

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures



**The Union of the Presentation Sisters
Of the
Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

English Province Policy June 2023

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Introduction

The Catholic Church and its individual members will undertake appropriate steps to maintain a safe environment for all, by practicing fully and positively Christ's ministry towards children, young people and adults and responding sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help them keep safe from harm.

This is demonstrated by the provision of carefully planned activities for children, young people and adults, caring for those by abuse and ministering to robustly managing those who have caused them.

The Catholic Church of England and Wales, the Bishops and Religious Congregational Leaders are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church and affirm a 'One Church' approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk through the promotion of a sustained culture of constant vigilance.

The 'best interests' or 'paramount chief principle,' which underpins and is enshrined in child and adult protection legislation, shall be the primary consideration in all matters of safeguarding.

This 'One Church' approach should also be adopted by lay associates of the faithful ministering to children and adults at risk in the name of the Catholic Church.

With Jesus as our model, in his defence of minorities and the oppressed, it is important that the church embraces all individuals with a spirit of love, tolerance and without discrimination.

All should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, race, ethnicity, religious and political beliefs, health, immigration and social status and cultural identity.

Policy Statement

We, the Presentation Sisters in England, are committed to safeguarding and promoting good practice in ministry by all our sisters, staff, associates and volunteers at all times. We consider the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults to be paramount.

We recognise the personal dignity, uniqueness and rights of all children, young people and vulnerable adults towards whom we have a special responsibility and a duty of care.

We believe that all have an equal right to protection from abuse and to live free from harm and we undertake to do all in our power to create a safe environment for all to prevent abuse and neglect.

We will liaise closely with Statutory Agencies to ensure that any allegations of abuse of those in our care are promptly and fairly dealt with.

We will support victims of abuse who are in our care. We will also give support to staff and sisters against whom allegations are made.

We will enable all our sisters, staff and volunteers to make informed and confident decisions regarding safeguarding. We expect everyone to sign that they have read, understood and adhere to the English Province Safeguarding Policy and related Procedures.



Sr. Eileen Keating PBVM
Province Leader:

Date: June 2023

Approved by the Trustees:

Date:

Approved by the Congregational Leadership: Date:

To be revised in:

Date: June 2025

Our Policy

We the Presentation Sisters of the English Province will take every reasonable step to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are protected from harm.

Our policy is intended to inform as well as to offer important practical guidance to all our sisters and staff who are in any way responsible for children, young people or adults at risk.

It should raise awareness among us of the importance of:

- Creating a safe, caring and loving environment at all times
- Putting procedures in place aimed at preventing any form of abuse
- Making a considered response should abuse of any kind be brought to our attention
- Fostering a culture of safeguarding

Consequently, the procedures for good practice which we follow are in conformity with those of the Catholic Church and Statutory Services in this Country. These provide the necessary framework for those who exercise ministry involving any work with children, young people and adults at risk. This enables them to carry out these ministries with confidence.

We will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting this policy and adhering to our procedures and the standards of behaviour as outlined in 'Integrity of Ministry, 2015' and in 'Caring Safely for Others, Pastoral Standards and Safe Conduct in Ministry' 2021
- Recruiting all sisters, staff and volunteers safely by ensuring all necessary checks are undertaken.
- Sharing information about safeguarding with statutory agencies where appropriate
- Providing effective oversight and management of sisters, staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Ensuring that all sisters, staff and volunteers adhere to this safeguarding policy and procedure.
- Provide those working with children, young persons and adults at risk with overreaching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

Key Principles: Children

The Catholic Church in England and Wales embraces its role in supporting children to achieve their full potential in an environment where they are protected from exploitation, abuse and maltreatment.

All adults within the Church have a responsibility to act and intervene when it appears that children need to be made safe from harm, whether the risk of harm is Neglect, Sexual Abuse, Physical Abuse or Emotional Abuse.

The Church will act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with Children's Social Care Services, the Police, Health Agencies, Probation Providers and other agencies to safeguard children and assist in bringing to justice anyone acting in the name of the Church who has committed an offence against a child.

Anyone who brings concerns or allegations to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully and seriously. All concerns and allegations will be dealt with within the national procedures and in a timely manner.

The Church is fully committed to acting within the guidance as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015, and acknowledges that the Church must work in partnership with other agencies and not act alone.

Key Principles: Adults at Risk

The Catholic Church in England and Wales is fully committed to work in relation to adults, who may be at risk of abuse and maltreatment. The Church will:

- Work actively and constructively within the framework set out in the Care Act 2014 AND Social services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014 and with associated statutory and good practice guidance:
- Recognise that everyone has the right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse
- Recognise that adults have the right to be protected from harm and exploitation
- Recognise that adults have the right to independence that involves a degree of risk; and act in an open and transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with Adult Social Care Services, the Police, Health Agencies and other agencies to

safeguard and assist in bringing to justice anyone acting in the name of the Church who has committed an offence against an adult.

- Recognise that an Adult at Risk is any adult (aged 18 or over) who:
Has care and support needs (these include health needs) and is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect and or harm, and is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

Legal Framework/ Safeguarding Guidelines

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

Children Act 1989

United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991

General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679

Human Rights Act 1998

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Children Act 2004

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Children and Families Act 2014

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice for 0 to 25 years

Statutory Guidance 2014 Information sharing

Advice for Practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2015

Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to Interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2015

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015

(ref: www.dh.gov.uk/en/publications)

The Nolan Report – A Programme for Action 2001 (Ref: www.nolanreview.org.uk)

The Cumberlege Commission Report. Safeguard with Confidence 2007

(ref: www.cumberlegecommission.org.uk)

CSAS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures 2011/2018 Ref: www.cscprocedures.org.net

Creating a Safe Environment

Statement of Principles

'Being loved and kept safe go to the very heart of the Church's ministry to children & vulnerable adults' (Safeguarding with Confidence – The Cumberlege Commission Report, 2007)

Every human being has a value and dignity which, we as Catholics, recognise as coming directly from God's creation of male and female in his own image and likeness. Our parishes and communities must be a place of welcome, where each person is respected and loved, and in which everyone receives and shares their unique gifts.

Parishes must be communities where we support and protect each other and we must take care of those who may be vulnerable because of age, illness or disability or who may be vulnerable because of current or past life experiences.

Everyone in the Church has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of those who worship in our Church or who join us for any activity facilitated by church members.

When Church activities are organised well, with regard for safety and wellbeing of all, we reduce the risk of avoidable harm to all participants and create spaces of true welcome in which relationships which are respectful and enriching can develop.

Guidelines for working with children

A checklist for best practice: Working safely with children: Be caring yet careful. We will do this by:

- Being aware and using ethical principles in ministry
- On-going training
- Minimizing situations where abuse of children and adults at risk may occur
- Promoting Safe Recruitment Procedures
- Having leaders and helpers of the same gender as the children and young people when working with them.
- Having two adults present with a group. In groups of more than 20 there should be one additional leader for every extra 10 (or part of 10) children and young people over 5 years of age.
- Activities away from home having a ratio of helpers not less 1: 7
- Arranging as far as possible that no adult should be left alone with a child or young person where there is little opportunity of their activity being observed by others.

Where adults and children meet one to one, the meeting should take place where they may be seen by others.

- Ensuring that all workers with children or young people do not meet them outside the normal programme or time-table or off the premises without a parent or other adult being present. A group of children or young people should never be taken off the premises without at least two adults being present.
- Ensuring that all premises are safe and especially that all access points are well lit and supervised.
- Ensuring that when transporting children and young people, there is always more than one adult in the vehicle and the driver has the correct and proper insurance cover required for this task.
- Ensuring that all consent forms are distributed and completed by the parents/carers of the children attending activities/events
- Ensuring that any child or young person with special needs is taking into consideration when planning and organising any activity or event.

Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments are an integral part of creating safe environments. A risk assessment is the written evaluation of what might cause harm to people and the steps being taken to prevent harm.

When planning activities, a risk assessment for the activity should be completed and brought to the attention of all leaders, who should also be made aware of their areas of responsibility, relevant health and safety procedures and safeguarding procedures. If off-site, the risk assessment should travel with the group.

Risk assessments should be completed by somebody with the requisite knowledge and skills, during the planning stage of an activity or event, and approved by the event leader.

