

THE FIRST ORDER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS
EUROPEAN PROVINCE

GUIDELINES Number 5B

THE SOCIETY OF SAINT FRANCIS (the Brothers of the First Order) - Charity Registration Number: 236464

THE COMMUNITY OF SAINT FRANCIS (the Sisters of the First Order) - Charity Registration Number: 286615

Safeguarding Policy¹

1. Safeguarding Policy of the Church of England

Every human being has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore to protect them from harm.

2. Safeguarding Principles

- a) The First Order of the Society of Saint Francis works in partnership with the Church of England in the area of safeguarding. We are committed to upholding the current policy statements and practice guidance of the Church of England, all of which can be found at: www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-practice-guidance. The most relevant are as follows:
 - i. *Promoting a Safe Church* (safeguarding policy for adults), 2006;
 - ii. *Responding well to Domestic Abuse Practice Guidance*, 2017;
 - iii. *Protecting All God's Children* (safeguarding policy for children and young people), 4th edition 2010;
 - iv. *Responding Well to those who have been sexually abused*, 2011;
 - v. *Safer Recruitment Practice Guidance*, 2016;
 - vi. *Practice Guidance: Safeguarding in Religious Communities*, 2015;
 - vii. *Promoting a Safer Church: House of Bishops Policy Statement*, 2017
 - viii. *Safeguarding in Religious Communities: House of Bishops Safeguarding Guidance*, 2020

- b) These policies need to be slightly adapted to make allowance for the differences between a church parish or a Religious Community within one particular diocese and the First Order of the Society of

¹ Adapted from Appendix I Local Model Safeguarding Policy of *Practice Guidance: Safeguarding in Religious Communities* 2015

Saint Francis, European Province, with houses in several dioceses within the Church of England. The First Order has placed itself under the umbrella of the Diocese of Southwark, with regard to safeguarding, it being the diocese of the current Bishop Protector. Upon the appointment of a new Bishop Protector other arrangements will need to be instituted to manage Provincial safeguarding matters.

- c) These policies apply both internally within the First Order, to brothers and sisters, including those on Leave of Absence, and those living with the Community in its houses, guests, volunteers and employees and externally regarding the ministries and pastoral work of its brothers and sisters.
- d) We will ensure that these policies are effectively implemented. This will include the provision of regular Safeguarding training:
 - i. Providing training as part of the initial formation programme for new members;
 - ii. Using the Church of England national online Safeguarding training modules to provide basic training for all brothers and sisters. We can access these either through our own parish/diocese structures or through the Cofe portal: <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/> We will encourage and recommend the use of further training opportunities in local dioceses. Sisters and brothers will be required to take a refresher /further training course every 3 years.
 - iii. Records will be kept of all courses completed.
- e) At the Candlemas Chapter every year, each Chapter shall appoint or re-appoint a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) who is required to have safeguarding training to the Level set by the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team.
- f) All safeguarding records shall be kept indefinitely.

3. **We are committed to:**

- a) The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry for all: children, young people and adults;
- b) The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and all vulnerable adults;
- c) The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and where they can find support and best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

4. **To this end:**

- a) We will ensure that all our members and, where appropriate, those living and working with us have been checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service. Each brother/sister must have a Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Certificate. This certificate, wherever possible, will be registered with the Disclosure and Barring online Updating Service, which will make it 'transportable'. Where the Certificate is not registered with the Disclosure and Barring online Updating Service, it must be renewed every 4 years.
- b) We will ensure that all our members and, where appropriate, those living and working with us have received Safeguarding training as described in 2 d) above. Additionally, a refresher will be provided 'in house' at least annually.
- c) Each year the Joint meeting of the Provincial Chapters shall appoint a Safeguarding Sub-committee consisting of the DSP's, the Ministers' Provincial and another, who is the liaison officer with the Insurance company (currently the Provincial Bursar SSF). This Committee has the responsibility for dealing with allegations and complaints and monitoring changes according to the policies and practice guidance of the Church of England. Extracted information regarding allegations and complaints shall be shared with the appropriate Chapter and the Charity Commission.
- d) Each House will have an appointed Safeguarding Person (SP). Any incident or suspicion of abuse should initially be reported to this person, who immediately informs the DSP. The names of the appointed Safeguarding Persons will be declared each year at the Joint Meeting of the Provincial Chapters and included in the Minutes of that meeting.
- e) Ultimate responsibility for all safeguarding matters is held by the Provincial Chapters as trustees of their respective charity.

