

Safeguarding Policy

Grace and Compassion Benedictines CIO

Our overarching commitment to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.



Document Title	Safeguarding Policy
Prepared For	Grace and Compassion Benedictines CIO
Version	3
Date of Issue	July 2026
Review Date	July 2027 (or on material legislative, CSSA or RLSS change)
CSSA Alignment	Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8

1. Purpose

Grace and Compassion Benedictines ("the Congregation") is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk in every setting in which we serve. This Policy sets out our overarching commitments, principles, governance arrangements, and reporting and escalation procedures, and gives effect to the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) framework.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This Policy is binding on every member of the Congregation, and on every employee, volunteer, contractor, associate and visitor acting in the name of Grace and Compassion Benedictines in England and Wales.

2. Scope & Definitions

2.1 Scope

This Policy applies to: every Sister and member in formation of Grace and Compassion Benedictines; every Trustee and member of the governance body; every employee, volunteer, contractor, agency worker, associate and visitor; and every ministry, residency, retreat, chaplaincy engagement, community house and online activity carried out in the name of the Congregation.

2.2 Key definitions

Term	Definition
Child	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday (Children Act 1989).
Adult at risk	An adult who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of their needs is unable to protect themselves (Care Act 2014 s.42).
Position of trust	A role specified in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 ss.16–24 (as amended by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022), which makes sexual activity with a 16–17 year-old an offence even if otherwise consensual.
Abuse	Includes physical, sexual, emotional, financial, neglect, domestic, organisational, modern slavery, discriminatory, self-neglect, spiritual and online abuse (Care Act 2014 statutory guidance categories, plus spiritual abuse per CSSA).
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead, the named individual with operational responsibility for safeguarding.
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer, the local authority lead for allegations against persons in positions of trust (England & Wales).
RLSS	Religious Life Safeguarding Service, the safeguarding body for religious institutes.

3. Our Safeguarding Commitments

Grace and Compassion Benedictines will:

- Place the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk above all other interests, including the reputation of the Congregation.
- Listen to, believe and respond compassionately to anyone who reports having been harmed.
- Report every safeguarding concern to the appropriate statutory authority without delay, in line with the legal and ecclesiastical duty under Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019).
- Recruit, vet and train members, employees and volunteers safely.
- Manage allegations and concerns fairly, supporting both those who report and those who are subject to allegations.

- Embed safeguarding in our governance, supervision, formation, ministry and pastoral practice.
- Continuously improve through self-assessment, risk assessment, audit and learning from cases.

Statutory and regulatory framework (England & Wales)

This Policy is applied in conjunction with the following frameworks. Where any conflict arises between this Policy and a statutory duty, the statutory duty prevails.

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 (s.10, s.11 duty to cooperate and promote welfare).
- Care Act 2014, adult safeguarding duty (s.42 enquiries, s.43 Safeguarding Adults Board duties).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (statutory guidance).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (where the setting includes any educational activity).
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (in particular positions of trust provisions, ss.16–24).
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, DBS and regulated activity definitions.
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), whistleblower protections.
- Equality Act 2010, protected characteristics and reasonable adjustments.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005, capacity, best interests, deprivation of liberty.
- Modern Slavery Act 2015, duty to notify and report indicators of exploitation.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Prevent duty.
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015), mandatory reporting duty.
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021, duty to consider children as victims of domestic abuse.

Catholic Church framework

- Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA), National Safeguarding Standards 1 to 8.
- Vos Estis Lux Mundi (2019, as revised), Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter on reporting abuse.
- Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, Vademecum (2022 revision).
- Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) mandatory reporting guidance.
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBEW) safeguarding policy and subsequent updates.
- Conference of Religious, Integrity in Ministry.

Cross-cutting and international

- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (including DPA Sch. 1 Pt. 2 Para. 18 safeguarding lawful basis).
- ICO Code of Practice for Data Sharing; Caldicott principles.
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention, 2007).
- Human Rights Act 1998, Articles 2, 3 and 8.

4. Roles, Accountabilities and Governance

Role	Safeguarding accountabilities
Board of Trustees	Ultimate accountability for safeguarding under charity law. Approve this Policy annually; receive the Monthly Safeguarding Highlights and the Annual Safeguarding Arrangements Report; ensure resources for safeguarding; commission independent reviews where appropriate.
Congregational Leader / Prioress General	Strategic responsibility for safeguarding culture; chairs the Safeguarding Committee; supports the DSL; takes safeguarding decisions on members.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), DSL NAME: - Sr Thaya Moses Montana Care Home, East Barton Road, Great Barton, Bury St Edmunds IP31 2RF admin@montanacarehome.com 01284 787321	Operational lead. Receives all disclosures; opens the Concern / Incident Log and a Case Chronology; risk-assesses; refers to Police, Children's Social Care, LADO, RLSS and CSSA; manages records and confidentiality; reports monthly to the Congregational Leader and Trustees.
Deputy DSL, Sr Rosaline Raju St Mary's House 38/39, Preston Park Av Brighton BN1 6HG rosyosb@yahoo.com 01273 502129	Acts in the DSL's absence; supports the caseload; co-leads training; maintains the Concern Log when the DSL is the subject of a concern.
Safeguarding Trustee, TRUSTEE NAME Sr Kathy Yeeles (Prioress General)	Provides Board-level oversight; supervises the relationship with the DSL; sponsors safeguarding at Trustee meetings.
Community Leaders / House Leaders Superiors/ Care Home Managers	First-line responsibility within each community house; ensure noticeboards display the DSL poster and the reporting flowchart; maintain entrance and visitor logs.
All members, employees, volunteers, Trustees, contractors and associates	Personal duty to report safeguarding concerns to the DSL without delay; comply with the Code of Conduct; cooperate fully with any safeguarding enquiry.

5. Recognising abuse, categories and indicators

All persons must be alert to the following categories of abuse. This list is not exhaustive.

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Category	Definition	Indicators (non-exhaustive)
Physical abuse	Hitting, shaking, burning, restraint, force-feeding, misuse of medication.	Unexplained injuries; explanations inconsistent with injury; fear of contact; flinching.
Sexual abuse	Any sexual act without consent; abuse of position of trust; grooming; online sexual abuse.	Sexualised language or behaviour inappropriate to age or role; STIs; pregnancy; withdrawal; self-harm.
Emotional abuse	Persistent maltreatment causing severe effects on emotional development.	Low self-esteem; excessive compliance; fearfulness; developmental delay.
Neglect	Failure to meet basic physical or psychological needs.	Poor hygiene; untreated medical needs; malnutrition; lack of supervision.
Financial abuse	Theft, fraud, exploitation, misuse of property or benefits.	Sudden changes in accounts or wills; missing belongings; controlled access to money.
Domestic abuse	Controlling, coercive, threatening, violent or abusive behaviour in intimate or family relationships.	Injuries; isolation; controlling partner; financial dependence.
Modern slavery	Forced labour, trafficking, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude.	Restricted movement; lack of documents; signs of physical abuse; dependency.
Discriminatory abuse	Abuse motivated by a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.	Harassment; slurs; differential treatment; isolation.
Organisational abuse	Neglect or poor practice within an institution.	Rigid routines; lack of choice; a culture of disrespect; lack of supervision.
Self-neglect	Inability or unwillingness to care for oneself.	Hoarding; refusal of essential care; deteriorating environment.
Spiritual abuse	Misuse of religious authority to control, coerce or harm.	Use of scripture to silence; isolation from family; fear-based compliance; manipulation of vocational discernment.
Online and technology-facilitated abuse	Grooming, exploitation, sextortion, indecent images, cyberbullying, image-based abuse.	Secrecy around devices; unexplained gifts; changes in mood after online activity.
Radicalisation	The process by which a person becomes drawn into extremism (Prevent duty).	Changes in social network; intolerant language; engagement with extremist material.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Mandatory reporting under the FGM Act 2003 (as amended).	Plans to travel; reluctance to return; medical signs.