Safer Recruitment Procedures

It is a requirement of the State and endorsed by the Catholic Church that all who have regular contact with children, young people and adults at risk should be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check. This applies to all Sisters, Staff and Volunteers. All National Policy and Procedures apply to any post holder whether they are sisters, staff or volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk.

The recruitment and selection process is detailed in the CSSA Procedure Manual which is available on the CSSA Website.

Appointments will be made on the basis of the person's experience, skills and ability to meet the set criteria and job specification for the specific role. It is essential to ensure that all documentation relating to the applicants are kept in a secure place and are confidential. The National Whistleblowing policy and procedures has been updated and is included to clarify the types of matters that can be considered under whistleblowing and reporting lines.

Responding to Allegations

Key Principles

- If any person reasonably suspects that a child, young person or adult at risk is being, has been or is likely to be abused, they must take action. To do nothing is not an option
- The actions of those who first handle allegations and concerns are most important. They could dictate the effectiveness of a subsequent enquiry.
- Under no circumstances should the alleged abuser be alerted at this stage, either directly or indirectly. Important evidence may be lost.

The guiding principle for any person in receipt of information about a concern or allegation must be:

- 1. Listen**
- 2. Record**
- 3. Refer**

In An Emergency Act At Once

If a child is in distress from a physical injury seek medical attention immediately. Phone for an ambulance and tell the medical services what the child has told you or of any suspicions you may have. Remember anything that the child says and record this as soon as possible. If you are advised to take the child to the hospital ensure that you have an escort with you.

Do not delay. Do not confront the person who is alleged to be responsible for the abuse. Record any observations and keep an account of what you have been told by staff or the child or young person. These records must be accurate and factual. It is not your role to investigate- concentrate on presenting the information clearly. Pass on the information to the appropriate person to whom you should report the matter.

Talking about abuse

If a child, young person or adult at risk wants to talk about abuse you should:

- Accept what the child/ young person/adult at risk, keeping calm and looking at them directly from time to time.
- Never push for information.
- Avoid asking questions.
- Let the person talk.
- Reassure the child or young person/adult at risk they were right to tell you.
- Let the child or young person/adult at risk know what you are going to do next and that you need to tell someone else.
- Make notes as soon as possible writing down exactly what was said and when s/he said it.
- Record dates and times of these events and keep the hand-written record even if these are subsequently typed, for an indefinite period.

If it is considered that the person making the disclosure is likely to be at risk returning home, immediate contact should be made with the Social Services or the Police.

(All above is relevant in the case of vulnerable adults)

Procedure for Responding to Allegations

1. Listen:

Where information is given in person, listen and accept what is said seriously. Do not pre-judge, rationalise, dismiss or minimise. Do not make judgemental statements about any person involved.

- A Sister or staff member who receives an allegation listens carefully to what is said, asks for a name and contact telephone details and assures the person that the concern will be attended to as soon as possible
- Do not promise total confidentiality, if this is proposed as a condition of giving information about possible abuse, such confidence must be refused.
- Explain what will happen next. Indicate those who will be made aware of the information which has been given by them. Do not make promises about future events.

- 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 the information, where appropriate with the Statutory Authorities. Support should be offered in doing so. If they refuse explain that you will have to take advice from the Religious safeguarding Representative.
- Do not attempt to investigate the allegation.

2. Record

Whenever possible and practical, take notes during the conversation. Always ask permission to do this and explain the importance of recording all information. If it is not appropriate, make a written record as soon as is possible afterwards. If possible by the end of the day;

- The written record should be signed and dated by the author
- The persons own words should be used. It is important to include full details of referrals to Police or Social care Agencies
- All original records, including rough notes should be passed to the Religious Safeguarding Representative
- Refer the matter to the Religious Safeguarding Representative for the Province.

3. Refer

The overriding principle of referral is as follows. If someone believes that a child, young person or adult at risk may be suffering, or may be at the risk of suffering significant harm, then he/ she should always refer his or her concerns to the Local Authority Social Services Department. In addition to the social care agencies, the Police have the power to intervene in these circumstances.

Enquiries into allegations of child abuse

All allegations of child abuse involving Religious Sisters, Staff or volunteers must be reported.

