

Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

CACS's ministry is the third stage of evangelisation, and the community is led by the friars at the Oxford Carmelite Priory, alongside the lay ministers who work together in CACS. The Oxford Priory is the physical location; however, this ministry occurs both onsite and across the globe via the internet.

The following is a safeguarding policy statement for the community of laity, religious and friars who make up CACS. All members of CACS and the Oxford Priory are committed to the eight Catholic Safeguarding Service Standards. Our policy statement, outlined in this document, is built around these eight standards.

Contact Details

Comments or questions on the above should be directed to the below postal and email addresses:

Postal address:

The Carmelite Priory
Chiswell
Boars Hill
Oxford
Oxfordshire
United Kingdom
OX1 5HB

CACS email: admin@carmelite.org.uk

Safeguarding leads: Fr. Liam Finnerty OCD, Fr. Clement Oborah OCD, Kate Keefe

Safeguarding email: safe@cacs.org.uk

Safeguarding phone: 07300319055

A Message of Commitment from the Director of CACS

Fr Alexander Ezechukwu



Here at the Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (CACS), safeguarding is a core part of our mission to always be a safe and sacred community.

Carmelite spirituality is founded on a deep thirst for spiritual intimacy and friendship, recognising the divine indwelling in every single person. Because of this, we see every encounter as a kind of theophany – a manifestation of God – that must be respected and safeguarded. The dignity and sacredness of each person is paramount.

For us, safeguarding work takes many dimensions. It is not just a policy on a shelf or a box-ticking exercise. Instead, we are committed to promoting a genuine spirituality of care. As an international community of friars, laity, experts and volunteers, this work is challenging and demanding. But it is a journey we are committed to – a journey towards creating a sacred and safe place for spiritual growth, formation and wholeness for everyone.

As a registered affiliate of the CSSA, our safeguarding practices align with the eight national Safeguarding Standards, the national policies and associated best practice guidance for the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Supported by our safeguarding team, we ensure that all concerns of a safeguarding nature are responded to promptly. Our approach is one of zero tolerance; where an allegation of abuse is made against those working in the name of the church, regardless of whether the allegation relates to their behaviour in their role within the Church or another setting, we will report this to the statutory authorities. This includes allegations where the identified perpetrator is deceased.

We will liaise openly with the relevant statutory authorities to support investigations. We seek to respond sensitively and compassionately to those in need, listening and learning from the voices of victims and survivors.



Fr Alexander Ezechukwu, OCD

Director of CACS, Chair of Safeguarding Committee



Safeguarding Awareness: Promoting a Good Safeguarding Culture

Standard 1: Embed safeguarding in the Church body's leadership, governance, ministry and culture

The Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality is committed to safeguarding all children and adults and ensuring our community is a sacred and safe space. This commitment directly relates to the fact that we are all made in the image of God, and the Church's common belief in the preciousness, dignity and uniqueness of every human life. We start from the principle that each person has a right to expect the highest level of protection, love, encouragement and respect.

Following on from the safeguarding reviews in 2020, we are committed to the "One Church Approach" to safeguarding by implementing the changes needed and ensuring we respond to victims/survivors promptly and compassionately.

In accordance with Article 19 of Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter, "Vos Estis Lux Mundi", from the 7th May 2019, it is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, as agreed by the Bishops Conference in April 2020, that all reports of abuse made against those working in the name of the Church are sent to the statutory authorities. This is regardless of whether the reports or concerns relate to a person's behaviour in relation to their role within the Priory or CACS, or any other setting. This policy must be applied in all situations where it is alleged, or where there are reasonable grounds to believe, that a member of the religious community – volunteer or employee – has acted in one of the following ways:

- Has behaved in a way that has harmed or is likely to have caused harm to a child or an adult at risk (hereafter *vulnerable adult*). This includes any vulnerable adult, irrespective of the cause of that vulnerability or whether the vulnerability is temporary or permanent.
- Has or is suspected to have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or a vulnerable adult.
- Has behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults.
- Has behaved in a way or made statements indicating that they may not be suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

- Has behaved in such a way that, by actions or omissions, their conduct has been intended to interfere with prejudice or undermine or avoid a criminal, civil or canonical investigation, against any person associated with or who is a member of a contracting congregation.

The behaviours above are to be considered within the context of the different categories of abuse, including sexual offences against children, both recent and non-recent offences, and possession and distribution of indecent images of children.

Additional national guidance can be provided by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) in relation to the sexual and criminal exploitation of children by organised criminal networks if the need arises.

The below is additional guidance from the CSSA provided in relation to adults disclosing abuse outside the context of the Church.

If a competent adult explicitly refuses the making of a referral about abuse that occurred outside of the Church, consideration must 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 report must always be referred to the statutory authorities. This can be done without disclosing the name of the victim/survivor where they have refused consent to do so, or where it is not possible to obtain consent.

It is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales to report to statutory authorities where a child or an adult is at immediate risk of harm, or there is concern that a child or adult is suffering or is likely to be suffering from significant harm or abuse from somebody who does not hold a role within the Church. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Someone who is at serious risk of harm from self or others.
- Someone who poses a serious risk of harm to someone else.
- A concern about a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm from someone else.
- Concerns over someone's mental capacity.

