

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

Statement of Safeguarding Principles

The Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland is committed to working in partnership with other Orthodox Jurisdictions, other Christian communities, and with relevant secular agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, in order to promote and maintain the emotional, physical, sexual, mental and spiritual wellbeing and safety of all children, young persons, and all adults committed to our pastoral care.

THIS POLICY MAY NOT BE USED OUTSIDE THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND IRELAND

We are committed to:

- Pastoral ministry based on the loving, respectful care and nurturing of all children, young persons and all adults.
- Prioritising the issues of safeguarding and protecting all children, young persons, and all adults in our care.
- Taking all necessary steps to establish safe, caring communities which provide a loving and compassionate environment where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse, and where they can find support and care delivered in accordance with the standards set by recognised best practice in this area.
- Developing the necessary pastoral resources at diocesan and parish levels in order to foster an appropriately informed ministry that can recognise and respond to the unique needs of those who have been abused.

To this end:

- We will carefully select, support and train all those with any pastoral responsibility within the Church, in line with both existing statutory requirements and in line with standards set by best practice in this area, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration/membership of the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that any adult, young person or child may have been harmed, or is at risk of harm, cooperating with police and local authorities in any investigation(s).
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse.
- We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm or abuse.
- We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust and/or authority.
- We will seek to offer appropriate pastoral care and support to any member of our church community suspected or convicted of having offended against a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.

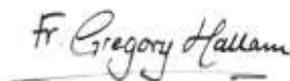
In all these principles, we will follow existing legislation, guidance from competent authorities, and recognised good practice in the area of safeguarding.

Approved by (Bishop and the Dean): Archpriest Gregory Hallam (Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer)

On: 17th December 2014

Latest edition: 5th September 2019

Signed:



The Archdiocesan Safeguarding

Administrator is: Name: Helen Hallam

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

As Antiochian Orthodox Christians of the British Isles and Ireland gathering together in conference in order to discern the will of God for what direction our missionary endeavours must now take in these turbulent but exciting times, we are presented with a unique opportunity to reaffirm our calling and commitment to protect and safeguard from harm the weakest and most vulnerable members of our communities: namely our children, our young persons, and any adults rendered vulnerable by illness, disability or adverse social/economic/interpersonal circumstances beyond their control.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the term used to describe those policies and practices that are put into place by our Archdiocese to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young persons, and adults **within** our parish communities.

Why do we need Safeguarding?

The Church has to contend with the reality of sin amongst Her members, and the fragility of our fallen, wounded human nature, both of which can lead to the most vulnerable members of our Church being abused by other members of the Church. Regrettably, even those in positions of service and trust within the Church can and do sin against children, young persons and adults committed to their care.

Prevention and Protection

Thankfully, the incidences of this failing are not common. That said, any one incidence of its occurring is one too many. The safeguarding policies and practices of the Archdiocese have two aims:

- They are pro-active measures designed to ensure that **all steps that can be taken** to prevent, or at least reduce the likelihood of the abuse of children, young persons, or adults within the Church **will be taken**.
- They provide guidance on how best to support and protect from further harm those who in some way have experienced abuse within the Church.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

How should Christians view Safeguarding?

The success of our safeguarding policies and the effectiveness of our practices will depend utterly and entirely on our ***attitude to safeguarding***. If we are of the attitude that:

- safeguarding is really just another attempt by the State to impose its will on the Churches,
- or if we think that abuse of children/young persons/vulnerable adults within the Church is not that big of an issue,
- or if we believe that safeguarding is really the business of the professionals only –

then these attitudes will be reflected in how we approach the concrete business of safeguarding in our parish communities.

Safeguarding: State and Church

Every organised institution or group with society, including churches, has under law a duty of care towards their members, especially the safeguarding of children, young persons and vulnerable adults. That means, amongst other things, that churches must be doing, and be seen to be doing, all within their power to positively and pro-actively protect their most vulnerable members from harm by other members of our parish communities.

That safeguarding is enforced by legislation in no way diminishes or takes away from the reality that it is simply the practical, concrete manifestation (formalised in policies and practices) of our core Christian calling to love one another, with special emphasis on looking after those who are most vulnerable.

However, the Church is not simply an extension of the State, and in no way gives uncritical assent to everything that is promoted under the heading of *safeguarding*.

Is Abuse a significant issue?

It may not be significant in terms of prevalence or incidences of occurrence, but it is highly significant in terms of the devastating impact it has on victims, their families, and church communities. For that reason alone, it is an issue deserving of high profile and priority within the Archdiocese.

Safeguarding: whose responsibility?

While professionals from statutory agencies and trained volunteers within the Archdiocese have specific roles to play in safeguarding, it is the privilege of every member of the

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

Archdiocese to be called to contribute in whatever way they can to making our communities places of safety and security for children, young persons, and all adults.

Towards a Culture of Safeguarding within the Archdiocese

The Antiochian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland commits itself towards fostering a culture of safeguarding, with the aim developing our parish communities as respectful, caring, nurturing, supportive and protective environments wherein all members are safe from harm and abuse and where every person is encouraged to participate freely and fully in the life and mission of the Church.

With reference to safeguarding, the Archdiocese is committed to promoting:

- Clear and effective leadership.
- Openness & transparency.
- Responsibility & accountability.
- Compassion and support.
- Justice & integrity.
- Honesty & humility.
- Questioning & challenging.
- Learning & changing.

Structure of Safeguarding Body within the Archdiocese

While safeguarding is the responsibility of every member of the Church, certain specialised roles have been created to ensure the safe and effective implementation of safeguarding policies and practices.

These roles are:

1. **Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee.** Comprised of 3 persons whose main responsibilities include: developing and implementing the Archdiocese' Safeguarding policies; ensuring that Archdiocesan safeguarding police is in line with statutory requirements and existing best practice; liaising with Archdiocesan Safeguarding Coordinator to address and respond to any concerns or complaints raised at the parish level.
2. **Archdiocesan Safeguarding Coordinator.**

Role Title / Description: Archdiocesan Safeguarding Coordinator

Responsible to: Archbishop, Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

Purpose: to coordinate and implement safeguarding policy and training within the Archdiocese.

Main Responsibilities

1. To coordinate safeguarding education and practice throughout Archdiocese for those involved in pastoral ministry.
2. To act as direct support for Parish Safeguarding Advocates.
3. To hear any concerns relating to safeguarding, including any disclosures or allegations of abuse, and take responsibility for managing the diocesan response to that concern or disclosure.
4. To report all instances of suspected or disclosed abuse, where there are reasonable grounds for concern, to local authorities, to the police, and to the Bishop (via the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Committee) .
5. Where the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Coordinator is unsure if a concern raised meets reasonable grounds for concern, s/he may consult informally with the Duty Social Worker from area in which concern has been raised.
6. To also refer all instances of suspected or disclosed abuse relating to parish personnel to the relevant Church authorities.
7. Out of office hours and in the case of an emergency, where a child is at serious and immediate risk, to report the matter to the police without delay.
8. To coordinate pastoral services to both those who raise allegations of abuse and those implicated by allegations of abuse.
9. To ensure that the person raising a concern, disclosing abuse, or making an allegation, and any member of Church personnel who is implicated by that, are regularly informed about the progress of the inquiry process.
10. To record all steps undertaken as part of these procedures.
11. The Bishop must appoint a Deputy Designated Person, who can act in the event that the Designated Person is not able to deal with a concern/allegation for any reason.

3. Parish Safeguarding Representative.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Local Safeguarding Representative

Role Title: Local Safeguarding Representative.

Responsible To: Parish Priest, and the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Coordinator.

