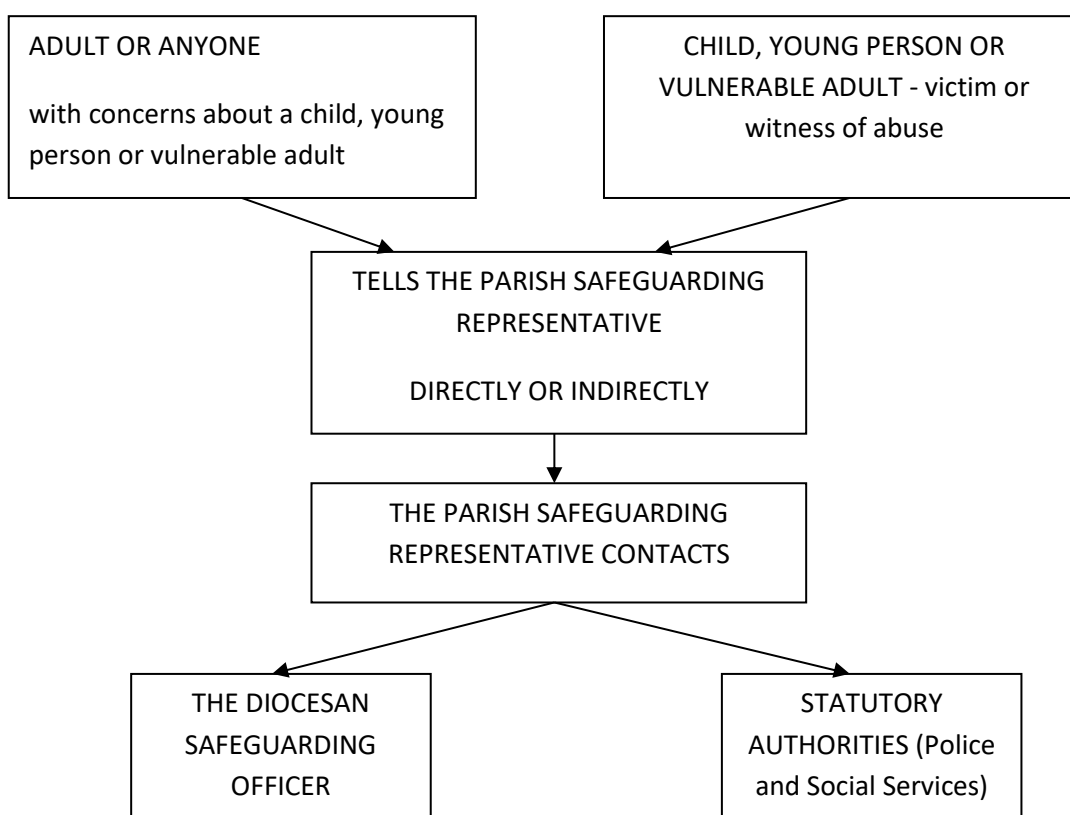
- Record the time, date, location (or e.g. by letter, by telephone) and persons present. The record should be signed and dated by the author.
- Your record must use direct speech wherever possible with actual words used.
- Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of words used.
- Do not be selective. Include detail which to you may seem irrelevant. It may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation.
- Include information about the circumstance of the referral, observations made and any background information which is considered relevant.
- Opinion may be included, though it must be specified as such.
- Maintain a log of actions on the reporting form and record times, dates, names and contact details of persons spoken to and any advice received or agreement reached.
- It is important to include full details of referrals to Police or Social Services. All original records, including rough notes, will be passed (by the Parish Safeguarding Team) by noon the next working day to the Diocese Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- Records must be kept secure and confidential and will not be copied unless strictly necessary for child protection purposes.

REFER

(See CSAS website flowchart)

The overriding principle of referral is as follows: “If somebody believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, then s/he should always refer his or her concerns to the local authority social services department. In addition to the social services department, the Police and the NSPCC have powers to intervene in these circumstances.” – **But, except in emergency, first contact the Parish Safeguarding Team.** “Significant harm” is not defined. Sexual abuse is always regarded as such. For other forms of abuse, advice should be sought from the Diocese Safeguarding Co-ordinator where there is any doubt.

The chart below illustrates the normal process in Our Lady of Loreto and St Winefride’s Parish when a child, a young person or a vulnerable adult discloses concern about abuse.



Social Services Departments have a duty under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, to investigate “*where there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm*”.

7. URGENT ACTION, RECORDING AND CONFIDENTIALITY IN AN EMERGENCY

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of immediate harm, is physically injured or it is thought that sexual abuse has occurred within the last 24 hours, contact Police and Social Services immediately, giving full information. There should be staff available from either agency who can respond at any time of day or night.

Seek medical help where necessary. Give medical staff relevant information about the allegation or concern.

Contact the Parish Safeguarding Team at first opportunity.

RECORDING

In all cases a record must be made of the incident / suspicion including all actions taken, adding time, date and signature, The report must be passed immediately to a member of the Parish Safeguarding Team (who will manage referral to other bodies) as soon as possible and in any case by noon the next working day and must be kept securely and confidentially.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

All information connected with a child protection enquiry is confidential within the multiagency network. No information should be shared with any person who does not need to know for the purposes of protecting children and facilitating the conducting of an effective investigation.

If an alleged abuser wishes to be informed of information held about him or her in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act or their Human Rights, explain that you are not permitted to comply with their request at this stage and refer them to the Diocese Safeguarding Co-ordinator (see below).

The law allows particular information to be withheld from the subject of such information for the prevention and detection of crime.

The (Parish or) Diocese Safeguarding Co-ordinator will record full details of all decisions regarding information-sharing, giving reasons in the log of actions for inclusion in the case file. In this way, any later challenges may be answered.

The welfare of the child is paramount. Children, as well as adults, have human rights.

Those with whom information may be shared include:

- Police
- Social Services or NSPCC
- Other statutory agencies, e.g. Health, Education
- Local CP Representative
- Diocese Safeguarding Co-ordinator or member of CP Commission
- Bishop or Congregation Leader
- CSAS professional staff

All of whom are required to keep information confidential within the boundaries of interagency professional confidentiality.

Other, such as the parish Priest or Pastoral Link Person may need to be given information, but not at this initial stage.

Consider:

- Does the person NEED to know the information?
- Does the person need to know ALL the information?
- Does the person need to know the information NOW?

Record what information has been provided and to whom, with reasons.