6. Reporting and escalation procedures

All persons must report every safeguarding concern, disclosure or allegation without delay. The escalation matrix below applies to all concerns, regardless of seriousness. Where the concern involves the named person on a row, the receiver becomes the next row down. The visual reporting flowchart accompanies this Policy.

Tier	Receiver of disclosure	Time-frame	Action / next step
1	Anyone who witnesses or receives a disclosure	Immediate	If anyone is in immediate danger, call 999. Ensure the person is safe. Do not investigate. Make a factual record.
2	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), [DSL NAME]; [DSL PHONE]	Within 24 hours	DSL reviews, opens the Concern / Incident Log and a Chronology, risk-assesses, and decides the referral pathway.
3	Congregational Leader / Community Leader	Within 24 hours of DSL receipt	Briefed by the DSL; supports decision-making; ensures pastoral and operational measures.
4	Board of Trustees	Within 5 working days (or immediately for serious incidents)	Notified of any allegation involving leadership, any statutory referral, or any serious incident notifiable to the Charity Commission.
5	Statutory and Church bodies: Police (999 / 101), Children's Social Care, Adult Safeguarding Team, LADO, RLSS, CSSA	Police immediately. LADO within 1 working day. Others as soon as practicable.	All allegations against persons in ministry must be referred to the LADO within 1 working day. Criminal matters are reported to the Police without delay.
6	Charity Commission Serious Incident Report; ICO breach (if applicable)	As soon as reasonably practicable	Where the matter is a Serious Incident, or involves a personal data breach (UK GDPR), file the appropriate notification.

6.1 What to do if you receive a disclosure

- Stay calm. Listen carefully. Take the person seriously.
- Reassure the person that they did the right thing by telling you.
- Do not promise confidentiality; explain that you must tell the DSL.
- Do not investigate, interview or interrogate.
- Make sure the person is safe; call 999 if there is immediate danger.
- Record the disclosure as soon as possible: date, time, location, who, and what was said (in the person's own words wherever possible), what you did, and who else was present.
- Submit the record to the DSL within 24 hours and store it securely until the DSL takes custody.

6.2 What the DSL will do

- Receive and triage the disclosure within 24 hours.
- Open a Concern / Incident Log entry and, where the matter is ongoing or complex, a Case Chronology.
- Conduct an immediate risk assessment.
- Make any required statutory referral: Police (immediate); Children's Social Care or the Adult Safeguarding Team (same day); LADO (within 1 working day); RLSS (within 1 working day for any member-related matter); CSSA where appropriate.
- Notify the Congregational Leader; brief the Trustees where appropriate.
- Document every decision and its rationale in the Escalation Record.

Statutory and external contacts (England & Wales)

Body	When to contact	How
Police, 999 emergency, 101 non-emergency	Anyone in immediate danger; suspected criminal offence	999 / 101
Local Authority Children's Social Care	Concern about a child	[Local authority duty number]
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Allegation against any adult in a position of trust	Within 1 working day
Adult Safeguarding Team / Safeguarding Adults Board	Concern about an adult at risk	[Local team number]
Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)	Referral where a person has caused harm or is at risk of doing so	dbs.referrals@dbs.gov.uk
Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS)	Allegations involving members of a Religious Institute	[RLSS contact]
Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)	Pattern, systemic or material safeguarding concern	catholicsafeguarding.org.uk
Charity Commission (E&W)	Serious Incident Report (SIR)	RSI form
Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	Notifiable data breach	Within 72 hours of becoming aware
Safe Spaces	Support to survivors of Church-related abuse	0300 303 1056
NAPAC	National Association for People Abused in Childhood	0808 801 0331
Samaritans	Emotional support	116 123
NSPCC Helpline	Concerns about children	0808 800 5000
Internet Watch Foundation / CEOP	Indecent images of children; online exploitation	iwf.org.uk / ceop.police.uk

7. Caring for those who report having been harmed (survivors)

The Congregation's commitments to survivors are set out in full in the Survivor Care and Support Policy. In summary, Grace and Compassion Benedictines will: listen with respect and compassion; provide a tailored support plan; signpost to independent support (Safe Spaces, NAPAC, Victim Support); maintain contact for as long as the survivor wishes; ensure the support offered is separate from any investigation process; and learn from each engagement.

