



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Reviewed and updated 24 August 2020

Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of London

Reviewed August 2020

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of London (The Diocese) is wholly committed to safeguarding every member, especially our Children and Vulnerable Adults, and is resolute that every person is entitled to being safe and protected from harm to enable him or her to safely enjoy and benefit from all its services and activities.

To continue to achieve this objective, we are committed to ensuring that all clergy, servants, paid and unpaid staff, volunteers and visitors who have contact with Children or Vulnerable Adults are aware of their responsibilities and applicable Policy Standards, and that there are appropriate protection and reporting procedures in place.

For the purposes of this Policy, clergy, servants, paid and unpaid staff, volunteers and/or visitors who have contact with Children or Vulnerable Adults will hereinafter be referred to as *Servants*.

We recognise that we must promote safe practices to protect Children and Vulnerable Adults from harm, abuse or exploitation. We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, and aim to maintain an environment where there is no opportunity for any form of harm, but where there are any concerns or allegations raised, that they are dealt with promptly, transparently, consistently and fairly.

The Safeguarding Officer for the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of London is Sami Gabriel, and his contact details are set out at the end of this document.

What this Policy covers

This Policy is primarily aimed at safeguarding:

- (a) Children, who are defined as being under the age of 18; and
- (b) Vulnerable Adults, defined as 'an adult who has care and support needs, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves from that abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs'.

This Policy applies to, and must be followed by, all Servants operating within any church site, or at any activity or event arranged or hosted by any parish within the Diocese.

This Policy covers all types of abuse, whether physical, emotional, and/or sexual misconduct.

We are committed to ensuring that:

- ❖ Children and Vulnerable Adults are listened to, valued and respected
- ❖ Servants are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know how to respond accordingly
- ❖ Servants that have any role with Children or Vulnerable Adults are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- ❖ Servants are given appropriate support and training
- ❖ All protection concerns are acted upon promptly, fairly and transparently

Brief details of the overarching principles of our Policy are set out below, while the detailed guidance on every aspect is in the “Policy Standard” provided to all Servants.

1. Safe Appointment

The following standards are to be followed:

- ❖ All Servants should complete an interview with the appropriate supervisors
- ❖ All Servants who will directly or indirectly have any contact with Children or Vulnerable Adults should have a new Enhanced DBS disclosure before they start any service
- ❖ All Servants will be provided with safeguarding training before they can serve with Children and/or Vulnerable Adults.

2. Safeguarding Training

Training will be available online and will be reviewed on an annual basis. The training will include the following modules:

- a. Good practices to be adopted
- b. Recognising signs of abuse
- c. Dealing with any concerns or allegations
- d. Reporting obligations and investigation procedures

3. Good Practice Guide

The primary objective of the Good Practice Guide is to reduce the potential for harm to all parties. The following guiding principles will be followed:

- ❖ All Servants must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to whilst Children and/or Vulnerable Adults are in their care
- ❖ All Servants serving with Children and/or Vulnerable Adults should receive regular basic safeguarding training
- ❖ Where possible, there should always be at least two Servants present with any group of Children or Vulnerable Adults; it is vital that the ratio of Servants to children or vulnerable adults is adequate to ensure safety
- ❖ Servants should be alert to strangers present in or waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose
- ❖ Any 1 to 1 interaction between a Servant and a Child or Vulnerable Adult must take place
 - (a) only with parental/guardian consent and
 - (b) where possible in public or open space and preferably where there are other Servants present
- ❖ Any concerns or allegations raised will be dealt with according to the detailed procedure set out in the Policy.
- ❖ Any knowingly false concerns or allegations will be taken very seriously and dealt with accordingly.

4. Procedure for concerns and allegations

If there is a concern relating to a Child or Vulnerable Adult, this should be raised with the Safeguarding Officer or a member of the clergy.

In the event that a Child or Vulnerable Adult makes an allegation or disclosure, to a Servant, of abuse against an adult or another child or young person, that Servant must:

- ❖ Listen carefully to the Child or Vulnerable Adult and avoid expressing his/her own views on the allegation
- ❖ Advise him/her that they have done the right thing by talking
- ❖ Let him/her know that what they are saying is taken seriously
- ❖ Not attempt to question or interview him/her personally
- ❖ Let him/her know that the Servant may need to tell someone else in order to help
- ❖ Inform him/her that the Servant will respect the confidentiality of any conversation, unless there is a level of risk that requires otherwise
- ❖ Explain what the Servant will do next
- ❖ Not delay reporting the alleged incident(s), and inform the Safeguarding Officer or member of the clergy as soon as possible, and in any event, within 24 hours

Once the Safeguarding Officer or member of the clergy has been informed of an allegation, it should be notified to the Vicar General, who will decide within a further 24 hours which procedure, in accordance with the applicable guidance, should then be followed. The relevant procedure will depend on the nature of the allegation and the risk of imminent or immediate danger. The person reporting the allegation and the respondent will be informed promptly of the process, which will then be followed. Unless there are specific reasons for any concerns/allegations relating to a Child or Vulnerable Adult not to be shared, they will be shared with the Safeguarding Officer and the parish priest(s).

Any procedure to be conducted will be undertaken by a diverse group including men and women, clergy and laity, and professionals from relevant fields.

Safeguarding Officer for the Diocese of London

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