

# Safeguarding Communication Policy & Process

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## Policy Statement

The Greyfriars recognise that safeguarding is fundamentally rooted in how we communicate. The way we speak, listen, record, and share information directly impacts the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of children, adults at risk, and all those we encounter in ministry.

We are committed to ensuring that safeguarding communication is not only procedurally correct, but also visible, understood, and consistently practised across all levels of the organisation. This includes clergy, religious members, staff, volunteers, and members of our wider community.

Safeguarding communication within our setting is therefore guided by a commitment to transparency, accountability, compassion, and clarity, ensuring that concerns are raised without hesitation, responded to appropriately, and never minimised or overlooked.

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## Purpose

This policy establishes a clear and consistent framework for safeguarding communication, ensuring that all individuals understand how to recognise concerns, respond appropriately, and share information responsibly.

It aims to remove ambiguity, reduce risk, and strengthen safeguarding culture by ensuring that communication is not dependent on individual judgment alone, but supported by clear structures, shared understanding, and accountable processes.

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## Scope and Context

This policy applies to all safeguarding-related communication across:

- Religious life and ministry, including pastoral care, liturgical settings, sacramental encounters, and spiritual direction
- Organised activities involving children, young people, and adults at risk
- Volunteer-led activities and community outreach
- Internal leadership, governance, and safeguarding oversight structures
- External engagement with statutory bodies, partner organisations, and the wider public

Safeguarding communication must remain consistent across all these contexts, recognising that risk can arise both within formal ministry and informal community interaction.

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## **Alignment with CSSA Standards**

This policy is explicitly aligned with the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) framework.

It supports the creation of a safeguarding culture where communication is open and understood (Standard 1), ensures that leadership maintains oversight and accountability (Standard 2), enables timely and appropriate responses to concerns (Standard 3), promotes compassionate and responsible care (Standard 4), strengthens awareness and confidence (Standard 5), reinforces safe ministry practice (Standard 6), enables safe challenge and transparency (Standard 7), and contributes to continuous improvement through review and learning (Standard 8).

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## **Principles of Safeguarding Communication**

Safeguarding communication within this organisation is not merely the exchange of information; it is an expression of care and responsibility. Communication must therefore be clear, timely, proportionate, confidential, respectful, and accountable.

Clarity ensures that individuals understand what is expected of them. Timeliness ensures that concerns are not delayed. Proportionality ensures that information is shared appropriately, without unnecessary disclosure. Confidentiality protects dignity while not preventing necessary action. Respect ensures that all individuals are treated with care. Accountability ensures that communication follows safeguarding procedures rather than personal discretion.

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## **Communication in Ministry Contexts**

Safeguarding communication within ministry requires particular attention due to the presence of authority, trust, and spiritual influence.

In pastoral settings, including spiritual direction, confession, and one-to-one accompaniment, communication must remain appropriate, transparent, and accountable. While these settings may involve sensitive and personal disclosure, they must never create environments where safeguarding concerns are withheld, minimised, or managed informally.

Ministers must be especially mindful that:

- Spiritual language must never be used to discourage disclosure or override safeguarding responsibilities
- No conversation, regardless of its spiritual nature, removes the duty to act where a safeguarding concern is identified
- Boundaries must remain clear, even within relationships of trust and care

Where safeguarding concerns arise within ministry contexts, they must be communicated through the same safeguarding processes, without exception.

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## Communication with Volunteers and Lay Participants

Volunteers play a vital role in religious communities and must be fully included in safeguarding communication structures.

It is the responsibility of leadership to ensure that volunteers:

- Know who the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is
- Understand how to raise a concern
- Feel confident that concerns will be taken seriously
- Are not placed in situations where they feel responsible for managing and safeguarding issues independently

Safeguarding communication with volunteers must be regular, accessible, and reinforced, rather than assumed.

Volunteers must never be expected to interpret safeguarding situations in isolation. Instead, they must be encouraged to report concerns promptly, with reassurance that doing so is both appropriate and expected.

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## Communication Within Local Communities

Safeguarding extends beyond internal structures and must be visible within the wider community.

This includes:

- Ensuring safeguarding contacts are publicly displayed
- Making safeguarding information accessible to those who engage with the organisation
- Providing clear routes for raising concerns, including for those outside the organisation

Communication must ensure that individuals who are not part of formal structures, including visitors, beneficiaries, and community members, can still access safeguarding support and raise concerns.

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## **Safeguarding Communication Process**

Safeguarding communication must follow a structured and consistent process.

When a concern arises, the individual must recognise the importance of responding without delay. The concern must be recorded factually, capturing what was seen, heard, or disclosed, without interpretation or investigation.

The concern must then be communicated to the Designated Liaison Person immediately. Under no circumstances should individuals attempt to resolve or investigate concerns independently.

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for assessing the concern, determining appropriate action, and communicating with relevant authorities where required. This may include statutory agencies, safeguarding bodies, or leadership, depending on the nature and severity of the concern.

All communication must be documented securely and accurately.

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## **Information Sharing and Confidentiality**

Safeguarding communication must balance confidentiality with the need to protect individuals from harm.

Information must be shared only with those who need to know, but must not be withheld where there is a safeguarding concern.

The organisation recognises that:

- Data protection legislation does not prevent the sharing of safeguarding information
- Safeguarding takes precedence where there is a risk of harm
- Records must be securely stored and accessible only to authorised individuals

All safeguarding records must be factual, dated, and maintained in accordance with organisational data retention policies.

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## Speaking Up and Whistleblowing

A safeguarding culture depends on individuals' confidence to speak up.

The organisation is committed to ensuring that:

- Concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation
- Alternative reporting routes are available where needed
- Individuals are supported when raising concerns

Silence presents risk. Safeguarding communication must actively encourage openness and challenge where necessary.

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## APPENDIX 1

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS TO STRENGTHEN PRACTICE:

#### “What This Looks Like in Practice”

Effective safeguarding communication is visible in everyday behaviour:

- A volunteer reporting a concern immediately, rather than waiting
- A priest recognising that a pastoral disclosure requires safeguarding action
- A community member knowing exactly who to contact
- A leader responding calmly and procedurally rather than emotionally

Safeguarding is strengthened when communication becomes habitual rather than exceptional.

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## Safeguarding Communication Scripts

### If Someone Discloses a Concern

“Thank you for telling me. I’m really glad you’ve shared this. I cannot keep this confidential, but I will share it only with those who need to know to keep you safe. I will need to pass this on to the safeguarding lead so that we can support you properly.”

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## If You Need to Report a Concern

“I have a safeguarding concern that I need to report. I have recorded what I observed and would like to pass this to you as the safeguarding lead.”

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## Communication Audit Checklist

Leadership should be able to evidence:

- Visibility of safeguarding contacts
  - Awareness across clergy, staff, and volunteers
  - Clear reporting pathways
  - Secure and accessible records
  - Evidence of regular communication and reminders
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## Training Prompt for Communities

A simple reflective exercise:

“Do we all know who to contact if we have a concern, and would we act immediately?”

If the answer is uncertain, communication needs strengthening.

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## Visual Communication Flow (For Training Use)

**Concern arises → Record → Report to DLP → DLP assesses → Referral (if required) → Record & monitor**

This flow should be visible in safeguarding materials and training.

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## Monitoring and Review

This policy and its associated communication practices will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required.

Review will consider:

- Effectiveness of communication pathways
- Feedback from members, volunteers, and leadership

- Learning from safeguarding cases or near misses

Continuous improvement is essential to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture.

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## Associated Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
  - Reporting Procedure
  - Whistleblowing Policy
  - Complaints Policy
  - Data Protection Policy
  - Code of Conduct
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## Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Approved By	Review Date
Ver :1 ,	March 2026	Safeguarding Lead	Trustees	March 2027