On receipt of the allegation, disclosure or complaint, the following procedure should be used:

- The Provincial will inform the Religious Safeguarding Representative for the Order/Congregation.
- The Religious Safeguarding Lead will inform the Safeguarding Commission and where required, the Religious Life Safeguarding Service. Both will establish a confidential file and seek to compile in it as much information about the complaint/disclosure as possible.
- The file will form the basis as to the next stage of the enquiry.
- The relevant Statutory Agencies will be informed of the nature of the allegation/disclosure.
- In the case of an allegation, Social Services and /or the Police (**not** the Chair or Members of the Safeguarding Commission) will normally interview the accused and/or victim.

Where an allegation has been made and the matter has been referred to the Children's Social Care Services/Adult Social Care Services, it will be necessary to consider what action should be taken to safeguard any child or adults who may be at risk from the adult.

Children's Social Care Services/Adult Social Care Services and the Police will make any recommendations about the action that should be taken and the timing thereof (see flowchart for Persons in a Position of Trust, Appendix B).

A temporary removal from post may be necessary while enquiries take place. **This action does not imply guilt.** It facilitates the progress of the enquiries and reduces possible risks to children pending further enquiries.

Clergy and Religious may have a temporary withdrawal from active Ministry. Such a decision will be taken by the Bishop or Congregational Leader following recommendations by the Religious Life Safeguarding Service, via the Safeguarding Commission.

Where the accused is subject to a separate formal procedure, as is the case for teachers, that procedure will take precedence.

In any event the Religious Life Safeguarding Service will liaise with the relevant Statutory Agencies where there are concerns for the welfare of children.

It is vital that all sisters, staff and volunteers be alert to signs of child and adult abuse. They may be alerted by:

- Noticing signs and symptoms of abuse in the child/adult at risk e.g. bruising, withdrawal.
- A child/adult at risk reporting or showing signs of having been mistreated.
- Allegations made by another person.
- An admission or 'cry for help' from someone who says they are harming a child.

Important to note:

- Children, young people and adults at risk may be suffering from abuse, which has taken place in the past as well as current abuse.
- Abuse is always wrong.
- Abuse is never the child, young persons or adult at risk's fault.

The 'Children-management of allegations and concerns policy and procedure' has had the following paragraph added to p4.

'All images that appear to be indecent, semi-nude or abusive (photographic, digital or other medium) must always be given to the police to determine whether or not they are of children and whether or not an offence has been committed. A decision must not be taken by the Church.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Religious Safeguarding Lead

She is accountable to and supportive of the Congregational Leader in the implementation of all Child and Adult Protection Policies for the Congregation. She assists in the creation of best practice in the prevention of and response to abuse of children and adults at risk.

She should attend training sessions and have a sound knowledge and understanding of the National Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in this country. She has the responsibility for facilitating the DBS procedures within the Congregation and ensuring that everybody who is required to go through a DBS procedure does so.

When made aware of an allegation and or concerns:

- She will inform the Province Leader as a matter of urgency.
- She will report the allegation to the appropriate authorities, the Police and or the Social Services.
- She will advise the Trustees to Inform the Insurance Company, Legal Representative and the Charity Commission (if appropriate at this stage).
- She may be required on occasions to attend a Strategy Meeting to represent the Congregation.
- She will Inform the Safeguarding Co-ordinator on the relevant Commission of the allegation and seek their advice and support.
- She may be required to prepare a Report and attend a Commission Meeting
- She will record all actions taken including those of third parties and maintain a case file.

Role and Responsibilities of The Province Leader

The Provincial has overall pastoral responsibility for her Congregation. Through the Trustees, she delegates the implementation of National Safeguarding Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in England and Wales to the Religious Safeguarding Lead. She seeks the advice of the Safeguarding Commission through the Safeguarding Coordinator on safeguarding issues, in particular when allegations have been made against a person in her responsibility as Province Leader. The Safeguarding Commission on receipt of the information will make appropriate recommendations to the Provincial and the Trustees.

The Trustees

The Trustees of the Charity are ultimately responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, their Charity can do so safely.

