

# SOCIETY OF THE SACRED MISSION

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

The Society of the Sacred Mission (SSM) is a Christian Charity, the core purposes of which are to promote vocations, to nurture faith and spirituality and to encourage theological learning. These purposes are primarily delivered through the work of St Antony's Priory in Durham, in particular the work around spiritual direction and the operation of the retreat centre. In addition the charity provides appropriate care for the remaining Professed members of SSM, and administers the KTC grant fund.

We have adopted the House of Bishop's policy 'Promoting a Safer Church' and the associated guidance for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Church of England. Our main activity is based in the Diocese of Durham.

### OUR RESPONSIBILITY

SSM is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

### OUR SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

We are committed to building strong and safe communities and we believe that our staff, professed members and volunteers play an active part in keeping themselves and those they work with safe.

**We do this by:**

- Valuing, listening to and respecting those we work with.
- Encouraging the active participation of our staff, volunteers, spiritual directors and all those we work with in keeping themselves and others safe, ensuring they have a voice and a choice and know how to seek help if they need it.
- Carrying out appropriate risk assessments for all our activities to ensure the safety of those present.
- Safely recruiting, training and supporting staff, volunteers and spiritual directors.
- Ensuring all staff, volunteers and spiritual directors are made aware of this policy, understand their responsibilities for safeguarding and have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Having effective procedures in place for responding to safeguarding concerns and designated staff to respond to them.
- Displaying in our buildings and on our website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listening to and taking seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Offering support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, or when or where it occurred.
- Caring for and monitoring those within SSM who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Monitoring the implementation of our safeguarding policy and taking any measures required to strengthen and improve existing practice.

- Reviewing the implementation of this safeguarding policy and procedures at least annually.

## RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

A safeguarding concern is any worry or concern about the safety or well-being of a person because of something seen or heard, or information which has been received. This includes any concerns about the behaviour of our staff, volunteers or spiritual directors which is harmful or puts others at risk. For example, someone may tell you they, or someone they know, has been harmed, exploited, or abused or you might witness a situation where a person is putting the safety of an adult or child at risk.

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### WHAT WILL WE DO WHEN WE HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN?

We will:

- Act quickly and appropriately when a safeguarding concern is reported to us, following the Church of England best practice guidance set out in *Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults practice guidance (2018)*.
- Treat all safeguarding concerns in a professional, confidential and sensitive way.
- Always act in the best interests of people, respecting and involving them, giving them a choice over decision making which impacts them, unless they lack the capacity to do so or it would put them at serious risk of harm, exploitation, abuse or neglect.
- Provide people with safe and appropriate advice and refer them to services that meet their needs.
- Work in partnership with other organisations, including statutory services like the police and social care to make sure people get the help they need.
- Refer concerns where a child or adult at risk has been or is at significant risk of harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect to local authority social care or the police.
- Protect confidential information except where the wider duty of care or the public interest might justify making it known.

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### HOW TO REPORT A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Anyone can report a safeguarding concern. You can:

- Speak to one of our employees if you are attending one of our activities or events.
- Speak to the Director, the Designated Safeguarding Person, the Safeguarding Lead Trustee or the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser if you are an employee, volunteer or spiritual director.
- If you are worried about the safety or welfare of an adult, call the NSPCC Adult Helpline for confidential advice on 0808 800 5000.
- If you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child call the police. **999** for an emergency. **101** for a non-emergency.

Anyone can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser directly on [beth.miller@durham.anglican.org](mailto:beth.miller@durham.anglican.org) mobile no 07968 034075. If as an employee or volunteer you make a report to the NSPCC, the Police or any other agency you must also inform the Director of St Antony's Priory, Designated Safeguarding Person, Safeguarding Trustee or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

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### CONTACT DETAILS

Director: Revd Dr Nicholas Buxton [nicholas.buxton@stantonyspriory.org](mailto:nicholas.buxton@stantonyspriory.org); tel. 0191 384 3747

Designated Safeguarding Person: Laurence Pinkney [admin@stantonyspriory.org](mailto:admin@stantonyspriory.org); tel. 0191 384 3747

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser: Beth Miller [beth.miller@durham.anglican.org](mailto:beth.miller@durham.anglican.org); mobile 07968 034075

Safeguarding Lead Trustee: Revd Sheila Bamber [sheilab1554@gmail.com](mailto:sheilab1554@gmail.com); mobile 07989 542565

## OUR SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

We have developed 5 key standards, each with a range of policies, procedures, guidance and activities to help us meet our safeguarding commitments.

STANDARD	AIM	SPECIFIC POLICY, PROCEDURE OR AREAS OF ACTIVITY
<b>1. Awareness and training</b>	All staff members, volunteers and spiritual directors are made aware of this policy and have access to appropriate training to understand their responsibilities.	<p><b>The Safeguarding Policy.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff, volunteers and spiritual directors are introduced to the Safeguarding Policy/Statement as part of their induction.</li> <li>The policy is communicated to the public through our website.</li> <li>All staff, volunteers and spiritual directors receive appropriate training, guidance and support to ensure effective implementation of the policy, its associated procedures and guidance. We use the Church of England training framework.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Project and programme design and delivery</b>	All our projects, programmes and activities are designed and delivered in a way that protects people from the risk of harm that may arise from us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Safer Working Practices</b> outlines how staff, volunteers and spiritual directors should keep themselves and others safe.</li> <li>Risk assessments are undertaken for activities and programmes, to ensure the safety of those present.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Recruitment</b>	All staff, volunteers and spiritual directors are recruited safely, and all necessary checks are made to assess their suitability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding responsibilities are included in job descriptions as appropriate.</li> <li>We have adopted the Church of England's Safer Recruitment Policy. Recruitment processes include questions on safeguarding, verified references from employers and when necessary, criminal background checks.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Governance and Accountability</b>	People and processes are in place to monitor and improve the implementation of the safeguarding policy and our practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is Lead Safeguarding Trustee and safeguarding is a standing item on the Trustee Board's agenda.</li> <li>The Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is our external Safeguarding contact, and is the main source of support, advice and expertise for safeguarding and managing any safeguarding concerns.</li> <li>The Safeguarding Policy and all associated procedures and guidance are regularly monitored and audited to ensure they are effective and to identify and share any lessons learned within SSM.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Reporting and Responding to Concerns</b>	Reporting procedures are in place to enable an appropriate and timely response to any safeguarding concerns and designated employees feel equipped and confident to respond to safeguarding concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are reporting and incident management procedures in place, including                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Equal Opportunity Policy, Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy</b></li> <li><b>Whistleblowing Policy</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>The Designated Safeguarding Person and Safeguarding Lead Trustee have the training and support they need to fulfil their roles.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Note about training</b></li> </ul> <p>All staff and volunteers must complete the Church of England Basic Awareness training (available online and renewable every three years). The professed members will be trained as required by their specific ministries and residential contexts.</p> <p>Spiritual Directors will complete safeguarding training equivalent to the Church of England Basic Awareness training, and either Foundation/Leadership training or bespoke training relevant to their role, which should be updated every three years.</p> <p>The Director of St Antony's Priory and Designated Safeguarding Person will be trained on the Leadership Pathway (which includes the Basic and Foundation level training).</p> <p>The Designated Safeguarding Trustee will be trained on the Leadership Pathway; it is desirable but not essential that they complete the Senior Leadership Pathway.</p>		

Policy adopted: 19 October 2023. Next review date: September 2024