

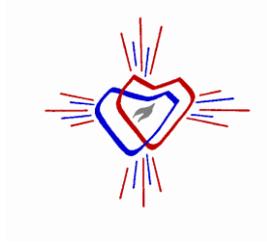
**Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**  
**Safeguarding Policy**  
England and Wales

January 2026

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Review Manager: Sister Julie Rose

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# **The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **1: POLICY OVERVIEW**

The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (hereafter SSHJM) are committed to safeguarding all children and adults. For the SSHJM this commitment directly relates to the fact that we are all made in the image of God and the Church`s common belief in the preciousness, dignity and uniqueness of every human life. We start from the principle that each person has a right to expect the highest level of protection, love, encouragement and respect. The Leadership Team and Safeguarding Lead of the Congregation work together to ensure that Safeguarding is central to the activities of all its members in England, Wales, Scotland, Africa the Philippines and America.

Following on from the safeguarding reviews in 2020, we are committed to the One Church approach to safeguarding by implementing the changes needed and ensuring we respond to Victims/ survivors promptly and compassionately.

### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all connected to the SSHJM regardless of their role or the activities that they are engaged in.

It is the responsibility of all within the Congregation to prevent abuse of any kind, whether by action or omission. Abuse refers to physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, neglect, self- neglect, organisational, psychological, financial, domestic. Additionally, behaviour that effectively results in modern day slavery or where there is evidence of discrimination or radicalisation needs to be recognised and addressed as a safeguarding issue.

### **3.0 TRAINING**

All SSHJM members and employees will undergo Safeguarding Training relevant to their role.

The Congregational Leader, Trustees, Safeguarding Leads and members will undertake refresher training every two years. They will also avail of supplementary year- round training that supports their role.

## **4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The Congregational Leader and Trustees**

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The Congregational leader and the Trustees have a duty to maintain appropriate governance and oversight of safeguarding in line with this policy and national guidelines. They are also responsible for ensuring appropriate policies, procedures and best practices are in place for the effective delivery of safeguarding, including any related due diligence checks. The Congregational Leader and Trustees also have direct oversight of the Congregational safeguarding Policy and guidance. Certain functions of the Congregational Leader and Trustees will be delegated to members.

### **The Safeguarding Lead**

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The Safeguarding Lead has direct management and oversight of documentation, case progression / management and the secure legally compliant storage of safeguarding reports and related materials, as well as oversight of the safeguarding links in Scotland, Ireland, Africa, Philippines and America.

### **All other roles**

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All members, staff, volunteers have an obligation to ensure they know how to respond to safeguarding concerns by familiarising themselves with the content of this policy, the procedures contained within it, and any other associated policies and procedures.

### **General**

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Everybody involved in the ministry of the Congregation has a duty to disclose to the Congregational Leader or the Safeguarding Lead any safeguarding concerns that have been raised about them.

## **5.0 PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Action must be taken if a concern is raised that a child or vulnerable:

adult is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. This includes but is not limited to:

- Someone who is at serious risk of harm from self or others
- Someone who poses a serious risk of harm to someone else

- A concern about a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm from someone else
- Concerns about someone's mental capacity

Action must be taken in line with the Church`s mandatory reporting policy agreed by the Bishops Conference, April 2020. This means that appropriate action must be taken if there are reasonable grounds to suspect or believe that someone who holds any role within the Church is going to or has committed a crime, is going to or has caused harm, poses a risk or is otherwise unsuitable to work in their role.

## **6.0 PROCEDURE**

If someone is in immediate danger or there is a safeguarding emergency, dial 999

If any member or staff becomes aware of a concern detailed in section 5 or any other safeguarding issue, they should contact the Safeguarding Lead, who will inform the RLSS Safeguarding Team and pass to them the concern and all associated records, ensuring the person who raised the concern is aware of the next steps.

- Ensure the victim/survivor or individual has been informed of the next steps
- Explain what will happen, give them options if possible and an indicative timescale
- Contact any relevant bodies
- Complete the safeguarding paperwork and ensure appropriate record keeping of all communications, meetings and discussions in relation to the case, are documented
- Inform the Congregational Leader of the new safeguarding referral and offer support if needed.

### **Safeguarding Bodies (not exhaustive)**

- Internal Safeguarding Structures within the Catholic Church
- Local authority Safeguarding Team – Adults
- Local Safeguarding Team – Children
- Police 999
- Police 101
- General Practitioner
- RLSS Out of hours Team
- Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)
- Local Safeguarding Commission

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Charity Commission

Care Homes with a Care Manager should alert the Local Authority directly of any safeguarding issues within 24 hours. The Manager should follow the directions given from the Safeguarding Team within their Local Authority. They must also let the Safeguarding Lead and Congregational Leader know and keep them informed with any developments as and when they occur.

## **7.0 WHISTLEBLOWING**

The Congregation will encourage and enable anyone with a safeguarding concern to refer the concern without fear of victimisation or disadvantage.

If that concern is regarding malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions within the Congregation or other religious institution in relation to safeguarding then the Religious Life Safeguarding Standards (RLSS) should be made aware of it.

The action taken will depend upon the nature of the concern referred.

## **8.0 RECORDING AND STORAGE OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND CASE FILES**

The Congregation is responsible for ensuring that all case files are accurate, up to date and stored securely.

Where the RLSS are responsible for managing a case, they will ensure records are accurate, auditable and secure, and that all records of any safeguarding concern or allegation referred are properly maintained.

## **9.0 SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

The Congregation will ensure that Congregation members, lay staff and volunteers are subject to appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements.

Appointments will be based on the persons experience, skills, and ability to meet the set criteria and job specifications for the specific role. It is essential to ensure that all

documentation relating to the applicant is kept in a secure place and remains confidential.

An appointment to a role will not be confirmed until the person has been interviewed by a panel, a satisfactory DBS check has been received, previous employment references have been confirmed as acceptable.

On appointment, all new employees should be provided with and sign to say that they understand all relevant policies and procedures, including a copy of this document and their responsibilities within it highlighted.

All persons seeking to work with children or vulnerable adults whether in a paid or unpaid capacity must be provided with the opportunity to self- disclose relevant conviction information. This is a DBS Code of Practice requirement and applies to anyone being asked to have an Enhanced Disclosure.

## **10 POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy has been approved by the Congregational Leader and Trustees and will be subject to review where there is a significant change to the Congregation infrastructure, processes or to relevant legislation.

Policy updated:

Name: