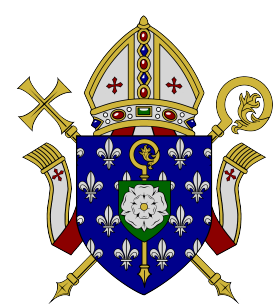


Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Messages in the Diocese of Leeds



Introduction from Bishop Marcus

***Jesus said: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'* (John 8:12)**

The Catholic Church has "a duty to serve humanity in different ways, but one way in particular imposes a responsibility of a quite special kind: the diakonia - the service - of the truth" (*Fides et Ratio*, Pope St John Paul II, 1998).

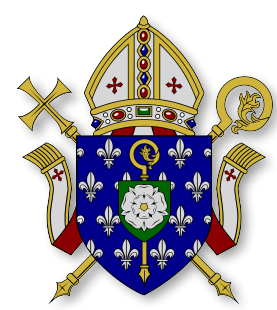
The light of truth, revealed to us by Our Lord Jesus Christ, is the principle which must guide the expression of all authentic Christian communication. Indeed, truthfulness and transparency are vitally important for the integrity and trustworthiness of all forms of human communication. Sadly, in the Church as in society in general, this has all too often been lacking.

It is a cause for deep shame and regret that some members of the Church, especially clergy, religious and lay people entrusted with positions of leadership in the Church and its institutions, have on occasions failed to be faithful in their 'service of the truth'. By this negligence they have also failed to defend and protect the innocent and most vulnerable amongst us. A combination of hubris and a misdirected desire to 'protect the Church's reputation' has caused untold harm and suffering, all too often perpetuated, or even perpetrated, by those in positions of the greatest trust.



It is the light of truth itself that has brought these past failures within the Church rightly into the open; failures for which I as a bishop feel profound sorrow and shame. My heart grieves especially for those within our own Diocesan Family whose lives have been devastated by abuse. This was not – and is not – Christ's way. Truth and justice require that we shine a light into those dark places. What was once shrouded in secrecy, darkness and denial must now be communicated with clarity, courage and compassion.

The purpose of this Safeguarding Communications Plan is to set out how, within the Diocese of Leeds, we promise to care safely for others; how we will communicate our policies, our best practice, our guidance and our openness in providing safe, welcoming church environments; and how we will demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that the safeguarding of the vulnerable: children, young people and adults, is at the heart of the Church's mission.



What are Our Promises?

We will Defend, Protect and Safeguard

We will defend, protect and safeguard the sacred value of human life from its beginning until its natural end, particularly the lives of those who are vulnerable and most at risk.



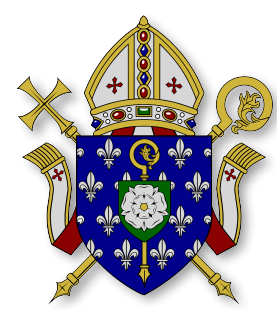
SAFEGUARDING

We will Respect Human Dignity

We will respect the dignity of each person as someone who is created in the image and likeness of God.

We will Communicate with Care

We will communicate and model all thoughts, words and actions on the person of Jesus Christ, proclaim the Gospel effectively, and our clergy will exercise the sacred ministry faithfully, responsibly and sensitively.



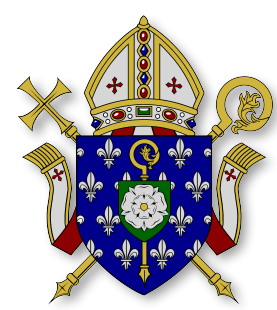
Why we make these promises...

It is our legal, moral and Christian duty to protect all from harm to the best of our ability, especially those who are young or vulnerable.

Victims and survivors must be believed and never re-traumatised by failures to address their complaints.

The work of the Church with the young or adults who may be at risk in our parishes and diocese must continue to allow people to flourish and participate fully, but in as safe an environment as possible.

The public are right to expect robust, transparent processes; we are driving a culture change to earn back public trust and confidence in the Church's commitment to Safeguarding.



Our Culture of Caring Safely for Others

What we do...

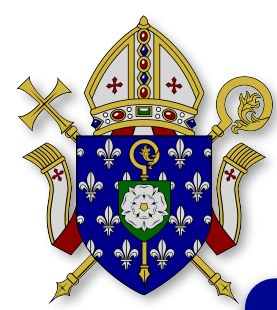
We provide information on the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Diocese of Leeds, keeping up to date and following the policies, guidance and recommendations of our regulatory bodies, such as the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA).

We promise sensitive, confidential support for victims and survivors and their families.

We provide the contact details of those with safeguarding roles in the Diocese and the Safeguarding Volunteer(s) in each parish, providing training and awareness of good practice - from safer recruitment to facilitating a safer environment - and where people have been harmed, we handle their disclosures correctly.

We publish information on the procedures for reporting allegations, suspicions, and concerns. We also liaise with, and are subject to, the Statutory Authorities in our management of allegations and to the Law in our handling of public/press/media interest.

We remain vigilant and take seriously all concerns and allegations and the management of perpetrators - known or suspected - who may live in our parish communities.



Caring Safely for Others is Everybody's Business across Our Diocesan Family!

Everyone in Our Parishes

If YOU are a parent or carer, a child or adult who may be at risk, a member of Parish Clergy or Parish Safeguarding Volunteer...

HOW to keep safe when involved in Church based activities.

WHAT to do if you, or someone you know, is being harmed.

WHERE to find sources of advice and support.

WHAT are the roles of the different agencies involved in Safeguarding.

WHAT is the 'referral process' and HOW it works.

Victims, Survivors & their Families

If YOU or someone close to you has experienced church-related abuse, either recently or in the past...

[WHO to contact in Diocese of Leeds Safeguarding](#)

HOW to access support.

HOW to become involved in making change happen so that YOUR voice is heard.

UNDERSTAND our Diocesan care strategy for victims and survivors of abuse.

Trustees, Clergy, Employees & Volunteers

If YOU live our Catholic values by embedding Safeguarding Culture in the Catholic Church...

UNDERSTAND Diocesan safeguarding policy, practice, and guidance.

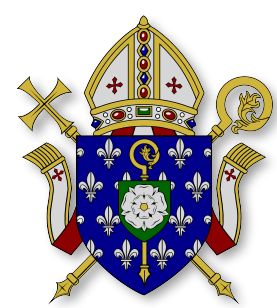
WHAT is good Safeguarding practice and HOW to deliver it.

HOW to follow Safer Recruitment .

HOW to deal correctly with allegations.

WHERE to access training, advice and support.

WHO are the relevant persons/agencies to contact & WHEN and HOW to engage with the wider public, press and media.



WHAT messages are we communicating?

Victims and survivors feel not only heard and supported to achieve justice, but also empowered by being treated with dignity and respect and consulted on policy decision-making.

The work of the Church continues in a safer environment for all the Diocesan Family.

Clergy, employees, and volunteers feel confident and supported by Diocesan Safeguarding and can access the appropriate levels of training/DBS/Safer Recruitment/advice.

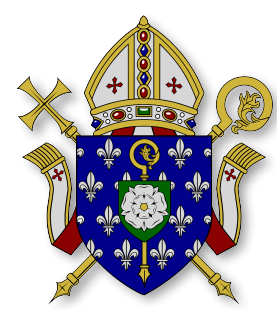
All disclosures and cases are handled according to a clear and transparent procedure and adhering to confidentiality.

The importance of Safeguarding is communicated to everyone in as clear, direct, and jargon-free language as possible.

People feel confident that the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Leeds cares for their safety and wellbeing and that they have the knowledge and support they need to keep others and themselves as safe as possible.

The duty of care to those accused or convicted is met in a way that combines justice and mercy.

All CSSA standards and updates are followed in a timely fashion.



Communicating Our Safeguarding Culture

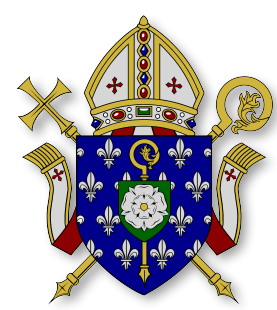
In consultation with the Bishop, the Trustees' Safeguarding Sub-Committee, Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Director of Communications, we will...

Determine and maintain robust reporting structures and chains of communication, ensuring confidentiality and legal compliance.

Use only clear, jargon-free and sensitive language and terminology, including a glossary of terms and acronyms associated with Safeguarding.

