



The Catholic Association

PROTECTION POLICY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

THE OVERARCHING STRATEGY

The Paramourcy Principle

Everyone, both within our organisation and amongst the public at large should be aware of the importance that we attach to the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We endorse without reservation the “Paramourcy Principle” which is the fundamental guiding principle accepted by statutory and other bodies in all child protection procedures in England and Wales. Arising from the children act 1989, this states that the welfare of the child should be the paramount consideration in all matters concerning children and young people.

What Is Protection of Children, Young People And Vulnerable Adults?

The Catholic Association recognizes the personal dignity and rights of children and vulnerable adults towards whom it has a special responsibility and a duty of care. The Catholic Association and all individual members of it, undertake to do all in their power to create a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults and prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

The Catholic Association authorities will liaise closely with statutory agencies to ensure that any allegations of abuse are promptly reported and properly dealt with, victims supported and perpetrators held to account.

Who are Children?

The legal definition of a child is given in the Children Act of 1989, as any person aged 18 and under. This definition has been adopted by the Catholic Association and therefore any pilgrim under the age of 18 should be considered as a child.

Who are Vulnerable Adults?

The legal definition of a vulnerable adult is a person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

What is Abuse?

Emotional: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying to them that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

Physical: Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to an individual. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill-health to a person whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fictitious illness by proxy, or Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy.

Sexual: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children, young adults or vulnerable people in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child, young person or vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger, or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, an individual's basic emotional needs.

Financial: Financial abuse describes the situation where an abuser misappropriates a vulnerable person's money and/or other assets through various means (eg. theft or fraud); misuses or wrongfully spends a vulnerable person's assets while having legitimate access to these; or fails to use a vulnerable person's assets to meet that person's needs.

THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTION

At the core of the Catholic Association's management of protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults is the use of the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) vetting procedure. Regulations require the Catholic Association to carry out its own CRB vetting checks, whether or not individuals have been vetted by other organisations.

Child Protection Officer

The Trustees will appoint a Child Protection Officer who will oversee the management of the Catholic Association Protection Policy and be a single point of contact during pilgrimages.

The current Child Protection Officer is Osyth Hawke.

Who must be checked?

The following members of the Catholic Association must be subjected to CRB vetting:

Trustees
Child Protection Officer
Heads of Department
Diocesan Directors
Hospitalité Council Members
Doctors
Nurses
Management Committee Members
Young Persons Group Supervisors
Glanfield Group Helpers
Helpers' Children's Programme Staff and Helpers
Brancardiers
Handmaids
Priests and Deacons (who will work with children or in the Accueil)

In principle all those above should be in possession of a CRB disclosure certificate before working on the Catholic Association Pilgrimage; this is to be the case for all those working in the Glanfield Group or Helpers' Children's Programme. Administrative difficulties due to the geographic spread of our organisation and delays at the CRB may make this impossible to achieve for all volunteers; however, the majority must have completed disclosure forms in advance of the Pilgrimage and a certificate must be produced for subsequent Pilgrimages.

Refusal to complete a disclosure form for the Catholic Association would bar an individual from working with children, young adults or vulnerable adults on the Catholic Association Pilgrimage.

How Frequently Should Checks Occur?

The Catholic Association Policy is that those working in the Glanfield Group or Helpers' Children's Programme must be checked annually. Others must be checked every 3 years if possible, and always within 5 years.

THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION CRB PROCESS

CRB Disclosure Application Counter-Signatories

CRB Disclosure Application Forms must be signed by counter-signatories. The Catholic Association Trustees will nominate CRB counter-signatories who must be experienced helpers. Their numbers should be limited; currently, 6 individuals are nominated.

Current Counter-Signatories are: Trevor Fernandes, Bill Kidd, Frances Presgraves, Chris Thorpe, Sadie Vile and Tina Walker.

CRB Disclosure Application Nominated Members

The workload for counter-signatories can be reduced by using nominated members of the Catholic Association who are authorised to check the details of documentary evidence. CRB forms will be sent on to counter-signatories with photocopies of the original documents. The Catholic Association Trustees will nominate CRB counter-signatories who must be experienced helpers. Their numbers should be limited but there must be enough to ensure geographic coverage.

Counter-Signatories' and Nominated Members' Responsibilities

Counter-signatories and nominated members must be CRB vetted themselves. They must also be made aware of their responsibilities to the Catholic Association and to those in our care.

CRB Database

A central database of CRB vetted individuals will be held. Counter-Signatories must ensure that details of all vetted individuals are included in the database. The data will be available to the Child Protection Officer in Lourdes.

Chris Thorpe manages the database and holds the disclosure forms.

COMMUNICATION

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy is published on the CA website along with a helpers' Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct and details of how to contact the Child Protection Officer will be published in the Pilgrimage Handbook. Copies of the Policy and Code of Conduct should be published on posters in the Accueil.

The Child Protection Officer will be introduced to pilgrims during the Pilgrimage Opening Mass.

CODE OF CONDUCT

YOU MUST

- Treat all pilgrims with respect.
- Always be an example of good conduct that you would wish others to follow.
- Ensure that there is more than one helper present during your activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others. Clearly Sacramental or Medical protocols may be exceptions to this requirement. However, all sensible precautions should be taken to ensure everyone's safety.
- Respect all pilgrims' rights to personal privacy.
- Encourage pilgrims to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Be aware that even caring physical contact with a pilgrim may be misinterpreted.
- Recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with other helpers or other pilgrims.
- Operate within the Code of Good Conduct and procedures of the Catholic Association Lourdes Pilgrimage

YOU MUST NOT

- Render yourself unfit for duty through the consumption of alcohol or the lack of sleep.
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with other pilgrims.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour.
- Make suggestive/derogatory remarks or gestures in front of other pilgrims.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts.
- Exaggerate or trivialize abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Rely on your good name or that of the Church to protect you.
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'.
- Take a chance when common sense, policy, and practice suggest another more prudent approach.
- Ignore the Protection Guidelines and Procedures operating within the organisation.

WHAT TO DO . . .

If a pilgrim discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Allow him or her to speak without interruption, accepting what is said, but *do not* investigate.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, do not pass judgment.
- Let them know you are glad they have shared this information.
- Advise the person that you must pass on the information.
- Report the matter to the leader in charge of your group/section, and/or the Pilgrimage Protection Officer.

If you suspect a pilgrim is being abused, emotionally, physically, or sexually:

- Report the matter to the leader in charge of your group/section, and/or the Pilgrimage Child Protection Officer.

If you receive an allegation about any pilgrim or about yourself:

- Immediately tell the leader in charge of your group/section, and/or the Pilgrimage Protection Officer.
- Try to ensure that no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise.

In all cases:

- The listener must record the conversation as soon as possible. The record should reflect the conversation as accurately as possible, using the Pilgrim's own words. The record should be signed and dated noting the time and location at which it took place. The names of anyone else present should be included.
- Report facts to the Pilgrimage Protection Officer.
- You must refer, you must not investigate. Do not contact the subject of the allegation.
- Do not promise confidentiality, as any information received may have to be acted upon by other authorities.