

Jesuits in Britain and Jesuit Schools Working Together on Safeguarding



PURPOSE

The Jesuits in Britain are committed to the paramountcy principle, which is to say that the protection of children must always be the over-riding priority. Within this context, we seek to promote a culture of safeguarding in which Jesuits themselves, those who are employed by us or who work with us as volunteers, and members of the communities in which we work, including children, young people and adults at risk, are well informed about safeguarding, know how to respond to concerns or allegations, and know how to protect children and adults at risk. It is also important that any complainant can access us easily so they can report their case.

There are eleven schools associated with the Jesuits in Britain. Six independent schools are part of three local trusts and two independent schools, together with three voluntary aided schools, fall within the remit of the Trust for Roman Catholic Purposes (TRCP).

In this statement, we, the Jesuits in Britain, want to address the question of how we are to achieve that effective interagency cooperation which is the minimum standard of national and Church safeguarding guidance, a question which requires us to look in turn at the relationship we have with each of the Schools. The intention of this document is to make clear our *motivation*, the *principles* which inform our approach to the complex safeguarding issues which arise in this context, and to outline certain *procedural consequences* of those principles.

PREAMBLE

Together with the Catholic Church worldwide, the Jesuits in Britain acknowledge the serious failures of the past, both in terms of the abuse perpetrated by clergy, religious and laity engaged in Church works, and of the often-inadequate responses of Church authorities to victim-survivors.

We deeply regret that we have at times ourselves failed in both regards. We recognise that the resulting abuse crisis has gravely damaged many people. In addition, it has impaired the trust that victims, the faithful and wider society have in us. This seriously impedes our attempts to serve Christ's mission of salvation for all.

The Jesuits in Britain want wholeheartedly to support the efforts of Pope Francis, the Bishops and the Jesuit Superior General to create a culture of effective safeguarding in which all the vulnerable are protected and kept safe. In that context, we can then prevent further abuse and work to re-build damaged relationships and trust with integrity and authenticity and thereby to overcome the obstacles the crisis has placed in the path of our mission. Pope Francis has repeatedly demanded that Catholic institutions, over and beyond fulfilling their statutory and legal obligations, demonstrate Christian compassion and provide reparation for abuse that has taken place. We undertake to play our part in fulfilling that mandate.

As a Catholic religious order, we hereby express our intention, in partnership with our Schools, to meet these challenges, which flow from our Catholic faith. In addition to providing assurances about meeting all statutory obligations, we commit to proactive and effective action that will enable victim-survivors to access support aimed at repairing the harm caused. We want fully to play our part in making the Catholic Church safe for everyone. Any actions

related to these commitments will be effectively and widely communicated, not just to the Schools themselves but also to parishes and communities served by them and by the Jesuits in Britain.

We are committed to listening to any victim-survivors who have suffered abuse from Jesuits or their employees and volunteers, to acknowledging their experience, to responding effectively to their complaints, to providing them with pastoral and professional support at the earliest possible opportunity, and promptly to assess claims if and when they arise.

These commitments find expression in the Safeguarding Policy and practices of the Jesuits in Britain. We need these to be informed by and compliant with the relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory codes of practice for schools,¹ with the guidance applicable in the jurisdictions of England & Wales and of Scotland, and in particular with the obligations and responsibilities upon us as a charity (Jesuits in Britain) registered in England & Wales (230165) and in Scotland (040490). We also want to ensure that we always follow current best practice in the field of safeguarding so as to create and sustain a safe environment for all.

We need our Safeguarding Policy and practices to be informed by and compliant with Canon Law, the regulations of the Catholic Church, the prescriptions of the Society of Jesus, and the guidance of both the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission, CSAS and the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service, organisations directed by the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England & Wales and Scotland respectively.

In addition, for the local trust schools, being registered charities, national guidance governing charities will apply.

PRINCIPLES

1. The overriding concerns of the Jesuits in Britain in all matters concerning safeguarding are (i) the protection of children, (ii) justice towards survivors of abuse, and (iii) their care and support. All other principles and procedures should be interpreted in the light of this principle.

2. The Jesuits in Britain will listen to and offer help and to promptly assess claims if and when they arise to anyone who has been abused by Jesuits or their employees and volunteers.

In responding to complaints and concerns, therefore, we give high importance to the goal of making support for victim-survivors available through our Safeguarding Co-ordinator (or directly through the School where that is more appropriate).

3. The Jesuits in Britain fully respect the governance arrangements (informed by the guidance referred to above) which pertain to each of the Schools.