Purpose: The Local Safeguarding Representative has a key role to play in the implementation and management of the Safeguarding Procedures at the parish level.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To make themselves familiar with all aspects of the safeguarding procedures and know where parishioners might access the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Policies.
2. To keep a record of all under 18 activities within the Church and those who run them.
3. To keep a record of all activities involving vulnerable adults within the Church and those who run them.
4. To be willing to participate in basic safeguarding training and ongoing training. According to the requirements of the Insurance Company, there must be an approved training event for each eligible person at least annually.
5. To assist the parish in raising awareness to the issues of Safeguarding by:
 - promoting or arranging suitable and relevant training;
 - ensuring that all volunteers working with young people understand and adopt a safe code of conduct.
6. To inform external organisations eg sports clubs who use Church facilities, of the need to have their own safeguarding policy.
7. To assist the parish priest with the implementation of Archdiocesan Safeguarding Policies
8. With the parish priest ensure that the Archdiocesan recruitment process takes place:
 - asking all volunteers to complete appropriate application forms;
 - arranging for references to be taken up;
 - interviewing prospective volunteers in the parish working with children and vulnerable adults;
 - identifying volunteers who require a DBS check and administering the process.
ALL DBS checks must be completed and assessed BEFORE the person takes up the role, post or office. In respect of clergy, both major and minor, this must be before ordination takes place.
9. The Local Safeguarding Representative will be responsible with the Parish Priest for the effective, efficient and smooth operation of Safeguarding in the parish by:
 - ensuring that all searches, training requirements and other safeguarding duties are undertaken locally within ***4 weeks of notification or identification***; excepting unforeseen or extenuating circumstances. Emergency situations must be dealt with immediately.
 - Any delay or variation must be cleared with the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer and /or Administrator first.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

9. Assist the parish priest in monitoring the work of new volunteers. This can be achieved through the following:
 - reviewing new volunteers after an initial 6 month probationary period
 - being available to discuss matters of concern with volunteers
 - showing an interest in the work being done with children, young people and vulnerable adults within the parish.
10. To act as a recognised contact point for adults and young people who need to report concerns about child and vulnerable adults safeguarding.
11. To refer any concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult to the appropriate agency according to Archdiocesan policy.
12. To assist the parish priest in the management/monitoring of known sex offenders in the parish, if the need arises.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Local Safeguarding Representative will need:

- to be a trusted person within the parish community and have skills of tact, resilience, communication and understanding to undertake this vital role;
- to have basic skills in observation and listening;
- a clear commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults based on a belief in the dignity of the human person;
- the ability to put the principle of the paramount welfare of the child (or vulnerable adult) first in any decision making about children or vulnerable adults and not to be swayed by external pressures to depart from this principle;
- the ability to refer child protection or vulnerable adult protection issues to the appropriate statutory or police authorities as specified in Archdiocesan policy;
- the ability to record child/vulnerable adult protection concerns, in writing and to collect and record data about activities in the parish involving children or vulnerable adults;
- to be sensitive to the concerns of volunteers, in particular in relation to aspects concerning form completion and ongoing supervision and monitoring and be able to explain the requirements of volunteers to comply with the policy;