This policy and procedures apply to all workers within the Carmelite Priory, Oxford, religious, lay, voluntary or employee, regardless of their role or the activities they undertake.

It is the responsibility of all members of the Community to prevent abuse, whether by action or omission. Abuse in this policy refers to: physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, neglect, self-neglect, organisational, material, psychological, financial, domestic or verbal.

Additionally, behaviour which effectively results in modern day slavery or where there is evidence of discrimination or radicalisation.

Safeguarding training at a commensurate level to someone's roles and responsibilities also informs an awareness of the different types of abuse. This is available through the CACS level II online safeguarding course and the CSSA's free online safeguarding courses.

Please see our separate training log in reference to safeguarding training for the Priory and CACS. This includes the following safeguarding training:

- An audit of safeguarding training completed by all friars at Oxford Priory up to February 2026
- Training of the DBS team at CACS
- Training completed by the prior and safeguarding Leads
- Training completed by the CACS Safeguarding Committee
- Level II safeguarding training for all SDFP students
- Training for students on the CACS Supervision Programme
- Training for all SEM ministers.



Communication

Standard 2: Communicate the Church's safeguarding message

Safeguarding as part of our commitment to be a safe and sacred community lies at the heart of all that we do within CACS, and we communicate this in several ways:

- Our safeguarding policy is available in paper copy upon request, or as an electronic copy via our website. All our safeguarding policies are published on our website.
- All first-year students on the SDFP undertake modules in safeguarding at CACS, as do students on the CACS Supervision Course.
- Additionally, we have a safeguarding implementation and improvement plan (development plan). A summary of this is published in the CACS *Beacon* magazine, which is distributed to all members of CACS.
- For Safeguarding Sunday in 2025, a short video has been made about safeguarding at CACS.
- Accessible guides have also been produced, directed towards different groups in CACS – the friars, the US spiritual direction graduates, the SEM community and SDFP students.
- There are noticeboards with key safeguarding information in the retreat house and in the Priory.

Safeguarding is a standing item on CACS and Priory key team meetings, which include:

- Administrative team meetings, led by Judy Barlett
- Senior CACS team meetings, led by Fr Alex
- Anglo-Irish Provincial Trustee meetings
- CACS trustee meetings
- SDFP and reflective supervision team meetings
- SEM minister meetings, led by Fr Luke

Responding Well to Those Who Have Been Abused and Harmed

Standard 3: Engage with and care for those who report having been harmed

CACS is committed to promoting a healthy, compassionate and safe culture to encourage disclosures and support victims and survivors of abuse.

Getting safeguarding right is more than just policies and procedures; it is also about how they are implemented and how people are treated and related to. We seek to provide a compassionate, caring and respectful response to all individuals who have been affected by reports of abuse within CACS or any Church setting, and who seek help and healing.

All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that support is offered to those who seek it confidentially (on a “need to know basis”), quickly and effectively. Support will be focused on the best interests and welfare of children and adults. Our support will align with the criminal justice process.

Our commitment to those who have been harmed or abused includes providing clear and accessible information about:

- How victims and survivors can report abuse within CACS – this is made clear on posters in the Priory, placing our safeguarding policy online and ongoing training with SDFP and supervision students and the wider community. We also actively engage in Safeguarding Sunday and have produced a short video on our work.
- Support that is available for victims and survivors following a disclosure.
- The processes that will be followed when abuse (or risk of abuse) is disclosed or suspected and what will happen to the personal information of people about whom abuse is disclosed.
- The process and how statutory services are involved.
- How victims and survivors can contact statutory services if they believe that they have been abused or are at risk of being abused.
- Contact of national services for victims and survivors of abuse made available.
- Information on safe space services, specifically for victims and survivors of abuse within religious life and the Church.

As appropriate, we will seek support from:

- The Safeguarding UK Lead for the Discalced Carmelite Anglo-Irish Province
- The Religious Life Safeguarding Service
- The Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency
- Thirtyone:eight
- Simon Bass, our safeguarding expert
- The Head of Safeguarding at the Diocese of Portsmouth
- The local authority LADO or police

We will signpost victims and survivors of abuse to safe spaces below or another appropriate safeguarding support community.

UK-based Safeguarding Support Communities

Safe Spaces

A free and independent support service for anyone who has experienced abuse in relation to the Church of England, the Church in Wales or the Catholic Church of England and Wales. This could be abuse by someone who holds any role at the church or anyone linked with or participating in a church-led activity or group.

If you have been affected, however long ago, Safe Spaces can provide you with support. You do not have to have told the police or the church authorities, and you do not have to still be involved with the church. Your information will not be shared without your consent unless you or someone else is in immediate danger.

The Safe Spaces team is available on its helpline at the times listed below. You can also email them or contact them anonymously via the chat facility on their website.

Website: <https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0300 303 1056 (Mon–Fri: 9am–9pm, Sat: 9am–1pm, Sun: 1pm–5pm)

Email: safespaces@firstlight.org.uk

Childline

Free and confidential help and advice service for anyone under the age of 19. Their phone line operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Website: <https://www.childline.org.uk>

Telephone: 0800 1111 (Mon–Sun: 24 hours a day)

Galop

Supporting LGBT+ people who have experienced abuse and violence.

Website: <https://galop.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0800 999 5428 (Mon, Tue, Fri: 10am–5pm, Wed–Thu: 10am–8pm)

Grief to Grace

Provide a specialised five-day programme of spiritual and psychological healing for anyone who has suffered sexual, physical, emotional or spiritual abuse in childhood, adolescence or adulthood, including those who are the victims of rape, incest or abuse by a member of the clergy.

Website: <https://www.griegtograceuk.org/>

Telephone: 020 8154 2719 (Mon–Fri: 10am–5pm)

Hourglass

Formerly *Action on Elder Abuse*. A charity that works to challenge and prevent the abuse of older people.

Website: <https://wearehourglass.org/>

Telephone: 0808 808 8141 (Mon–Sun: 24 hours a day)

Karma Nirvana

A charity that helps anyone who has been affected by honour-based abuse.

Website: <https://karmanirvana.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0800 5999 247 (Mon–Fri: 9am–5pm)

Mankind

Help and support for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence.

Website: <https://www.mankind.org.uk/>

Telephone: 01823 334244 (Mon–Fri: 10am–4pm)

Medaille Trust

Provides refuge and freedom from modern slavery.

Website: <https://www.medaille-trust.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0800 069 9916 (Mon–Sun: 24 hours a day)

Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS)

Supports women and men who have been sexually abused, as children or adults, by ministers, clergy or others under the guise of the Church.

Website: <https://www.macsas.org.uk/>

Telephone: 08088 010340 (Sat: 9am–11:30am, Wed: 7pm–9:30pm)

National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)

Offers support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse.

Website: <https://napac.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 801 0331 (Mon–Thu: 10am–9pm, Fri: 10am–6pm)

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

The UK's leading children's charity.

Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Telephone: 0808 800 5000 (Mon–Fri: 8am–10pm, Sat–Sun: 9am–6pm)

Rape Crisis England & Wales

Provides specialist information and support to all those affected by rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and all other forms of sexual violence and abuse.

Website: <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 500 2222 (Mon–Sun: 24 hours a day)

Refuge

Help for women and children experiencing domestic abuse and violence.

Website: <https://www.refuge.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 2000 247 (Mon–Sun: 24 hours a day)

Replenished

Support for those who have experienced abuse and trauma in a religious context.

Website: <https://www.replenished.life/>

Telephone: 07746 153703 (Mon–Tue: 9am–5pm)

Respect

Helpline for male victims of domestic abuse.

Website: <https://mensadviceline.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 801 0327 (Mon–Fri: 9am–8pm)

Stop It Now

UK-wide charity dedicated solely to preventing child sexual abuse.

Website: <https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 1000 900 (Mon–Thu: 9am–9pm, Fri: 9am–5pm)

Unseen

A UK charity that provides safe houses and support in the community for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery.

Website: <https://www.unseenuk.org/working-with-survivors/>

Telephone: 08000 121 700 (Mon–Sun: 24 hours a day)

Women's Aid

Charity for women and children who are living with domestic abuse.

Website: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 2000 247 (Mon–Sun: 24 hours a day)

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Standard 4: Effectively Manage Allegations and Concerns

Who to Contact

The Religious Life Safeguarding Service

Email: safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org

Telephone: 0151 5562311

LADO

Email: lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01865 810603

If the safeguarding leads at the Priory and CACS become aware of a safeguarding issue involving a priest, friar or religious person, they should contact the RLSS Safeguarding Team and immediately pass on the concern and all associated documentation (. They should ensure the person who made them aware of the concern knows they are doing this, even if this is against their wishes.

If the allegations are about a lay person and an incident in secular society, whether in the present time or in the past, the safeguarding lead or his deputy can seek expert advice from the RLSS in the first instance or call the local authority social services (whose numbers are listed below for both adults and children in reference to safeguarding).

If there is immediate danger to the person who made the allegation or another party, the police should be called immediately on 999.

Where a concern is about anyone working with children, the Designated Officer for the Local Authority should be contacted, in addition to the RLSS.

All information pertaining to the safeguarding concern and supporting documentation should be passed on immediately, first verbally and then where the advisor at the RLSS advises it to go. In the case of an allegation of high risk of abuse or danger, the CACS/Priory Safeguarding Lead will also contact other appropriate agencies.

A safeguarding concern will always be assessed by the CACS Safeguarding Lead and/or deputy before they seek the advice of the RLSS.

Under no circumstances should anyone at CACS carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

The safeguarding lead may need to inform others ,depending upon the circumstances and/or nature of the concern; this will include the prior and the safeguarding lead for the Province, Fr Thaddeus.

In the case of a serious incident, the following would need to be informed: Chair of Trustees/ the Provincial, the Local Authority Designated Officer, the Charity Commission, CACS and the insurance company.

Concerns must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place, which is designated in the CACS Data Handling and Record Keeping Policy.

Information to Collect

The role of the safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead is to collate and clarify the precise details of the disclosure or concern and pass this information to RLSS and on to the statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

The RLSS or safeguarding lead at the Priory and CACS who takes the case should:

- Ensure the victim/survivor or individual has been informed of the next steps.
- Explain the safeguarding process involved and give an indication of the timescale of actions to be taken.
- Explain, when necessary, where confidentiality cannot be maintained; discuss support available to them within CACS and the wider Church and secular communities.
- Contact any relevant bodies, including local authority bodies and the police.
- Complete the safeguarding paperwork and ensure appropriate record keeping of all communications, including phone calls, meetings and discussions in relation to the case
- Use the standard forms available to be completed by the reporter of the concern and the safeguarding lead.
- Inform the Prior and the UK Provincial Safeguarding Lead, Fr Thaddeus, that there has been a new safeguarding referral.

- All concerns should be reported to the RLSS within 24 hours of receiving the information unless there are exceptional circumstances which require deferral.
- The decision to delay reporting to the statutory authorities where required should follow a clear risk assessment criterion, be recorded and be done in consultation with the Prior.
- When the concern is to be reported to a statutory agency, the individual who reported the issue should be informed.
- When the concern needs to be reported to a statutory agency, the individual reporting the issue must be informed that the information will not be kept confidential and that the details will be passed on to the police and any other appropriate statutory body.
- All staff should be supportive of the individual making the disclosure but should not seek more details than necessary for an initial statutory referral.

Timescales for Reporting

Safeguarding concerns or disclosures

When abuse is suspected or witnessed, or a disclosure of abuse is received by the Priory or CACS, there is a requirement to report the disclosure and other relevant safeguarding concerns to the appropriate statutory authority, including social services/the police, within 24 hours.

In case of an emergency

If a child or adult is in immediate danger, at imminent risk or requires medical attention, the relevant emergency service must be contacted via 999. Local social services should also be contacted at the earliest opportunity in the case of a child or vulnerable adult.

In case of non-emergency

In a situation when there is no immediate risk to a child or vulnerable adult and no requirement to make a statutory report, the Priory and CACS, or the RLSS on their behalf, will work with the individual to agree desirable outcomes in line with this policy.

Safeguarding Bodies

Below is a non-exhaustive list of the safeguarding bodies who may need to be notified, depending on the situation:

- Internal safeguarding structures within the Catholic Church
- Local authority safeguarding team – Adults
- Local authority safeguarding team – Children
- Police 999
- Police 101
- GP
- Crisis Team
- RLSS Out-of-Hours Team
- Community Psychiatric Nurse
- Charity Commission
- CSSA
- Local Safeguarding Commission
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- NSPCC
- DBS

In the case of a child (0-18)

In the instance of a situation involving someone under the age of 18, referrals should be made to children's social care for the area where the child is living or is found. If a crime has also been committed, the police in that area should also be contacted. The referrer should confirm any verbal and telephone referrals in writing, within 48 hours, and obtain social care/police report reference details for inclusion in the relevant case file.

In the case of an adult (18+)

Referrals should be made to the relevant body. If a crime has also been committed, the police in that area, and if applicable the LADO, should be contacted. The referrer should confirm any verbal and telephone referrals in writing, within 48 hours, and obtain any report references for inclusion on the relevant case file.

When a person's conduct towards a child or an adult may impact their suitability to work with or continue to work with children or adults

The allegation must be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer for safeguarding within 24 hours. Additionally, restrictions may need to be placed on the person's role and remit while the matter is investigated; for example, they may be "stepped down" from ministry or other conditions may be imposed pending the outcome of an investigation.

When a person's conduct towards an adult impact on their suitability to work with or continue to work with adults

Please refer to the OCD's policy on *Managing Allegations Against Staff* or seek advice from the RLSS.

Where it is believed that a criminal offence may have taken place

Regardless of whether the accused person is living or deceased, the report should be referred to the police within 24 hours.

Where there is a safeguarding concern or disclosure reported to Oxford Priory or to a member of CACS working for CACS or the Priory in an international context

The concern should first be reported to the Safeguarding Lead at CACS, who will contact RLSS as a priority for advice as to next steps. RLSS and thirtyone:eight both have international departments who will give advice and support to CACS.

Where there is a concern about the local safeguarding lead

The person who has received the disclosure or concern should make a direct referral to the provincial safeguarding lead as a priority:

Fr Thaddeus Ekuma, OCD

Email: jbnthed@gmail.com

Telephone: 0743891670

As the Safeguarding Lead is a friar, the Religious Life Safeguarding Service would be asked to lead on any investigation into safeguarding concerns by the Provincial Safeguarding Lead.

Record Keeping

Primary responsibility for the management of documents and safeguarding case files lies with the safeguarding lead, who will work closely with Judy Bartlett, a member of the CACS Safeguarding Committee who holds the post of senior administrator. She will ensure that any records are stored digitally with a secure password (with only the prior, safeguarding lead and deputy having access to that part of our data).

The safeguarding lead will ensure an accurate, auditable and secure record of any safeguarding concerns or allegations are maintained. CACS has a form for this, which the safeguarding lead, deputy safeguarding lead and senior administrator have a copy of.

This form records:

- Relevant contact details
- Details of how/when the concern or allegation was received
- Details of the concern itself
- Relevant historical information
- Identified past and present risk factors
- Any actions taken (including disciplinary procedures) along with contact with statutory agencies
- Rationale for actions and or outcome of the case

All records are potential evidence in a criminal proceeding, civil case or statutory/public inquiry and will be stored in a suitable and retrievable format with an auditable record of provenance and integrity.

All safeguarding allegation records and subsequent response and outcomes are kept securely and indefinitely. Any written records will be kept in a secure filing cabinet, but as soon as possible, they will be translated to digital form and made into an electronic record in an encrypted folder (and files password protected). There is a dedicated safeguarding email address in use at CACS.

Key Agencies

The following are the key agencies that the CACS Safeguarding Leads work with:

- CACS is under the Carmelite safeguarding UK Provincial Lead, Fr Thaddeus Ekuma, OCD.
- CACS is based in the Local Authority of Oxfordshire County Council.
- CACS is under the authority of the RLSS ref safeguarding.
- Although CACS is in Portsmouth Diocese, dioceses in the Catholic Church no longer have oversight of safeguarding in religious orders. However, there may be cases where Portsmouth Diocese should be involved.
- There may be incidents where local authorities outside of Oxfordshire are involved.

The Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS)

A UK charity that provides safe houses and support in the community for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery.

Website: safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org

Telephone: 0151 5562311 (Mon–Fri: 8am–8pm; Sat–Sun: 9am–5pm)

RLSS Out-of-Hours Service

Open 5pm–8pm on weekdays and 9am–5pm on weekends and bank holidays. To use this service, please call 0151 5562311 and leave a voicemail. The team will pick it up and get back to you, usually within 2 hours.

Portsmouth Diocese

Ruth Attfield, Head of Safeguarding

Email: safeguarding@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Telephone: 02394 216486

Adult Social Care

Telephone: 0345 050 7666, Option 2 (Mon–Thu: 8:30am–5:00pm; Fri 8:30am–4:00pm)

Emergency Duty Team Social Care Out-of-Hours Telephone: 0800 833 408

Thames Valley Police Child Protection Unit

Contact via the MASH Team, or for urgent concerns, contact the police on 999.

Oxfordshire Children's Social Services

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (Mon–Thu: 8:30am–5:00pm; Fri 8:30am–4:00pm)

Telephone: 0345 050 7666

Emergency Duty Team Social Care Out-of-Hours Telephone: 0800 833 408

Children's Social Care also offer a no-names consultation service through the Early Years and Locality Community Support Service on 0345 050 7666.

LADO

Where a concern is about anyone working with children, then the Designated Officer for the Local Authority (LADO) can be contacted.

Telephone: 01865 810603.

Email: lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Whistleblowing

The Priory and CACS will encourage and enable anyone with a serious concern to raise that issue without fear of victimisation or disadvantage. Please refer to the CACS/Priory Whistleblowing Policy on our website.

If the concern is regarding malpractice, illegal acts or omissions at the Priory and CACS or other religious institutions relating to safeguarding, then the RLSS should be made aware. The action taken by the RLSS will depend upon the nature of the concern referred. However, an investigation will be undertaken if appropriate, followed by appropriate action. Written feedback will be provided, including a rationale documenting the reasons why identified actions have been taken. This can be delegated to the RLSS.

Managing Those Who Are the Subject of a Safeguarding Concern

Standard 5: Manage and Support Subjects of Allegations and Concerns

At Boars Hill, we wish to provide a welcoming community and recognise our responsibility towards ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults at risk. This means that where it is known that someone poses a risk of harm and they wish to be part of the community, they will have to adhere to suitable boundaries. Following a risk assessment, CACS will take expert advice from the RLSS. Where an individual has committed offences of a violent or sexual nature against a child or adult and wishes to partake in activities and services provided by CACS, boundaries will need to be put in place which could include:

- Exclusion from all activities and services where there are children in attendance, or on site.
- Only taking part in certain activities or services.
- Having a safeguarding agreement in place for the duration of their stay or participation on a course or activity.

Safer Recruitment and Management of Workers

Standard 6: Implement Robust Human Resource Management

The DBS lead, Fr Clement, supported by the deputy DBS lead and academic registrar, Christie Moreton, and senior administrator, Judy Barlett, will ensure that staff and volunteers are safely recruited. This will include having a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record check at the most appropriate level to the work they are undertaking, in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements. In the case of those outside the UK, police checks and letters of endorsement are required.

Appointments for posts will be based on the person's experience, skills and ability to meet the set criteria and job specification for the specific role. All documentation relating to the applicants and personnel in general is stored in a secure place and remains confidential. Please see the CACS Data Handling and Record Keeping Policy.

A robust recruitment process is required for students entering our SDFP; this is managed by Christie Moreton and includes:

- An identity check
- A DBS check (or police check if outside the area our DBS process covers)
- Two personal references

Appointment to a role or to a place on the SDFP or Pastoral Supervision Course will not be confirmed until the above have been obtained.

For paid employment at CACS, references, and DBS Disclosure checks need to have been received. These references must be from previous employers.

On appointment, all new employees will be provided with and sign to say they understand all relevant policy and procedures, including a copy of this document and their responsibilities within it highlighted.

All persons seeking to work with children or adults, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, must be provided with the opportunity to self-disclose relevant conviction information. This is a DBS Code of Practice requirement and applies to anyone being asked to have an Enhanced Disclosure check.

Full details for safer recruitment can be found in the CACS Safer Recruitment Policy.