The Trustees have a responsibility and a duty to ensure that there is an appropriate Safeguarding Policy in place, which is updated regularly and implemented fully. They have a duty to report to the Charity Commission any serious incident which could adversely affect the Charity's financial position, work, beneficiaries and or reputation of the Charity. They are also responsible to ensure that Insurers are informed of any incidents that could affect the Charity.

Contact Details:

Provincial:

Sr. Eileen Keating,
Presentation Provincialate,
Chesterfield Road,
Matlock, DE4 3PT
Email: eprov@pbvmengland.co.uk

Safeguarding Lead:

Cath Taylor
E mail:cathtaylor11@gmail.com
Mobile: 07530595535

DBS Coordinator:

Sr. Helen Burke
Presentation Convent,
60 Coventry Road,
Market Harborough,
LE16 9BZ
Email: burkeheleneileen@yahoo.co.uk

Appendix A: Definitions

Child Abuse

Abuse of a child may occur when somebody inflicts harm on the child or fails to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger.

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/guardian/carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child/adult at risk from physical harm or danger, or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child/adult at risks basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child/adult at risk. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/guardian/carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child/adult at risk. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy, or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Sexual Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child/adult at risk so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It includes sarcasm, degrading punishments, threats and not giving love and affection, which can have adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of a child/adult at risk. It may involve conveying to a child/adult at risk that s/he is worthless, unloved inadequate or valued insofar as s/he meets the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child/adult at risk. It may involve causing a child/adult at risk frequently to feel frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child/adult at risk, though it may occur alone.

It is vital that all sisters, staff and volunteers be alert to signs of abuse of children and adults at risk..

They may be alerted by:

- Noticing signs and symptoms of abuse in the child/adult at risk e.g. bruising, withdrawal
- A child/adult at risk reporting or showing signs of having been mistreated
- Allegations made by another person
- An admission or 'cry for help' from someone who says they are harming a child/adult at risk.

Important to note

- Children, young people and adults at risk may be suffering from abuse which has taken place in the past as well as current abuse.
- Abuse is always wrong
- Abuse is never the child/adult at risk's fault

Adults at Risk

Recognise that an Adult at Risk is any adult (aged 18 or over) who:

- Has care and support needs (these include health needs) and is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect and or harm, and is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs

Active Ministry

Those Clergy and Religious (both men and women) who are currently working with the general public in any capacity whatever, whether paid or voluntary.

