Missio Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

Missio, including Mission Together, is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all people and recognise our particular responsibility towards children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect (adult at risk) Missio has a particular involvement with schools and young people, which is reflected in the policy. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the best interest of the individual is paramount.

For the purposes of this policy an adult at risk is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support.[1]

This policy will be updated at least annually and/or when further advice and guidance is published by the government or advice agencies. It is available to everyone working in school and young people environments and is published on the Missio website. Paper copies are available by verbal or written request.

The Policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Catholic Safeguarding Standard Agency (CSSA)

Any Missio staff or volunteer who has a concern about a child's welfare should in the first instance contact the School Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher and their Missio line manager and HR Adviser who will record and follow up the concern.

Missio employees and volunteers will only undertake supervised work and activities with children and young people or adults at risk. They are to be *overseen always* by a nominated leader or member of employees/volunteers from the visiting or visited establishment who has been checked at an enhanced level, including the Barred List for Children where the work/activity is with children.

Scope of the Policy

The Policy applies to all Missio employees. It also applies to all volunteers who work with Missio or in Missio's name. The policy also applies to all those engaged, commissioned, or contracted to work with or for Missio in any capacity.

Missio Employees/Volunteers/Contractors will:

- Assess the safeguarding risks for all events which Missio organises and plan for their mitigation.
- Act in good faith and treat other people with dignity and respect, without discrimination, harassment, abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that their personal and professional conduct is, and is seen to be, of the highest standard and does not bring Missio into disrepute.

[1] **Care Act 2014/Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**

- Take reasonable action to protect others from harm and to challenge infringements of the rights of others, especially children and young people or adults at risk.
- Ensure that all contact with children, young people or adults at risk (whether by phone, email or direct contact) is supervised, accompanied, or at least in sight of other adults.
- Never shame, belittle or degrade children or adults that are being ministered to, or colleagues.
- Refrain from showing favouritism to anyone, to the exclusion of others, or inconsistent application of rules.
- Refrain from singling out individual children, young people or adults at risk.
- Always challenge bullying and peer-to-peer abuse in all its forms.
- Avoid touching a child, young person or adult at risk, unless there is a reason to do so – e.g., the person puts their hand out to shake hands.
- Refrain from engaging in any form of personal relationship with any person being ministered to in the course of their work with Missio.
- Declare any prior relationship with a child, young person, parent, adult (e.g., a family relationship, a neighbour) to the Missio Safeguarding Lead.
- Always obtain consent from schools or other relevant responsible organisation before taking images (e.g. photographs, videos) of them. Consent to the safe use of images (photography and filming) form to be completed.
- The decision to say no will always be respected.

Safer recruitment

Applicants for roles working for Missio will:

- Provide a detailed CV which includes their employment/volunteering history and any gaps in that history will be explored at interview.
- Provide two referees.
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications.
- If offered employment/voluntary role, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations *as appropriate to the role.*
- If offered employment/voluntary role, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK.
- If appointed, employees/volunteers confirm they have received a copy of the Missio Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, and understand their role in safeguarding;

Missio maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

Taking action to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe

It is not Missio's role to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation made by any child or adult. All employees/volunteers however have a duty to recognise concerns and refer any concerns and allegations to the relevant person or authority. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of pupils will be discussed with the designated safeguarding lead with responsibility for safeguarding within the visited establishment.

Reporting requirements

All clergy, religious, lay employees and volunteers are required to report allegations of abuse, and concerns to the safeguarding lead within the diocese or religious order, who will ensure a referral is made to statutory authorities within 1 working day.

If a child or young person, or an adult, is in immediate danger this must be reported immediately to the Police.

Regardless of whether the accused person is living or deceased, where it is believed that a criminal offence may have taken place, the allegation must be referred to the Police within one working day.

When a person's conduct towards a child or an adult may impact on their suitability to work with or continue to work with children or adults, the allegation must be referred to the local authority's designated officer (2) for safeguarding or adults within 1 working day.

Where a safeguarding allegation or concern relates to someone who is aged 18 years or over but is still receiving children's welfare services, the matter will be addressed using adult safeguarding arrangements (3).

Reporting

Missio's safeguarding leads are:

- Nicky Pisa, Fundraising & Communications Director – contact details: nickypisa@missio.org.uk 020 7821 9755
- Claire Colleran, Education Outreach Officer – contact details: education2@missio.org.uk 07581148504
- Richard Hopper, HR Adviser – contact details: richard@richardhopper.co.uk, 07939 503616

If any employee or volunteer suspects abuse, or if a child or adult makes a disclosure, or if a person external to Missio reports to Missio a suspicion or allegation relating to Missio employees, volunteers or activities, including activities carried out in partnership with Missio by other organisations, the following steps must be taken:

- Immediately record the incident/concern or report;
- Pass the report to Nicky Pisa, Fundraising & Communications Director and Richard Hopper, HR Adviser;

Nicky Pisa will assess and review within 24 hours. If urgent action is required to protect children or an adult at risk, this must be done immediately by contacting the Police. No employee or volunteer will prejudice their own standing or position within Missio by responsibly reporting potential or suspected child abuse.

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[2] This role is responsible for overseeing concerns or allegations made against employees, volunteers and others working within organisations and ensuring that the approach taken is coordinated and matters are investigated, recorded, followed up and concluded in a timely manner.

[3] Care and support statutory guidance (DOH, 2016)

Investigating and responding to Reports

In the event of a concern or allegation of abuse being reported, Missio will act immediately, prioritising the safety of the alleged victim, following the process set out below:

1. Nicky Pisa or in her absence Claire Colleran will assess and review within 24 hours.
2. They will assess the concern/allegation and decide next steps, including who else needs to be informed. This might include the Safeguarding officer/Headteacher in another organisation, responsible adult, a Catholic Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator and/or, if appropriate, relevant personnel in statutory agencies, such as the Police or Social Services.;
3. In addition to any actions taken by statutory authorities, and in accordance with said authorities, the meeting will instigate an investigation if it is thought there may have been a breach of organisational policy. The Missio HR Adviser will designate an investigating officer and will continue to guide and monitor the process;
4. An investigation will gather evidence and interview relevant parties in order to establish the facts and make recommendations about action needed to be taken in relation to the employee/volunteer, and where appropriate, recommendations about action in relation to policy and procedure changes where these are found to have contributed to the incident taking place. The process will seek to reinforce Missio's safeguarding procedures.
5. Missio's National Director will be informed and updated regarding the progress and outcome of the investigation.

The subject of the complaint (alleged perpetrator) and all witnesses must co-operate fully and openly with internal and statutory investigations and hearings. Their confidentiality will be protected and information which could identify them will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Anyone who knowingly communicates confidential information about a case may be subject to disciplinary action.

Missio will be guided by the relevant statutory authority regarding the individual remaining in role whilst an investigation takes place. If removal from role is recommended by the relevant statutory authority and/or Nicky Pisa, in consultation with the Missio HR Adviser and National Director, this will be regarded as a neutral act and will not prejudice any internal investigation.

If a Missio employee is the subject of a safeguarding allegation they may be immediately suspended on full pay until an investigation has been completed subject to guidance from the relevant statutory authority. If a Missio volunteer is the subject of an allegation of abuse they will be withdrawn from their work until an investigation has been completed. Missio will inform the statutory authorities. In both cases, it should be made clear that suspension does not imply prejudgment of the investigation outcome but rather protects all parties while an investigation is undertaken.

If an unsubstantiated suspicion is expressed, the investigating officer will gather evidence in order to undertake a risk assessment and then take appropriate action, which may involve contacting statutory authorities.

Confidentiality

When speaking to a child or an adult in circumstances where there are concerns about significant harm to a child or an adult, full confidentiality cannot be promised. It may become necessary to share the information in the best interests of the child or adult at risk and/or to protect others as well as the person

subject to the concerns. Information may need to be shared for a Child Protection Enquiry by Children's Social Care Services, and/or for a criminal investigation by the Police or for an adult investigation by Adult Social Care Services and/or in some circumstances it may be needed for action in the Courts or other legal proceedings or for insurance reasons.

Confidentiality is often confused with secrecy and remaining anonymous in reporting and referring. Anonymity can be agreed where the report is coming from a parishioner or member of the public and is being passed to the public agencies through an employee/volunteer of Missio, but only with their agreement and in agreement with the public agency e.g. the Police or Children's Social Care Services / Adult Social Care Services. Total anonymity cannot be guaranteed as the circumstances may develop into a criminal process.

If there are concerns about the safety of the person reporting, this must be clearly recorded and taken into full account when reaching an agreement with the Social Care Services and the Police.

Where a person in a formal role within Missio raises a concern or reports an allegation of abuse, they cannot do so anonymously.

Allegations made against employees/volunteers and volunteers of Missio

In accordance with article 19 of Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter, "*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*", 7 May 2019[4], it is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales[5] to report to the statutory authorities, all allegations of abuse made against those working in the name of the Church, regardless of whether the allegations or concerns relate to a person's behaviour in relation to their role within the Church or another setting.

This policy must be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a member of the Clergy or Religious Community, lay persons, and volunteers:

- has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child or an adult at risk;
- have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or an adult at risk;
- has behaved towards a child(ren) or an adult(s) in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults;
- has behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children or adults at risk;
- has behaved in such a way that, by actions or omissions, his or her conduct has been intended to interfere with or avoid civil investigations or canonical investigations, whether administrative or penal, against a cleric or a religious regarding the above[6]

These behaviours are to be considered within the context of the different categories of abuse and include sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect and self-neglect; domestic abuse, including

[4] In England and Wales, articles 1 and 19 of Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter, "*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*", 7 May 2019, mean that sexual acts, including pornography, committed by clergy or members of Institutes of Consecrated Life or Societies of Apostolic Life against an adult at risk must be reported to the statutory authorities. It is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales to extend this to all forms of abuse against children or adults at risk by any abuser.

[5] This includes certain areas outside of England and Wales which are the responsibility of dioceses within England and Wales e.g. the Channel Islands and Isle of Man

[6] This means willfully; a deliberate attempt to interfere with or prevent civil or canonical investigations.

controlling or coercive behaviour and/or economic abuse; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation; the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation; psychological abuse; financial or material abuse; modern slavery; discriminatory abuse; organisational abuse.

For children, this includes:

- having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual (see **ss16-19 Sexual Offences Act 2003**); or with someone over 18 that was groomed into the relationship while still a child (i.e., under 18 years);
- 'grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (see **s15 Sexual Offences Act 2003**);
- other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature e.g. inappropriate text / e-mail messages or images, gifts, socialising etc
- possession of indecent photographs / pseudo-photographs of children.

All images[7] that appear to be indecent, nude/semi-nude, or abusive (photographic, digital, or other medium) must always be given to the Police to determine whether they are of children and whether an offence has been committed. A decision about whether the images are of children must not be taken within the Church.

If an adult with capacity explicitly refuses the making of a referral about abuse that occurred in their childhood, consideration will be given to whether the accused person has access to children who may be at risk. In these circumstances, the name of the accused and details of the allegation will be referred to the statutory authorities, without disclosing the name of the alleged victim where they have refused consent to do so.

Whistleblowing

Any Missio employee or volunteer who raises concerns of serious malpractice will be protected if they come forward with serious concerns, if they have raised the concern in good faith. Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offence and will be investigated in accordance with Missio's disciplinary policy and procedure.

Risk Management

[7] This includes:
1.Indecent images of children under the Protection of Children Act 1978 which includes:
Indecent photographs
Pseudo photographs
Tracings or
Derivatives of photographs/pseudo photographs

2.Prohibited images of children under S.62 Coroners and Justice Act 2009 which includes:
Computer generated images (CGI)
Cartoons
Manga images
Drawings

3. Possession of Paedophile Manual under S.69 Serious Crime Act 2015 which is defined as 'in possession of any item that contains advice or guidance about abusing children sexually' e.g. include how to produce images/groom

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Risk will be managed using Safeguarding Plans which are reviewed at least annually.

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