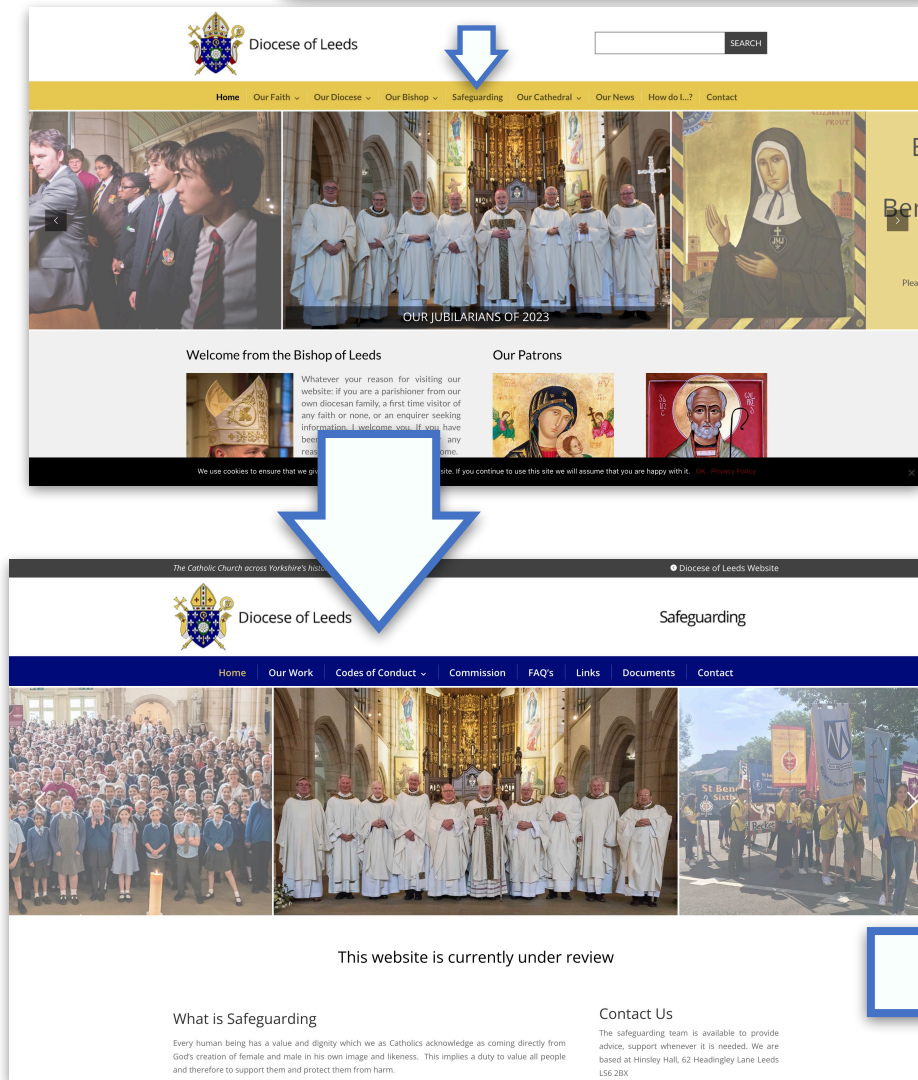
Decide through which diocesan media Safeguarding messages are conveyed in each circumstance.

Consider the diversity of communities within our Diocesan Family and how best to reach people whose first language is not English, and people with disabilities.



Our Communications Methods & Tools

Safeguarding is prominently headlined on the front page of our principal communications platform, the Diocese of Leeds website.



Safeguarding training

Safeguarding news, publications and events

Our Safeguarding Statement

Parish Safeguarding Handbook & Resources for Parishes

Contact details for our Safeguarding Team

Information of how to report a concern

Safeguarding Communications Plan

Recruitment packs and guidance for Safer Recruitment

Safeguarding agency and help services

The site includes the policy documents and operational guidelines, including forms which may be downloaded from this site. It contains links to local and national support and is updated as and when new or revised material becomes available.



Our Safeguarding Resources

Resources for Parishes

Parish Safeguarding Handbook.

Copies of our Policy Documents and Operational Guidelines available on request in every parish.

