

Stanbrook Abbey Safeguarding Policy Supplement

‘All guests are to be welcomed as Christ...’
Rule of St Benedict Chapter 53

Our Lady of Consolation
Stanbrook Abbey

Autumn 2023

Table of Contents	1
Safeguarding Policy Statement	2
Code of Behaviour	3–4
Definitions of Abuse <i>children</i>	5
Definitions of Abuse <i>vulnerable adults</i>	6
How we respond to concerns/allegations	7–8
Safeguarding at Stanbrook Abbey	9–10
Useful contact telephone numbers	11

The community of Our Lady of Consolation, Stanbrook Abbey...

We live by the Gospel and the Rule of St Benedict and the precept that all who live, work or visit here are to be 'welcomed as Christ'.

Our dignity as human beings, created in the image and likeness of God is to be respected at all times and made concrete in the way we speak, behave and listen to one another.

Christ is especially present in the guest and in the sick. Our community should be a place where everyone feels safe and supported.

Date

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Do:

- Treat all people with dignity and respect
- Provide an example you wish others to follow
- Respect people's right to personal privacy
- Plan activities which involve more than one person being present, or at least within sight or hearing of others
- Encourage children, young people and vulnerable adults to feel comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviors they don't like
- Remember that others may interpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Recognize that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse
- Challenge unacceptable behavior and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse

DO NOT:

- Permit abusive peer activities (ridiculing, bullying)
- Play physical contact games with children and young people
- Have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others
- Jump to conclusions without checking the facts
- Show favoritism to any individual
- Make suggestive remarks or gestures even in fun
- Let suspicion, disclosure or allegations of abuse go unrecorded or unreported

In our relationships with one another in community we reflect the good practice we believe is the right of every individual who visits our community.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding involves protecting vulnerable groups from the sorts of harm listed here.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse involves acts of commission or omission, which result in harm to the child. Abuse may occur in the family, community or institutions e.g. school, hospital in the street

Definitions of Abuse

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to the child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms or, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional mal-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or not valued. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual on-line images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic psychological and/or physical needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Who is a vulnerable adult?

A vulnerable adult is a person aged over 18yrs who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or being exploited. This may be because of their circumstances e.g. chronic illness, disability, age, mental health issues or their lifestyle causes them to be at risk in some situations.

Definitions of abuse

Physical Abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual Abuse includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented to or was pressured into consenting to.

Psychological Abuse includes emotional abuse, threats of abandonment or harm, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive works.

Financial or material abuse includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory abuse includes racist, sexist, that is based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, slurs, negligence or ignorance.

How we respond to concerns or allegations?

If you receive any information about a safeguarding concern or an allegation, you must do all that you can to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are not put at continued risk and that a proper investigation may be made.

Key Principles

If you suspect that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being, has been or is likely to be abused you must take action.

To do nothing is not an option

If there is an immediate danger call the police or social services

If there is no immediate danger, collect the fullest possible information at the time the concern or allegation reaches you. That may include details of what you see, as well as what you are told.

At the first possible opportunity report the matter to the Religious Life Safeguarding Service RLSS (via the community safeguarding representative) 0151 5562311

If there is immediate danger ring 999

Do not under any circumstances alert the alleged abuser, either directly or indirectly, to what has happened. This is very important.

All information connected with the child, young person or vulnerable adult enquiry is strictly confidential. Do not share any

information with any person who does not need to know for the purposes of protecting children, young people or vulnerable adults and carrying out an effective investigation

Keep a record of any information that you provide, and to who, with reasons.

If any investigation is needed it will be done by the police, Social Services or the RLSS. To protect vulnerable people they need to make a careful assessment of risk, based on fact and judgement, and they –not you– must be the ones to carry out the investigation.

The 5 'R's of Safeguarding

- Recognise

You must have a clear understanding of the what the different signs and symptoms of potential abuse, harm and neglect can be. Listen and keep on listening

- Respond

If you do have a safeguarding concern, it is essential that you respond appropriately and do not ignore the situation. Don't ask questions

- Refer

It is usually the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead or management to pass on safeguarding concerns to the appropriate authorities. However, if the safeguarding risk is more urgent and you suspect somebody is under immediate or severe threat, you should contact the relevant local authority or police services.

- Report

Safeguarding concerns need to be reported without delay. Confidentiality is important, so only share information with those who are a part of the safeguarding process.

- Record

This is the who, what, when and where of safeguarding. Take precise, comprehensive notes that detail everything about your safeguarding concern. For example, who it involves, what happened, and include times and dates. You should do this as soon as possible.adult

Safeguarding at Stanbrook Abbey

The safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole community.

The safeguarding lead is appointed by the Abbess. She will ensure that the whole community and employees are familiar with the expectations of this policy and its practical implications.

As necessary she will facilitate DBS checks for the community and those entering the novitiate.

She will facilitate the DBS checks for those employees who work in the infirmary with vulnerable sisters, as part of the employment process.

She will attend training and updating courses and feed information back to the community as necessary.

The community will bring to her attention situations that involve concerns re the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults that visit the monastery.

She will refer to the Diocesan safeguarding officer all concerns regarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Typical situations for us at Stanbrook:

As an enclosed, contemplative Benedictine community we are visited by individuals and groups. Individuals ask to speak to sisters on a 'one to one' basis. We are **a listening ear** and do not offer therapeutic services. Should it become clear that someone needs more than a listening ear we have duty to point the individual in the direction of more appropriate support. When the individual is a vulnerable adult and there are concerns about their own safety we have a responsibility to refer the matter in the first instance to the Diocesan Safeguarding coordinator.

Occasionally, school groups visit our community. They are responsible to come to the monastery with the appropriate adult: child ratio for the particular age group.

An individual child should not be left with 'a' nun away from the rest of the group. If a nun is leading a session with a smaller group of children/young people another adult should be present. Activities are to be arranged and agreed with the visiting school prior to the visit.

6th Formers who come for an overnight visit to the monastery do not sleep inside the enclosure. They use our 'holiday' lodges and are the responsibility of the accompanying adult/teacher. Activities are to be arranged and agreed with the visiting school prior to the visit.

If any sister finds herself in a situation in which she feels uncomfortable she should ask for support from the safeguarding representative.

Contacts:

Monastery Safeguarding Representative: Sr Josephine Parkinson
01347 868900

Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) 0151 5562311

Safe Spaces Victim and Survivor Support 0300 3031051

NSPCC: 0800 800500

Child Line: 0800 1111

Stop it Now Helpline: 0808 1000 900

Action on Elder Abuse: 0808 808 8141

Age UK: 0800 169 6565

Local Social Services: 01609 534527

Local Police: 999 Emergency or
101 Enquiry

**Conventus of Our Lady of Consolation Registered Charity
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