5. **Taking Action**

- a) We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that any vulnerable adult, child or young person for whom we are responsible or with whom we have had contact, may have been harmed.
- b) All allegations and complaints shall be notified, without delay, to the DSP who immediately informs the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser of Southwark Diocese (DSA) and all members of the Safeguarding sub-Committee and after consultation appropriate action will be taken.
- c) If we suspect that a child or adult is at significant risk of neglect and/or abuse or it appears that a crime may be being committed

- we will report our concerns immediately to the SP who informs the DSP who consults the Safeguarding sub-Committee. The DSA must be consulted about appropriate action. The situation may need to be reported to local social services or the police.
- d) The SP of the House concerned will keep a written record of what has been said and done in responding to a complaint or suspicion of abuse. This record will be kept in a safe place and a copy will also be sent to the DSP of the Community involved and made available to the Safeguarding sub-Committee.
 - e) If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of the Community, including a member on Leave of Absence, someone living in a Community house, or a guest, a volunteer or an employee, the person against whom the allegation has been made will be withdrawn from all contact with the child or children, or adults concerned, and any other vulnerable people, while a full enquiry is conducted. The DSP must inform the DSA who shall inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser of the diocese in which the offence is alleged to have been committed. The Safeguarding sub-Committee must be kept informed. The Bishop Protector must also be informed.
 - f) We will fully cooperate with the statutory agencies in any investigation following a complaint or an allegation concerning a member of the Community or a person living with us. If the safeguarding policy is not appropriate, the *Procedure for Formal Complaints: Guidelines 5E*, wherever this policy does not lay down a process.
 - g) We will comply with the condition of Public Liability insurance policy that any incident or allegation is notified to the insurer immediately that is possible.²
 - h) We will take advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser on reporting 'serious incidents' to the Charity Commission.³
 - i) We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and/or isolation.
 - j) We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further abuse

² *Practice Guidance: Safeguarding in Religious Communities 2015 §9*

³ Identifying and Reporting Safeguarding Serious Incidents to the Charity Commission: Guidance forand Religious Communities, 2019

- k) We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of respect and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.
- l) We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our Community, including one on Leave of Absence, a person living in a Community house, or a guest, a volunteer or an employee known to have offended or is alleged to have offended against a child, or vulnerable adult.
- m) The Ministers Provincial are responsible for ensuring that this policy is being carried out.
- n) The Safeguarding sub-Committee will report annually to the Joint Meeting of the Provincial Chapters.

6. **Authorisation of Ministries**

- a) Brothers and sisters exercise a variety of ministries and some of these liturgical, pastoral or catechetical ministries are carried out publically in the name of the Church.
- b) Any brother/sister who performs such ministries is required to hold the appropriate permission according to the policy of the diocese in which they minister.
- c) Each ordained brother/sister will obtain the appropriate licence/permission to officiate as a priest/deacon from the bishop of the diocese in which they minister.
- d) All ministries require our adherence to the relevant safeguarding standards. The members of each house must ensure that these standards are maintained and that others living with the Community in its houses, guests, volunteers and employees are aware of them and practice them.

Our *Procedure for Formal Complaints*⁴, *Bullying and Harassment Policy*⁵, and *Whistle-blowing*⁶ can be found at the references below.

⁴ SSF Guidelines Number 5E

⁵ SSF Guidelines Number 5C

⁶ SSF Guidelines Number 5D

Our Community **Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)** is:

For SSF: Br Martin John SSF

Email: martinjohnssf@franciscans.org.uk

Tel: 01299 896 345

For CSF: Sr Maureen CSF

Email: maureenssf@franciscans.org.uk

Tel: 01526 321115

The Southwark Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is:

Moira Murray

Email: moira.murray@southwark.anglican.org

Tel: 020 7939 9423 or mob: 07982 279713

Out of hours number for safeguarding emergencies: 020 3874 6743

This Safeguarding Policy was adopted by the Joint meeting of the Community of St Francis European Provincial Chapter and Society of St Francis European Provincial Chapter meeting by Zoom, on 7 June 2021. It will next be reviewed in **one years' time**.

Signed:

.....

Sr Sue CSF
(Minister Provincial CSF)

Br Benedict SSF
(Minister Provincial SSF)

Date: