

METROPOLITAN OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH

Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement

The Metropolitan Old Catholic Church is committed to promoting a safe environment for all people, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We believe that every person is created in the image of God and is entitled to dignity, respect, and protection from harm.

The Church will take all reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly, appropriately, and in accordance with applicable laws and best practices.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Clergy (ordained and licensed)
- Religious and members of religious communities
- Lay ministers
- Volunteers
- Church officers and trustees
- Anyone acting on behalf of the Metropolitan Old Catholic Church

3. Safeguarding Principles

The Metropolitan Old Catholic Church will:

- Promote the welfare and well-being of all people.
- Protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect.
- Foster a culture of transparency and accountability.
- Respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
- Work cooperatively with statutory authorities where necessary.
- Ensure safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

4. Definitions

Child

Any person under the age of 18 years.

Vulnerable Adult

A person aged 18 or over who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to age, illness, disability, mental health condition, or other circumstances.

5. Forms of Abuse

Abuse may include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect
- Spiritual abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Online or digital abuse

6. Recruitment and Selection

The Church shall take reasonable steps to ensure suitable individuals are appointed to positions of trust.

These may include:

- Application forms
- References
- Interviews where appropriate
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks or equivalent checks where required
- Safeguarding training

No person may undertake regulated activity without the appropriate checks being completed.

7. Code of Conduct

All clergy, church officers, and volunteers shall:

- Treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Avoid situations where they are alone with children without appropriate safeguards.
- Never engage in abusive, exploitative, or inappropriate behaviour.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly.
- Comply with safeguarding procedures and training requirements.

8. Reporting Concerns

Any concern, allegation, disclosure, or suspicion of abuse must be reported immediately to:

The Church Safeguarding Officer

or

The Primus Archbishop

Where a person is in immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted without delay.

The Church will not attempt to investigate criminal allegations internally before reporting them to the appropriate authorities.

9. Confidentiality

Safeguarding concerns will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and where necessary to protect individuals or comply with legal obligations.

10. Record Keeping

All safeguarding concerns, allegations, disclosures, and actions taken shall be recorded accurately and securely.

Records shall be retained in accordance with legal requirements and Church procedures.

11. Training

The Church will encourage safeguarding training for:

- Clergy
- Religious
- Church officers
- Volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults

Training should be refreshed periodically.

12. Responding to Allegations

Where allegations are made against clergy, church officers, or volunteers:

1. The concern will be taken seriously.
2. Appropriate statutory authorities will be notified where necessary.
3. Interim measures may be implemented to protect all parties.
4. Natural justice and confidentiality will be respected.
5. Church disciplinary procedures may be initiated where appropriate.

13. Online Safety

The Church recognises the importance of online safeguarding.

Church personnel shall:

- Use official communication channels where possible.
- Avoid inappropriate private communications with minors.
- Obtain consent for photographs and recordings.
- Ensure social media activity reflects Christian values and safeguarding principles.

14. Safeguarding Officer

The Metropolitan Old Catholic Church shall appoint a Safeguarding Officer responsible for:

- Receiving safeguarding concerns.
- Maintaining records.
- Advising clergy and church officers.
- Promoting safeguarding awareness.
- Liaising with statutory agencies when required.

15. Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the governing authority of the Metropolitan Old Catholic Church or sooner if required by changes in legislation or Church practice.

Adoption

This Safeguarding Policy was adopted by the Metropolitan Old Catholic Church on:

Date: 18/06/2026

Signed: ++Shane Primatus

The Most Revd Shane R. F. Hughes
Primus Archbishop

Signed: ++Shane Primatus

Church Safeguarding Officer