CACS Offerings

CACS is a vibrant community which provides several ministries and activities including pilgrimages to different locations across the world. These activities and pilgrimages change from time to time. In addition to our own activities, we also offer our buildings to other groups for spiritual retreats and for other groups.

We provide the following:

Daily Mass

Tuesday to Friday: 6:00pm

Saturday and Sunday: 11.00am

CACS courses

- Spiritual Direction Formation Programme (UK, US and Nigerian-based and on Zoom).
- Pastoral Reflective Programme (Zoom)
- Vigil Lectures (Zoom)
- School of Prayer Courses (Zoom)
- School of Prophets Course (Zoom)
- School of Scripture Course (Zoom)
- Contemplative Circles (Zoom)

Pilgrimages

- Yearly pilgrimages to Spain, Portugal and France

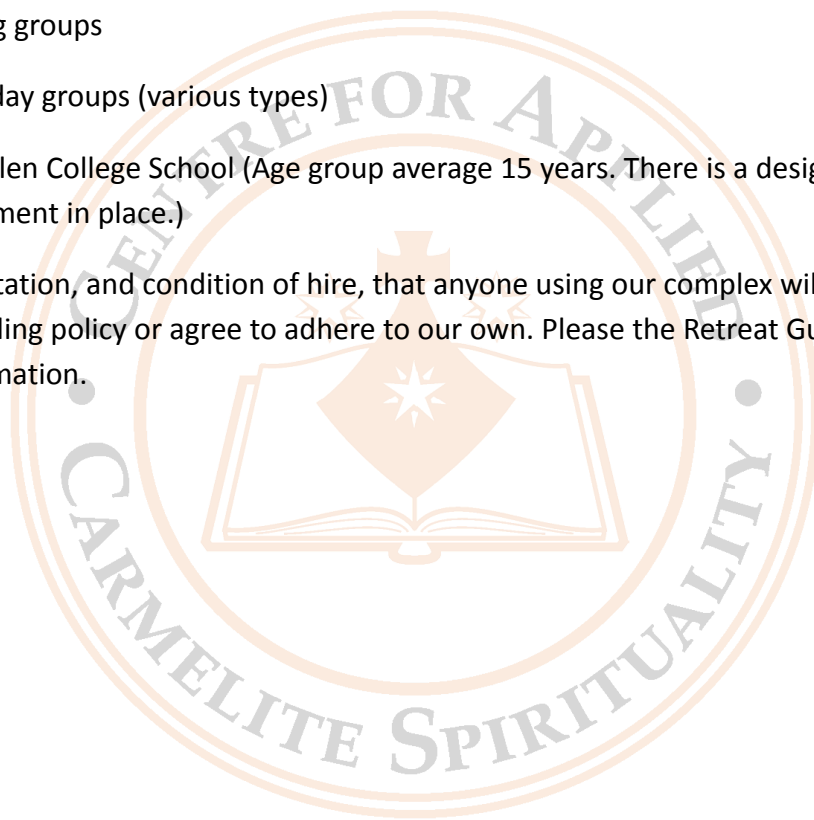
- Encounters programme for young adults (average age 25-35 years)

Retreats

Some retreats are led by outside organisations. The retreat house is managed by the Oxford Priory, a separate charitable trust. Retreats include:

- In-person and online individually directed retreats
- In-person and online themed and group retreats
- Secular Carmelites
- Zen and Buddhist groups
- Healing groups
- Away-day groups (various types)
- Magdalen College School (Age group average 15 years. There is a designated risk assessment in place.)

It is our expectation, and condition of hire, that anyone using our complex will have their own safeguarding policy or agree to adhere to our own. Please the Retreat Guide for detailed information.



Safeguarding Training

Standard 7: Provide and Access Training and Support for Safeguarding

All employees, friars, and volunteers at Boars Hill will undertake safeguarding training commensurate with their roles and responsibilities. As a minimum, everyone involved with ministry at the Priory and CACS will undertake the CACS Level II Safeguarding Training. This is now available as an online CACS course. Each year, additional modules from the CSSA training are required.

Safeguarding Courses

The levels of safeguarding courses and those at CACS who have engaged in them in 2024-2025 are as follows:

Basic Awareness (Level 1)

All CSSA administrative staff undertake this course and have done so in 2025.

CACS Online Safeguarding Training (Level II)

All friars, spiritual directors, pastoral supervisors, SDFP and reflective pastoral supervision students, as well as accompaniers and facilitators on SDFP and Pastoral Reflective Supervision programmes have taken this course. It is a requirement before any religious or lay person begins ministry in CACS.

