

**Fanning The Flame Catholic  
Mission  
Safeguarding Policy**

# **Fanning The Flame Catholic Mission**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **FANNING THE FLAME CATHOLIC MISSION:**

Fanning The Flame Catholic Mission (FTFCM) began as a ministry to children and young people in 1995, introducing them naturally to the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a Catholic context. The main activities are Summer Camp and retreat weekends.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Safeguarding is about protecting adults who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults as well as protecting the children, young people and vulnerable adults themselves. A reality of life is that children, young people and vulnerable adults are potentially at risk from abuse or exploitation by some adults. Although it is a very small minority that presents this risk, everyone has a responsibility and role in protecting the children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care by following all practical and reasonable steps to counteract the risk.

A Safeguarding Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm and makes clear to all involved with FTFCM what is required in relation to their protection. It is a key requirement which helps to create a safe and positive environment for the children, young people and vulnerable adults at FTFCM events and to show that FTFCM is taking its responsibilities seriously. For the purposes of this policy, children and young people are any person under the age of 18 years. A vulnerable adult is defined by COPCA (*Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults*) as - “A person aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against ‘significant harm’ or ‘exploitation.’”

Sensible precautions laid out in this policy will minimise the risks for adult volunteers, children, young people and vulnerable adults and ensure they are kept safe from

harm. These procedures must be clear and consistent and be made available to all involved with FTFCM.

Behaviour, language and circumstances considered acceptable some years ago may be considered unacceptable or inappropriate now.

Differing cultural understanding of what constitutes child abuse may occur and must be discussed in accordance with this policy.

Safeguarding issues must be kept at the forefront of good practice. There is continual change in legal legislation and the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator should keep the Camp Coordinator and the Safeguarding Officers of FTFCM up to date with any such change of legislation.

The Global Connections guidelines on Safeguarding, state:

*“We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults by protecting them from abuse. We believe that it is never acceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind and that Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility within our organisation”.*

FTFCM endorses this statement and although it is impossible to offer complete protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults, implementing a Safeguarding Policy minimises the risk of abuse and exploitation to all children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend FTFCM activities.

## **HAVING A SAFEGUARDING POLICY:**

- helps protect children, young people and vulnerable adults at FTFCM events
- helps protect all those involved with FTFCM including clergy, all volunteers and visitors
- creates a safe and positive environment at FTFCM events for all participants
- clarifies what is required of FTFCM volunteers in relation to the protection of the children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care
- maintains standards of behaviour for volunteers when they are around children, young people and vulnerable adults and indicates what to do if they notice, or are told about, the inappropriate behaviour of others
- maintains an environment where participants feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- shows a commitment to openness and communication
- shows respect for confidentiality, and for the circumstances where confidentiality cannot be allowed to override the rights of FTFCM participants to be protected from harm
- ensures that the children, young people and vulnerable adults within FTFCM know that there are adults to whom they can talk if they have any concerns or suspicions
- provides a statement of intent that demonstrates FTFCM commits itself to safeguarding the children, young people and vulnerable adults in its care
- ensures that the Diocesan Safeguarding Commission, in accordance with their guidelines, checks all volunteers with responsibility for FTFCM participants. Ensures that records are kept up to date
- helps volunteers to understand their role in cases of allegations or suspicions of abuse
- ensures FTFCM appoints two designated people to enable any concerns to be reported in accordance with its procedures
- ensures FTFCM is committed to reviewing its policy and good practice at regular intervals

- ensures a risk assessment is carried out before the start of each camp
- ensures a Safeguarding Officer is available at all events

## **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE:**

Abuse is always a violation of trust. It occurs when a child or young person is denied the opportunity to feel safe. It is inflicting harm or not preventing harm, by neglect, physical or sexual harm, or emotional abuse of a child under the age of 18 years.

The following seven categories of abuse are universally found.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Causing actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent injury or suffering to a child (may include biting, hitting, shaking, dragging, squeezing, burning, administering poisonous substances, suffocation/drowning and excessive force or Fabricated Illness Syndrome (*FIS – formally known as Munchausen’s Syndrome*) etc.). Physical abuse can be hidden, e.g. bruising and marks covered up.

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Involves actual or likely involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children, young people and vulnerable adults in sexual activity that they do not comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles. Sexual abuse includes touching, spoken language or behaviour for any sexual purpose, rape (*penetration*), grooming (*manipulation by an individual*), fondling, petting, showing of indecent or pornographic materials, either through photographs, books or materials on any electronic device such as a computer/lap-top/tablet or mobile phone, encouraging a child or vulnerable adult to engage in sexually inappropriate behaviour.