Poster detailing the safeguarding policy statement and contact details for safeguarding concerns to be displayed prominently in each church and church hall of every parish (also available translated into other languages where English is not a first-language)

Information leaflets on safeguarding for children and adults.

Annual Report on Safeguarding in the Diocese.

Copies of CSSA audits made available on request.

Safeguarding News

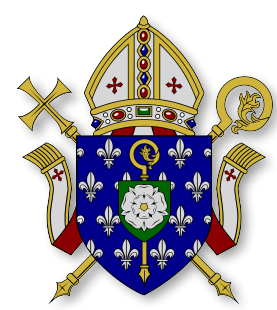
News and notices for parish bulletins will cover safeguarding activity, training and events, and developments in safeguarding policy and procedures, and examples of good safeguarding practice.

News will be published on both the Safeguarding and main Diocesan websites and distributed electronically to Parish Safeguarding Representatives, the Trustees' Safeguarding Sub-committee and to all clergy and employees in parishes and curia.

Training

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team prepare and publicise an annual training plan which incorporates information on training and networking events for Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs), clergy, employees, and other volunteers.

Our safeguarding training programme is available for all clergy, employees, trustees, and volunteers delivering safeguarding both in the context of the Catholic Church and in a wider context.



Our Safeguarding Team

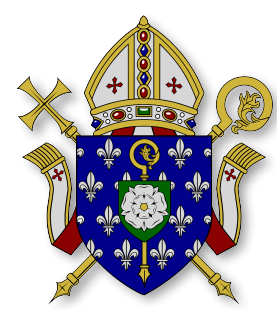
Our Safeguarding Team may be contacted via safeguarding@dioceseofleeds.org.uk & 0113 261 8046.
Their key responsibilities include...

Annual action plan and regular liaison with the Bishop, Trustees and the Director of Communications regarding ongoing improvements in communicating the message, promoting and embedding our Culture of Safeguarding.

Training and information sessions for priests, music staff, activity volunteers, Parish Safeguarding Representatives and pilgrimage organisers.

Attendance at meetings (Trustees, Deanery, Council of Priests, ongoing clergy formation etc) to provide reports, updates and advice.

Liaison and networking with external agencies.



Implementing, Monitoring & Reviewing this Plan

Informed by liaising with other churches & feedback from across the communities of Our Diocesan Family, ongoing review of this Plan will be reported on in the context of the quarterly Safeguarding and Communications reports to the Bishop and Board of Trustees and in the Annual Report.

The Safeguarding Subcommittee and Board of Trustees have the responsibility of managing all aspects of policy development for the Diocese.

Trustees



Parish Priest

Within each parish the overall responsibility for implementing this plan, as in all aspects of safeguarding children and adults at risk involved in church related activities, remains with the Parish Priest.

All activity leaders, and relevant curia department leads, have responsibilities in relation to communicating our safeguarding messages as part of our duty to embed a Culture of Safeguarding throughout Our Diocesan Family.

Director of Communications

As appropriate, and as determined by the Director of Communications in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, the Bishop and Vicars General, we publish Diocesan policies and procedures concerning the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, in order to promote and develop a positive understanding of safeguarding activity in the Diocese among the general public and through the press and media.

Any (permitted) Statements regarding legal cases and convictions are posted on the news pages of the Diocesan website, made available in parishes and copies sent to the Charity Commission. All press/media enquiries are directed to these publicly-available statements.



Glossary

The language and abbreviations we use in Safeguarding...

Safeguarding - The collective responsibility to protect children's, young people's and adults' health, wellbeing and human rights; enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

The 'Four Rs' of safeguarding children - Recognise, Record, Report and Refer.

CSSA - Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency – independent body set up to audit Catholic dioceses and hold them accountable for best practice.

Adults at Risk - the term now used for 'vulnerable adults': people with physical or mental disabilities and older people with reduced mental capacity which may put them at risk of abuse or neglect. (The Care Act 2014)

Child looked-after - the term now used instead of 'looked-after child'

CIC - Children in Care

Victims and Survivors - We use these terms together to reflect how some people who have experienced abuse prefer to describe themselves.

DBS - The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is a non-departmental public body of the UK Home Office. The DBS enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially involving children or adults who may be vulnerable or at risk, and provides wider access to criminal records information through its disclosure service for England and Wales.