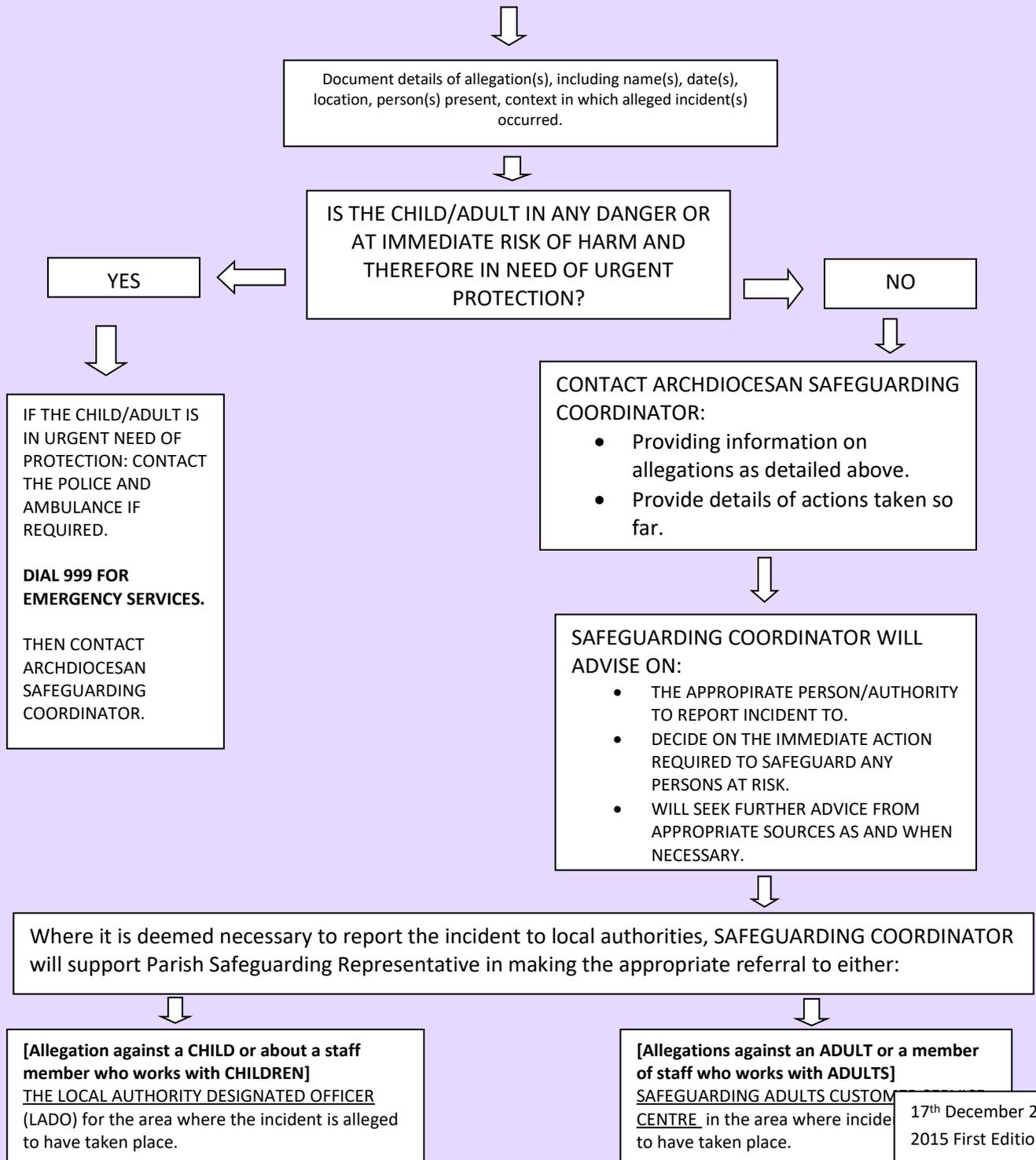
SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY

- to respect and maintain confidentiality.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PARISH CLERGY, PASTORAL WORKERS OR VOLUNTEERS

Action taken by Parish Safeguarding Rep

ALLEGED INCIDENT(S) REPORTED TO PARISH SAFEGUARDING REP.



17th December 2014
2015 First Edition

If there is any police or social services involvement in an allegation, then it would be one of these agencies who would be the LEAD AGENCY, and they will inform the cleric/pastoral worker/volunteer of the allegations made/investigation details. SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR should request details of the investigation and allegations in order to determine what action should be taken by the Archdiocese to

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND IRELAND

MONITORING OF SEX OFFENDERS AND OTHERS IN THE PARISHES

Introduction

It is vitally important that if a sex offender presents himself or herself in an Orthodox community whether that person is Orthodox or not, that the parish or monastery should have a workable contract which follows all our Archdiocesan Safeguarding principles. This contract would need to be discussed with and then signed by the sex offender. Such a contract may also prove necessary when someone who belongs to one of our communities proves to be, from local intelligence, a possible risk to children or vulnerable adults even if they have never acted upon their impulses or indeed been convicted of any crime.

The Safeguarding Contract

In drawing up such a contract, the situation and activity of each community would need to be taken into account. For example, church events and activities vary in so far as they give access to children and vulnerable adults. In some church buildings there are unseen corners, corridors and rooms and in others it is completely open plan. Bearing this in mind, I don't think that the Archdiocese can provide a "one size fits all" contract template. However, there are some foundational principles which should be observed in each community when drawing up such a contract.

1. Most important is, of course, supervision. No contact with children or vulnerable adults should be allowed without active and continuous monitoring of a person or persons designated and trained for that purpose. These supervisors should have undertaken the full Safeguarding Training Course that we rolled out recently;
2. The sex offender should not be allowed to undertake forms of Church service that primarily involve contact with child and vulnerable adults; in other words, any contact must always be in a mixed environment with adults and children – Sunday school/children's clubs are not possible. They should also not be allowed to take up any position of leadership in any sector of church life for this gives them an authority which they might seek to abuse in the community, nor should they undertake any activity which would reasonably imply any degree of trust in the community;
3. Accountability lies at the heart of keeping children and vulnerable adults safe when there is a sex offender around. This is probably best provided for by having regular meetings between the sex offender, his supervisors and the priest. The frequency should be determined locally but these should take place at least monthly, unless of course something happens in the meantime. Some of the business of these meetings will be highly confidential, if not in a confessional context where of course the seal cannot be broken. Nonetheless, there is the need for an opportunity for the sex offender to have a private conversation with the priest and maybe those having supervision about his or her struggles and how they could be resolved with any necessary plan of action and reporting back. All these elements of accountability and their practical implementation should be written into the contract, signed off and consistently implemented indefinitely. Confidential logs should be kept in case they need to be produced at a later date.