8. Supporting Respondents (subjects of allegations)

Respondents are treated fairly, with dignity, and in accordance with the presumption of due process. The Respondent Support Policy sets out detailed arrangements, including the named Pastoral Support Contact, access to independent legal advice, mental-health support, and the conduct of risk-management measures while enquiries proceed.

9. Safer recruitment, training and supervision

- Enhanced DBS checks are required for every member, employee and volunteer involved in a regulated or relevant activity.
- Two written references are obtained and verified before any appointment.
- All recruitment follows the Safer Recruitment Policy and the Safer Recruitment Checklist.
- Every joiner completes the Safeguarding Induction Checklist before commencing ministry or duties.
- Safeguarding training is mapped by role in a Training Needs Analysis; the Central Register tracks completion and renewal.
- Supervision arrangements are in place for the DSL and for any individual managing a safeguarding case.

10. Records, information sharing and confidentiality

All safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the Data Storage and Records Management Policy and the Information Sharing Protocol. Records are retained in line with the retention schedule, safeguarding case records for 75 years from the date of the most recent entry.

11. Whistleblowing

Any person who has reason to believe that this Policy is not being followed, that a safeguarding matter is being concealed, or that retaliation is being taken against someone who has raised a concern, must raise the matter under the Whistleblowing Policy. Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protections apply.

Mapping to CSSA Standards

Standard	Theme	How this Policy supports it
Standard 1	Leadership, Governance & Culture	Sets the Congregation's overarching commitments, governance, accountability and culture.
Standard 2	Communicating the Safeguarding Message	Specifies how safeguarding is communicated; cross-references the noticeboard posters and flowcharts.
Standard 3	Engaging With & Caring for Those Harmed	Cross-references the Survivor Care and Support Policy and signposts independent support.
Standard 4	Managing Allegations & Concerns	Detailed reporting and escalation procedures; statutory contacts; concern recording.
Standard 5	Supporting Respondents	Cross-references the Respondent Support Policy.
Standard 7	Training & Support	Mandates training and induction, and references the Training Needs Analysis and induction checklist.
Standard 8	Quality Assurance & Improvement	Requires self-assessment, action planning, risk assessment and annual review.

12. Review & Assurance

- This Policy is reviewed annually by the DSL with the Safeguarding Committee.
- The Trustees approve the Policy annually.
- Compliance is monitored via the risk assessment, the CSSA action plan and the Annual Safeguarding Arrangements Report.
- Material changes (legislative, CSSA or RLSS) trigger an interim review.

Approval and Sign-off

This Policy is adopted by Grace and Compassion Benedictines and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Role Version 3	Name	Signature	Date
Congregational Leader / Prioress General	Sr Kathy Yeeles	<i>Sr Kathy Yeeles</i>	July 2026
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Sr Thaya Moses	<i>Sr Thaya Moses</i>	July 2026
Safeguarding Trustee (on behalf of the Board)	Sr Carmel Murtagh	<i>Sr Carmel Murtagh</i>	July 2026

Version History

Role Version 2	Name	Signature	Date
Congregational Leader / Prioress General	Sr Kathy Yeeles	<i>Sr Kathy Yeeles</i>	31 st August 2025
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Sr Thaya Moses	<i>Sr Thaya Moses</i>	31 st August 2025
Safeguarding Trustee (on behalf of the Board)	Sr Carmel Murtagh	<i>Sr Carmel Murtagh</i>	st August 2025
Role Version 1	Name	Signature	Date
Congregational Leader / Prioress General	Sr Kathy Yeeles	<i>Sr Kathy Yeeles</i>	25 th August 2023
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Sr Thaya Moses	<i>Sr Thaya Moses</i>	25 th August 2023
Safeguarding Trustee (on behalf of the Board)	Sr Carmel Murtagh	<i>Sr Carmel Murtagh</i>	25 th August 2023
			Summary of changes
			Grace and Compassion Benedictines CIO,