**NEGLECT:** Persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from any physical and/or psychological damage through the exposure to any kind of danger. This includes cold, starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child’s health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. Neglect can include lack of food, sleep deprivation or failure to maintain the child’s health and hygiene.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional development of the child caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. Emotional abuse is conveying to the child that they are always wrong, worthless, useless, or taking away the child's self-esteem, etc. It must be remembered that physical abuse and neglect go hand-in-hand with emotional abuse.

**SPIRITUAL ABUSE:** Someone using their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice (eg. cults, witchcraft) to satisfy their needs at the expense of others. Spiritual abuse, like any other form of abuse, is about the misuse of power.

**ABUSE OF TRUST:** Abuse of any kind is an abuse of trust. It is unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any inappropriate behaviour which might allow any of the here-mentioned forms of abuse to occur. It is unacceptable to allow a sexual relationship or any other inappropriate behaviour to develop whilst the relationship of trust continues.

**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. In many cases financial abuse is often accompanied by physical or social abuse and neglect.

## **THE WELFARE AND RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS:**

The welfare and rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount to FTFCM.

A child, young person or vulnerable adult has the right:

- to have their health, safety, well-being and best interests considered paramount
- to have their welfare and development promoted and safeguarded
- to be valued, respected and understood within the context of their own culture, religion and ethnicity
- to have their needs identified and met within all FTFCM activities

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**Code of Behaviour at Camp for Volunteers**

- A register must be taken twice a day, at morning and evening sessions.
- When leaving the camp, eg. to go for a walk, a register must be taken immediately before leaving, and on returning to camp. Everyone must be counted out and counted in – including adults. Adults should be in charge of a small group. Two adults, one at the front and one at the back of the group, should wear fluorescent jackets.
- When transporting a child off-site eg: to the doctors or hospital, two adults need to be present, one being the same gender as the child. The driver plus one other is sufficient. The child or young person must sit in the back seat of the vehicle.
- If a young person (under 18) wishes to leave the camp for any reason, the Camp Coordinator must be informed and must register the child off the site and back on if they return.
- Any adult leaving the site must inform the Camp Coordinator.
  
- The ratio of adults to children, young people / vulnerable adults is 1:10 therefore for any additional part of 10 there should be another adult present.

Volunteers should not spend time alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults away from the sight of other adults. Meetings with individual children, a young person or vulnerable adult should take place within sight of others. If privacy is required you should be in an open space but with another adult nearby.

Volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. However, there may be occasions when physical contact is unavoidable, such as providing comfort in times of distress, or physical support in cases of injury. In all such cases contact should take place with the consent of the child/young person/vulnerable adult.

Children, young people and vulnerable adults should never be alone in a car with an adult to whom they are not related. There should always be two adults present, one being the same gender as the child.

Volunteers should not meet children, young people or vulnerable adults outside organised activities unless it is with the knowledge and consent of the Camp Coordinator acting *in loco parentis*.

Volunteers should not start an investigation or question anyone after an allegation or concern has been raised by a child, young person or adult. You should record the facts and report these to the Safeguarding Officer.

Volunteers should never (even in fun) –

- initiate or engage in sexually provocative conversation or activity
- allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged
- allow any allegations made by a child to be ignored; all should be reported
- trivialise or exaggerate child abuse issues
- make promises to keep any disclosure confidential from the Safeguarding Officer
- threaten to or actually hit or otherwise physically assault any child, young person or vulnerable adult
- develop physical/sexual relationships with a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- develop a relationship with any child, young person or vulnerable adult which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive

- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- do anything for children, young people or vulnerable adults of a personal nature that they can do for themselves or for which they have a personal carer
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, young people or vulnerable adults, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour anyone to the exclusion of others

Volunteers must respect all participants' rights to privacy and encourage them and other adults to feel comfortable enough to report inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

Volunteers are expected to act with discretion with regards to their personal relationships. They should ensure their personal relationships do not affect their leadership role within FTFCM. All pre-existing relationships between volunteers and/or participants of FTFCM must be declared to the Camp Coordinator or the Safeguarding Officer before the activity.

Volunteers should refrain from consuming alcohol for at least 12 hours prior to assuming responsibility for any child, children and/or vulnerable adult/s and throughout camp duration.

Volunteers should be aware of the procedures for reporting concerns or incidents and should familiarise themselves with the identity of the Camp Coordinator and Safeguarding Officer.

If a volunteer finds themselves the subject of inappropriate affection or attention from a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they should inform the Camp Coordinator or the Safeguarding Officer.