Therefore, we will cooperate with the Schools, whenever necessary, as they carry out the statutory duties and obligations relating to safeguarding. We will not act in any way to interfere with or impede them in doing so.

¹ The safeguarding policies and practices of the eleven schools are governed by statutory codes of practice:

- "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (2019) applying to schools in England and Wales and revised annually; "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2018)
- "National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland" (2014)
- "Getting it Right for Every Child" (2012) (latest iteration 2018) applying to schools in Scotland.

We would hope and expect in turn that the Schools offer their cooperation to the Jesuits in Britain as we seek to meet our obligations and duties. This includes, in particular, our duty to reach out to those who have been harmed and to offer relevant pastoral support according to needs, as well as our need to communicate in public in a manner coherent with our main aims.

4. The Jesuits in Britain are committed to an open, transparent and cooperative approach to safeguarding and to supporting this approach with the Schools.

5. The Jesuits in Britain aim to communicate in a manner that serves their broader safeguarding objectives.

We are committed to communicating with all concerned in a way that is effective, timely, maintains appropriate confidentiality and meets the legitimate expectations of victim-survivors other relevant parties, as required.

We want to ensure appropriate reporting to statutory and Church authorities and to provide access, as and when called for, to relevant records and persons so that concerns and complaints can be investigated without delay.

We are aware that ensuring we meet these communication objectives requires agreed and effective procedures with the Schools.

6. The Jesuits in Britain are committed to managing risks effectively when Jesuits or our employees and volunteers are subject to abuse investigation or where they have a conviction for, or credible finding of, abuse.

Therefore, in such circumstances, we will establish a safeguarding management plan. In doing so we will liaise with the relevant School to ensure that the provisions of the plan include actions required of the School in fulfilment of its obligations.

7. The Jesuits in Britain will diligently fulfil all obligations as Trustees charity 230165.

The Provincial of the Jesuits in Britain, as Proprietor of the two schools (Donhead & St John's Beaumont) which fall within the governance remit of the TRCP Charity, has direct obligations towards and a duty of care for their pupils and staff. Above and beyond the safeguarding reports made by all the Schools to statutory authorities, we are required, furthermore, to make reports to the Charity Commission. This means that we must be informed promptly of any cases or incidents which arise. This information needs to be shared directly with our Safeguarding Co-ordinator and our Delegate for Education (whose role is, among other things, to serve as a channel of communication between the Schools and TRCP) so that actions required of us in our capacity as Trustees can be undertaken.

8. The Jesuits in Britain are committed to regular evaluation of policies and practices, including those contained in this Statement, to improve the effectiveness of all safeguarding activities.

This means that we will review concrete cases we have of cooperation with a School so that our response will be better in the future.

CERTAIN PROCEDURAL IMPLICATIONS

It follows from the above principles that clear and agreed channels of communication are essential if we are to work effectively and well together. The following information should

guide our communications regarding safeguarding complaints and other related issues that may arise.

Our **Provincial** is ultimately responsible and accountable for the safeguarding arrangements of the Jesuits in Britain; as such, he is to be promptly informed, advised and consulted by all members of the Jesuits in Britain team (below) in support of his decisions and actions.

Our **Safeguarding Coordinator** is the nominated person and point of contact in communicating any concerns or complaints, in reporting to statutory and Church authorities, in communications with and support arrangements for victim-survivors, in maintaining and accessing records, in the development and application of safeguarding management plans, and in ensuring best practice is followed in all Jesuit works and affiliated institutions.

Our nominated **Safeguarding Trustee** and the **Chair of our Independent Safeguarding Commission** will be informed and consulted by the Safeguarding Coordinator, as will our **Education Delegate**, so that he can offer input on contextual factors of safeguarding in schools and facilitate effective communication and respect for due process.

Our **Treasurer** will progress any legal and compensation claims for which we take responsibility and is the link to lawyers and insurers. (Schools should not approach our insurers directly as this causes confusion.)

Our **Socius** (the Assistant to the Provincial), supported by our **Media and Communications Manager**, is responsible for media inquiries.

Given the complexity of most cases, a clear channel of communication is essential when communication and coordination is required between the Jesuits in Britain and each of the Schools. We therefore say that the principal channel of communication should be between the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead and our Safeguarding Coordinator (unless, of course, the allegation involves either of them directly), even when circumstances require liaison between other members of our safeguarding team and their opposite numbers in the School in question.

On matters of particular sensitivity and concern, it will always be acceptable for the Provincial to communicate directly with the Head teacher, keeping members of their respective teams informed and thereby supporting them in fulfilling their respective tasks.

Fr Damian Howard SJ

Provincial

6th July 2020