There is also the issue of what happens when a sex offender, for whatever reason, leaves a community and for somewhere else in our Archdiocese or indeed other dioceses? There needs to be information sharing with the destination community. However, there are possible GDPR implications in the sharing of such sensitive data. Consequently, it should also be written into the contract that, should such a transfer take

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND IRELAND

place, the sex offender acknowledges that a sharing of information (outside the confessional) will take place together with a handover meeting. If the sex offender refuses to consent to this or any other clause in the contract, then there must be consequences that are disadvantageous to him or her.

Penalties and Consequences for Non-Compliance

Level	The Offence/Issue	The Consequence and Action
4	The Sex Offender (SO) refuses to sign the Safeguarding Contract	The SO is instructed to leave the community immediately. There is no need to advise any other parish on the assumption that all our parishes will both implement the same policy and make the same response.
3	The SO makes an accidental infringement of the Contract.	Immediate feedback is given by the Supervisor. The SO modifies his or her behaviour accordingly.
2	The SO intentionally is guilty of an infraction of the Contract, but no child or vulnerable adult is harmed.	The SO is instructed to leave the community immediately. The bishop is informed together with all the other clergy of the Archdiocese. The bishop may inform other bishops based on the facts.
1	The SO is intentionally guilty of an infraction of the Contract and a child or vulnerable adult suffers actual harm - psychologically, emotionally or physically, no matter how the courts might categorise that in statutory terms.	The incident is immediately reported to the Police and any other appropriate Authority. The bishop is informed together with all the other clergy in the Archdiocese. The bishop should then advise other Orthodox bishops of this person and the event, taking care not to assume guilt before the law has judged on the matter. Information shared should always refer to "allegations".

Why Excommunication in Some Cases

Some may say that since the Christian Church is a place of forgiveness and reconciliation, we should never find ourselves in the position of asking someone to leave, for whatever reason. However, in extreme cases (and Safeguarding violations are extreme cases, by definition) such action is necessary where there is an ongoing danger, if not actual harm, to the flock. The sheepfold must be protected against ravenous wolves and shepherds who fail to do this, as our Lord says, are unworthy of their calling (John 10:11-13).

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND IRELAND

We all know that in the Church at Corinth, St Paul evicted a believer who was committing incest with his mother (1 Corinthians 5:1-12). The Apostle justified this response in a two-fold manner. First, he explained that this was to provide opportunity for true repentance and, secondly, this was to protect the physical and spiritual integrity of the community itself. These teachings and practices, as we know, continued into the life of the early Church with those guilty of serious offences being, at least for a time, excluded from the Synaxis and only to be readmitted when genuine change of life had become evident. Even then, they spent some time in the Narthex as “weepers” to test their sincerity before full readmission. With the reappearance of wolves in our midst, such actions of temporary or permanent excommunication, under the bishop’s guidance and instruction, continue to be the most appropriate response.

What about other Orthodox Dioceses?

Of course, we are one Orthodox Church, not several. Multiple “jurisdictions”, where they occur, only refer to the oversight of each bishop in his diocese within any given see. Therefore, this Archdiocese will work as closely as possible with all the other Dioceses and their bishops to ensure the safety of *ALL* our children and vulnerable adults. We need to share best practice and that might include our policies subject to each bishop’s oversight and instruction. Furthermore, in level 1 infractions of our Safeguarding Policy, our Metropolitan will undoubtedly wish to share appropriate safeguarding information with other Orthodox bishops in the same way that he does when dealing with any clergy who have been suspended for other reasons. In these ways our actions for the safety of our children and vulnerable adults will be both consistently and universally applied across the Church as a whole.