

The Union of the Sisters of Mercy of Great Britain

Safeguarding Communication Plan

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Approved by:	The Trustees of the Union of the Sisters of Mercy
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1. Purpose

The Union of the Sisters of Mercy's communication plan aims to ensure that all members, lay staff, and volunteers are informed and aware of the processes, procedures, policy changes, and training requirements related to safeguarding. This plan enables clear and consistent communication, which is essential for creating a safe environment where everybody understands their roles and responsibilities.

2. Objectives

Safeguarding the wellbeing of all is paramount for the Union of the Sisters of Mercy. We are aware that children and adults at risk of abuse may need a coordinated approach to help keep them safe. Clear communication is essential to ensure that our members feel confident should a safeguarding concern arise. This will support our approach to:

- Promoting awareness of safeguarding and informing our community of policy changes.
- Provide information on transparent reporting systems.
- Inform our community about the roles and responsibilities of those responsible for safeguarding.
- Provide timely training updates and opportunities to ensure our community is informed about relevant changes and safeguarding trends.

3. Key Audiences

Sisters, Leadership/Trustees, Staff, Volunteers.

4. Core Messages

We emphasise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that there is a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse. All concerns will be taken seriously, with confidentiality being respected, but safeguarding must be a priority.

5. Communication Channels

"Safeguarding information is communicated through newsletters, noticeboards, the website, and other accessible formats. A full overview of channels, responsibilities, and frequency is provided in **Appendix A.**"

Safeguarding Newsletter

Safeguarding newsletter to all Sisters, staff and volunteers. This includes safeguarding information, policy updates, training opportunities, and a reminder of the safeguarding lead's contact details. The safeguarding newsletter is sent out every two months via email, and a hard copy will be sent by post for Sisters, staff and volunteers who do not have access to email.

The newsletter is written by the Safeguarding Lead in conjunction with the Safeguarding Working Group and shared with the Leadership Team for oversight. Once approved, it is sent to the secretary for distribution to the wider group.

Noticeboards

Noticeboards are used in public spaces to inform and communicate our safeguarding message. Our statement is prominently displayed in a visible location for all visitors to see when entering the premises.

Noticeboards are updated when required. This could be due to new safeguarding information or other relevant updates.

Links with specialist services such as RNIB are established to help support those who require assistance with accessing communication materials.

Website

Our website communicates our safeguarding statement, safeguarding policy, complaints and whistleblowing policy. We recognise that anyone who wishes to raise a safeguarding concern or complaint should have the opportunity to do so.

The contact function allows for direct and confidential communication with the Safeguarding Lead.

Our website features information about the CSSA, RLSS, and Safe Spaces. This means that anyone accessing our website can contact the broader systems of safeguarding within the Catholic Church.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

The Congregational Leader has overall responsibility for safeguarding. She is supported by the Trustees, which includes a Trustee for Safeguarding.

The Safeguarding Trustee serves as the liaison between the Leadership Team and the Safeguarding Working Group. The Safeguarding Trustee also provides scrutiny of policies, training, and DBS practices, as well as support to the Safeguarding Lead.

The Safeguarding Lead manages safeguarding concerns and develops policies, systems, and processes, updating the community and staff about training, relevant themes or hot topics. Additionally, the Safeguarding Lead manages PVG applications for Sisters in Scotland and all staff across the UK.

The DBS Coordinator for England and Wales manages DBS applications for Sisters in England and Wales.

This information, along with the names of the individuals assigned to these roles, is communicated to all Sisters and staff through a leaflet distributed by the secretary.

Appendix A. Communication Channels

Channel	What is Communicated	Responsible	Frequency
Newsletter	Policy updates, safeguarding information, training opportunities, and Safeguarding Lead contact details.	Safeguarding Lead (with Safeguarding Working Group); distributed by the secretary.	Every 2 months
Noticeboards	Safeguarding statement prominently displayed, urgent safeguarding information, and other relevant updates.	Safeguarding Lead	As required
Website	Safeguarding statement, safeguarding policy, complaints and whistleblowing policy, contact form for confidential reporting, links to CSSA, RLSS, Safe Spaces	Safeguarding Lead, Secretary + Web Admin	Reviewed quarterly
Accessibility / Other	Alternative formats (ESOL translations, large print, easy-read, support for hearing and cognitive needs)	Safeguarding Team	As needed