31:8 Courses completed in 2025/6

- DBS leads – Fr Clement and Christie Moreton
- International Safeguarding – Kate Keefe

RLSS courses

- Safeguarding leads – Fr. Clement, Fr. Luke, Kate Keefe, Fr. Liam
- Trustees and safeguarding – Fr. Luke, Kate Keefe and Fr. Liam and Fr. Alex
- Suicide, Self Harm and Safeguarding - Kate Keefe
- Advanced Safeguarding – Kate Keefe and Fr. Liam
- Safer Recruitment – Judy Barlett and Kate Keefe

CSSA modules

These have been directed at specific groups within the CACS community:

- *Leadership in Safeguarding* is a two-hour course on the CSSA website, which does not need to be completed in one sitting. It is suggested that all members of the CACS Safeguarding committee complete this.
- *Listening to the Voices of the Survivors* was a prioritised area of development in 2025 in our audit; this CSSA training is two hours long and in examining the structure, it is a good course. Safeguarding Committee members were asked to complete this as a priority by November 2025. All ministers in CACS had been asked to complete this in 2025.
- *Canon and Civil Law for Leaders in Safeguarding* – leaders in CACS and the CACS safeguarding committee have been asked to complete this.
- *Preparation for a Safeguarding Audit* is a ten-minute CSSA course all members of the Safeguarding Committee must complete.
- *CSSA Specialist Safeguarding Lead Training (Level 3)* – Fr Liam, Fr Clement and Kate Keefe completed this by 2025.

Fr. Alex, as director of CACS and chair of the Safeguarding Committee, regularly monitors courses completed.

Role of the Safeguarding Committee

Standard 8: Quality Assure Compliance to Continuously Improve Practice

The Priory and CACS undertake an annual audit using the RLSS audit form and then create an improvement /development plan. They engage an expert external safeguarding consultant, Simon Bass, to undertake an external audit of both.

The CACS Safeguarding Committee endeavours to ensure that their safeguarding processes meet all eight CSSA standards and rest upon the foundation of Carmelite spirituality. Throughout the year, we regularly evaluate the quality of our practice and undertake self-audits; this is led by the Safeguarding Policy Development Manager, Kate Keefe.

Our Safeguarding Development Plan outlines the quality assurance measures we are using to ensure we maintain a sacred, safe and nurturing environment for everyone.

Safeguarding Team Roles and Responsibilities



Fr Alexander Ezechukwu, OCD

- Director of CACS and safeguarding lead.

- Accountable for ensuring all regulations and laws, whether civil or Church, are enacted in the priory, including safeguarding and safer recruitment.
- Accountable to the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) and the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA).
- Accountable to the Province for ensuring the Oxford priory/CACS safeguarding policy is in line with Carmelite safeguarding principles.
- Responsible for ensuring all friars and brothers have up-to-date police or DBS checks and are all securely stored on site.
- Responsible for ensuring all friars and brothers have Level II safeguarding training (or a higher level for safeguarding officers) and responsible for ensuring the DBS checker has RLSS specialist training.
- Responsible for ensuring the priory meets all safeguarding standards, which will be inspected in the future by the RLSS.
- Responsible for ensuring a safer recruitment policy is in place, which will also be inspected in the future by the RLSS.
- Responsible for ensuring all friars have a supervisor for their ministries which they see at least every two months.
- Responsible for the training and formation plan for each friar.
- For shaping and sharing the spirituality that is the foundation of our safeguarding policy.



Fr Liam Finnerty, OCD

- On-site and online Safeguarding Lead 2 at CACS and Sub-Prior.
- Accountable for safe recordkeeping regarding all matters concerned with safeguarding.

- First point of contact for all allegations and responses to allegations with regard to priests or religious.
- Responsible for ensuring all allegations are responded to in line with the priory/CACS policies.
- Responsible, alongside Fr Clement Obiorah, for ensuring that victims/survivors are supported by signposting to support groups within and outside of The Church.
- Responsible for supporting the Director and Safeguarding Lead in ensuring all priests and brothers who work at CACs or the priory understand how safeguarding relates to and sits within the pastoral and healing ministry undertaken by fellow Carmelite brothers.
- Co-leader internal trainer in safeguarding as part of our commitment /policy to be a Sacred and Safe community.
- For shaping and sharing the spirituality that is the foundation of our safeguarding policy.



Fr Clement Obiorah, OCD

- Lead DBS recruiter.
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead 3 – responsible for receiving allegations in Fr Liam's absence.
- Enables our DBS work through Thirtyone:eight, the leading Christian Safeguarding DBS digital processing agency.
- Clarifies with all ministers/volunteers/students whether they need a safeguarding check and what kind.
- Helps identify whether you need DBS/Letters of Endorsement/Police checks depending where in the world you live or how long you have been a resident in England and Wales (soon this will include Scotland).

- Leads on CACS communication policy and implementation and Safeguarding communication policy and implementation.



Fr Luke Onwe, OCD

- Assistant Director of CACS and Director of SEM.
- Responsible for SEM ministers meet safeguarding standards before they begin ministry in SEM.
- Responsible for ensuring safeguarding is a standard item on the agenda on SEM team meetings.
- Undertake any responsibilities with regard to the SDFP programme meeting safeguarding standards delegated by the prior.



Judy Bartlett

- PA to the Prior and Director of CACS, Fr Alex.
- Distributes safeguarding meeting agenda and minutes .
- Provides administrative support for ongoing work/leads the CACS administrative team.

- When necessary, supports Fr Clement with DBS processing.
- Lead on data security in administrative system and record-keeping relating to all safeguarding matters.
- Lead on safer recruitment for paid posts.