APPENDIX B: RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS

What to do if you are worried about a child or adult at risk

Observations



Concerns



Allegations



1. Reassure the child/adult (if present)

2. Is the child/adult in immediate danger or risk?

Yes

Immediately contact
Social Care, Police or
Designated Officer

Contact the Provincial, Safeguarding Lead and RLSS

Take notes and pass on
Within 1 day
Form CM1
A record will be kept

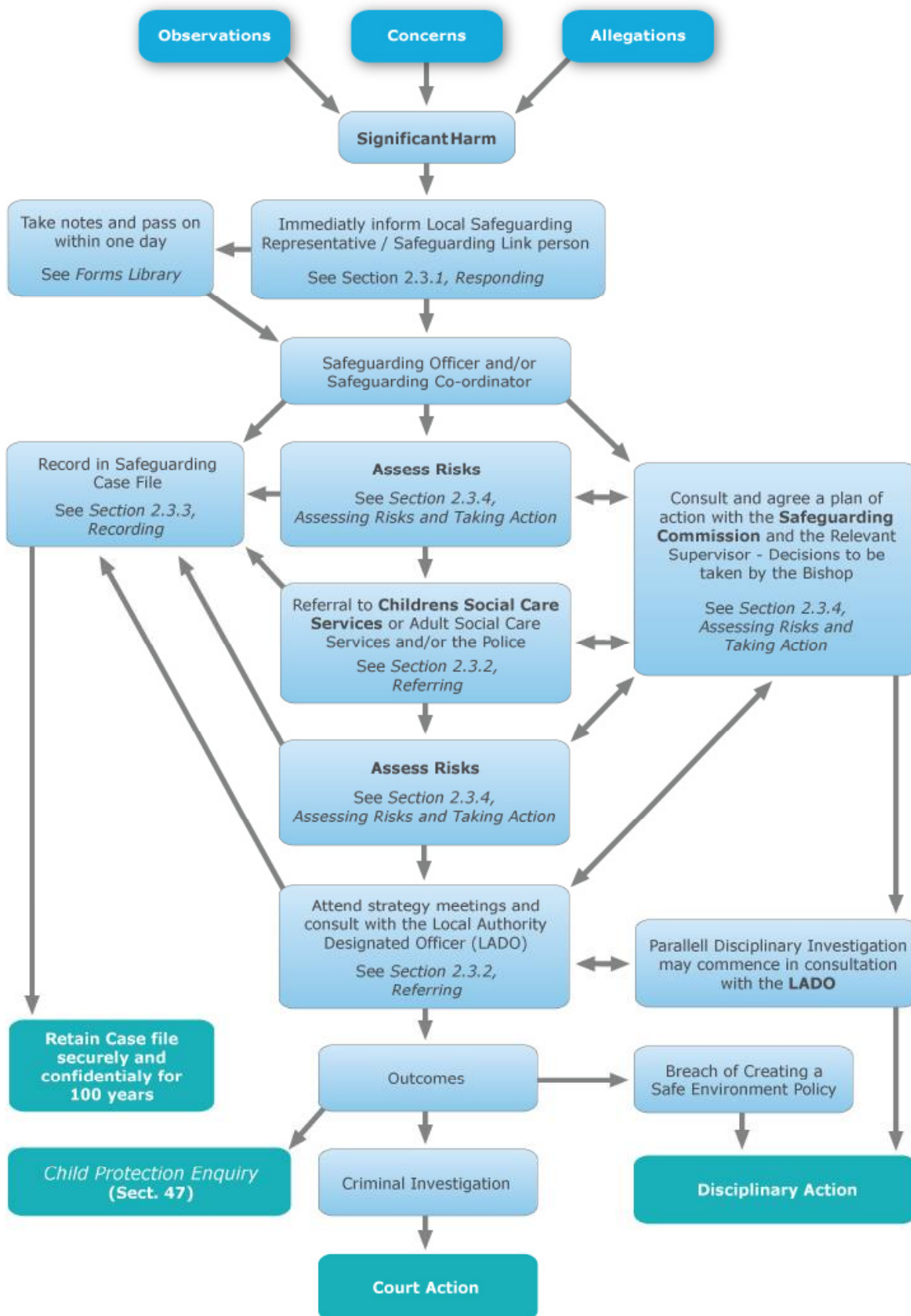
RLSS will report back

No

Contact Safeguarding
Coordinator

Take notes and pass
on within 1 day
(Form CM1)
A record will be kept

Appendix C: People in a Position of Trust Flowchart:



Appendix D: Managing the Organisation

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.
2. Plan the work of the organisation to minimise situations where the abuse of the above persons may occur.
3. Introduce a system whereby children, young people and adults at risk may talk with an independent person

Managing staff and volunteers

4. Apply agreed National procedures for protecting children, young people and adults at risk who may be at risk to all employed staff and volunteers.
5. Give all staff and volunteers clear roles and responsibilities
6. Use supervision as a means to protecting children, young people and any adult at risk.

Choosing the right staff and volunteers

7. Treat all would-be staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children, young people and or any adult who may be at risk.
8. Gain two references from people who have known the applicant for at least two years, one of whom may be a family member.
9. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children, young people and any adult who may be at risk in an interview before appointment.
10. Find out if an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.
11. Ensure that all appointments are conditional on the successful completion of a Disclosure Barring Application, following the National Procedures and subject to a satisfactory probationary period.

Dealing with abuse

12. Ensure the guidelines are issued, understood and followed on how to deal with the disclosure of abuse and how to respond appropriately to any concerns or allegations, by keeping a record of all Sisters, staff and volunteers having signed to say they have read and understood the policy and will adhere to it.

Training

13. Ensure that appropriate safeguarding awareness training is provided for all Sisters, staff and volunteers, their line manager or supervisors.

These principles must be adopted by the Church as a whole, but can only be given practical expression at Diocesan, Religious Order and Parish level.

(Extracts from A Programme for Action chaired by Lord Nolan)