If a volunteer has any concerns relating to the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult during a FTFCM activity, be it concerns about language/actions/behaviour of another volunteer, or concerns based on any conversation with the participant; particularly where the participant makes an allegation, they should report this to the Camp Coordinator or Safeguarding Officer.

***Be aware of each other's behaviour. If you see something inappropriate, report it.***

### **PROTECTION FROM ABUSE:**

This policy is for all volunteers involved in or visiting FTFCM camp and activities.

Clear guidance needs to be given to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and to protect volunteers and visitors from false accusation.

All volunteers at FTFCM camps and activities must be aware of the following:

- recognise and act to correct situations which may present risks
- recognise the particular needs of disabled children, young people and vulnerable adults. Research has shown that abuse can often go unrecognised and unreported due to people's attitudes and assumptions about disability. In normal circumstances no person under 18 should be left in charge of any child/children, young person or vulnerable adult
- participants attending any FTFCM activity should not be left alone or unsupervised at any time

The Safeguarding Officer should keep policies and procedures up to date, ensuring that volunteers are aware of the details of this policy.

Safeguarding issues should be addressed during daily debriefing at camp.

For FTFCM activities taking place in other diocese, schools and parishes, these guidelines will be followed.

In the event of a volunteer being accused of inappropriate behaviour it will be made clear that there are correct procedures for dealing with the situation which may include the immediate removal of the adult accused from the site, followed by an independent investigation. Dismissal from all involvement with FTFCM will result if the allegation is proven.

# **Fanning The Flame Catholic Mission**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **In Brief – Safeguarding Policy Statement**

This FTFCM Safeguarding Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in its care from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to their protection. It helps to create a safe and positive environment at FTFCM activities.

Safeguarding is also about protecting the adults who work with the children, young people and vulnerable adults in FTFCM. It is the responsibility of all volunteers to report any concerns to the Camp Coordinator or the Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

Volunteers should not spend time alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults away from the sight of other adults.

It is the duty of volunteers to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse of all participants with whom they come into contact. The welfare of all participants is of paramount importance in all FTFCM activities.

The Safeguarding Officer for FTFCM should keep policies and procedures up to date and ensure Safeguarding Officers at all FTFCM activity locations are aware of these guidelines.

FTFCM recognises that children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right:

- to have their health, safety, well-being and best interests considered paramount
- to have their welfare and development promoted and safeguarded so that they can achieve their full potential
- to be valued, respected and understood within the context of their own culture, religion and ethnicity.

If someone at a FTFCM activity is accused of abusing a child, young person or vulnerable adult there is a clear procedure that will be followed. This may include immediate removal from the camp/activity followed by an independent investigation. If the allegations are proven you will be asked to leave FTFCM.

## **Quick Reference Guidelines**

### In case of disclosure or allegation

Listen – do not interrupt or ask questions, take the young person seriously

Never make promises about confidentiality, you will not be able to keep them – you have to report any allegations

Be honest with the young person, explain clearly and sensitively the action you must take to protect them and others

Reassure the young person; do not express disbelief, shock or anger

Refer – contact the Camp Coordinator or Safeguarding Officer immediately

Do not alert the alleged abuser

## Code of Behaviour

**Do** treat everyone with respect

**Do** provide an example of good conduct that you wish others to follow

**Do** respect an individual's right to personal privacy

**Do** encourage people to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out inappropriate attitudes or behaviour

**Do** provide time and space for young people to talk about any concerns they may have

**Do** challenge unacceptable behaviour and inappropriate use of language and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse

**Do not** have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with young people

**Do not** allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour

**Do not** jump to conclusions about others without checking facts

**Do not** exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues

**Do not** show favouritism to any individual

**Do not** rely on your good name or that of the church or FTFCM to protect you

**Do not** believe it could never happen to me/ happen to them/ happen here

**Do not** take risks or chances when common sense, policy and good practice suggest otherwise

## **What to do ....**

\*If you suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being abused emotionally, physically, sexually or spiritually

\*If a child, young person or vulnerable adult discloses to you that they are being abused by someone else

\*If you receive an allegation about an individual towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult

- Listen and accept what is being said without judgement, question or comment

- Do not promise confidentiality. Advise the person that you must pass on the information to the Camp Coordinator or Safeguarding Officer

- Record the facts including the date and time

- Speak to the Camp Coordinator or Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible

You **MUST** refer.

You **MUST NOT** investigate

Please do not discuss the issue with other people at the camp/activity

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<http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/safeguarding>