Kate Keefe

- Safeguarding lead 1 project manager, safeguarding policy development manager, lead internal auditor of practice and policy implementation, and lay volunteer.
- Responsible for civil and Church law research nationally and internationally regarding safeguarding.
- Responsible for the Safeguarding Training Plan for CACS/the priory.
- Audits current safeguarding practice – lead on preparing annual CSSA audit document.
- Responsible for Safeguarding Development Plan.
- Monitors pace and progress of agreed actions.
- Prepares agendas for CACS Safeguarding Committee to be submitted to the Prior/Director of CACS via his PA.
- Co-lead internal trainer with Fr. Liam.



Christie Moreton (MSc, MA, BSc)

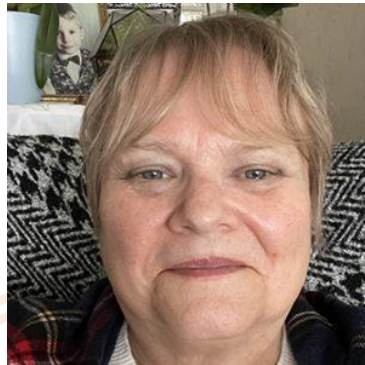
- CACS Academic Registrar, SDFP Lead Administrator and Student Welfare Officer, and DBS deputy to Fr Clement.
- Three-time graduate of Loughborough University (MSc Social Science Research, MA Digital Media and Society, BSc Sociology) and a former PhD researcher, published academic author, book editor and postgraduate teacher.
- Contributes a deep understanding and experience of the challenges of academic life for students, and the support and sensitivities that need to be in place to ensure CACS is a safe and sacred community.
- Brings very high-level and robust administrative and data skills to ensure DBS data is collected and stored securely.



Dr Kathleen Kelly

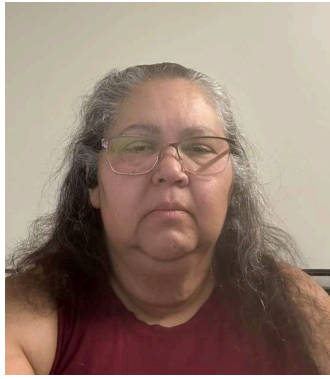
- CACS SDFP and School of Prophets graduate.
- Consultant psychiatrist in a leading UK hospital.
- Brings senior experience of safeguarding within her professional life.

- Brings a deep understanding and commitment to ensuring that disabilities and neurodiversity are considered in the development of CACS's commitment to being a safe and sacred community.



Thelma Rogers (OFS, MA)

- SDFP and CACS Reflective Pastoral Supervision Programme graduate, with a master's degree in Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy.
- Thelma brings extensive knowledge of safeguarding from her work as a hospital chaplain and at domestic violence and sexual abuse charities.
- A senior leader and member of the national council of the Secular Franciscan Order of Great Britain.
- Thelma brings lived experience of sensory disability, identifying as a person with a severe sight impairment.
- She has a deep knowledge and sensitivity to ensure CACS has awareness and good practice with regard to neurodiversity, disability, fragility and vulnerability, to develop a sacred and safe community.



Alma Castro, OCDS

- Graduate of CACS SDFP and Reflective Pastoral Supervision Programme
- Safeguarding Lead in CACS alumni facilitation group
- Resident in California, USA, and brings extensive experience of regulations and legislation with regard to safeguarding from her senior professional work in the USA



Simon Bass

- External Expert Consultant, Church Safeguarding Consultancy.
- Gives expert advice on the content of our Policy and Development Plan and Church law and civil law we must abide by.
- Audits present policy and safeguarding work in practice.
- Drafts safeguarding plan for team to develop.
- Evaluates progress on a yearly basis.

Policy Review

This policy is approved by Fr Alexander Ezechukwu, OCD, Prior, on behalf of the Board of Trustees for CACS and will be subject to a review in January 2027, unless there are significant changes to the infrastructure, processes or to relevant safeguarding legislation and best practice.

Policy last updated: January 2026

Date of next review: January 2027



Fr Alexander Ezechukwu, OCD

Director of CACS, Chair of Safeguarding Committee



Appendices to the CACS Safeguarding Policy

- Appendix A: A message from the director of CACS
- Appendix B: Letter to survivors from the safeguarding team at CACS
- Appendix C: CACS DBS and Police Clearance Policy
- Appendix D: CACS Handling of Disclosure Information Policy
- Appendix E: CACS Safer Recruitment Process Planner
- Appendix F: CACS Safer Recruitment Policy
- Appendix G: CACS Social Media and Internet Use Policy
- Appendix H: CACS International Safeguarding Policy
- Appendix I: CACS Data Handling and Record Keeping Policy
- Appendix J: CACS Whistleblowing policy
- Appendix K: CACS Complaints Policy
- Appendix L: CACS Modern Slavery Policy
- Appendix M: CACS Letters of Endorsement Policy
- Appendix N: CACS Ex-Offender Recruitment Policy
- Appendix O: Friars Safeguarding Handbook
- Appendix P: Safeguarding Referral Chart
- Appendix Q: Support Organisations for Survivors
- Appendix R: Spiritual Abuse Guidance Leaflet
- Appendix S: Safer Spaces Support Centre Leaflet
- Appendix T: “VOS ESTIS LUX MUNDI” – Pope Francis RIP
- Appendix U: PowerPoint on Safeguarding in CACS 2025