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# **SVD IBP Safeguarding Policy** **- British District**

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## **1. POLICY OVERVIEW**

Society of The Divine Word (SVD) of the Irish British Province (IBP) is committed to safeguarding all children and adults. For SVD IBP 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 victim/survivors promptly and compassionately.

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1. This policy and procedure applies to all within the SVD IBP regardless of their role or the activities they undertake.
- 2.2. It is the responsibility of all within the SVD IBP to prevent, whether by action or omission abuse. 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, this needs to be recognised and addressed as a safeguarding issue, in accordance with the procedures outlined in Section 6.

## **3. TRAINING**

- 3.1 All SVD IBP members will undergo Safeguarding Training relevant to their role.
- 3.2 SVD IBP member will undertake refresher training every three year.

## **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **4.1 The Provincial Council.**

The Council has a duty to maintain appropriate governance and oversight of safeguarding in line with this policy and national guidelines. Certain functions of the Council will be delegated to others within the SVD IBP, as indicated below.

### **2. The Provincial**

The Provincial is responsible for ensuring appropriate policy, procedures and best practice are in place for the effective delivery of a robust safeguarding service. Certain functions of the provincial will be delegated to safeguarding committee/ Safeguarding Lead as indicated below.

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#### 4.2 The Safeguarding Committee / Safeguarding Lead.

The Safeguarding Lead has direct oversight of SVD IBP safeguarding policy and guidance. This includes oversight of the relationship with and input on the work of the RLSS.

#### 4.4 All other roles

All members have an obligation to ensure they know how to respond to safeguarding concerns by making themselves familiar with the content of this policy and the procedure contained within it and any other associated policies/procedures.

#### 4.5 General

Everyone involved in the work of SVD IBP has a duty to disclose to the Safeguarding lead/ safeguarding committee / Provincial any safeguarding concerns that have been raised about them.

## 2. PRACTICE GUIDANCE

1. Action must be taken if a concern is raised that a child or adult is suffering or is likely to be suffering from significant harm. 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
2. Action must also be taken in line with the Church's mandatory reporting policy. This means appropriate action must be taken if there are reasonable grounds to believe that someone who holds any role within the Church is going to or has committed a crime, is going to or has caused harm, poses a risk or is otherwise unsuitable to work in their role.

## 6. PROCEDURE

- 6.1. If SVD IBP becomes aware of a concern as detailed in Section 5 or any other safeguarding issue, they should contact the RLSS Safeguarding Team and pass the concern and all records of it to them immediately. Ensure the person who made you aware of the concern knows you are doing this.

#### 6.1.1 The RLSS will:

- Ensure the victim/survivor or individual has been informed of the next steps
- Explain what will happen, give them options if possible and an indicative timescale
- Contact any relevant bodies within 24 hours
- Complete the safeguarding paperwork and ensure appropriate record keeping of all phone calls, meetings and discussions in relation to the case are documented.
- Update the relevant people at SVD IBP and offer any support needed

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## **7. WHISTLEBLOWING**

7.1. The SVD IBP will encourage and enable anyone with a safeguarding concern, to refer the concern without fear of victimisation, or disadvantage.

7.1.1 If that concern is regarding malpractice, illegal acts, or omissions at the SVD IBP or other religious institution in relation to safeguarding, then the RLSS should be made aware.

7.2. 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 and written feedback will be provided, including a rationale documenting the reasons why identified actions have been taken.

## **8. RECORDING AND STORAGE OF SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND CASE FILES**

8.1. SVD IBP has a responsibility to ensure that all case files held are accurate, up to date and stored securely.

8.2. Where RLSS is responsible for the management of a case, RLSS will ensure records are accurate, auditable, and secure and all records of any safeguarding concerns or allegations referred will be properly maintained.

## **9. SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

9.1. The SVD IBP will ensure that congregation members, lay staff and volunteers are subject to the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (including enhanced DBS) in line with both statutory and Catholic Church requirements.

9.2. Appointments will be based on the person's experience, skills and ability to meet the set criteria and job specification for the specific role. It is essential to ensure that all documentation relating to the applicants are kept in a secure place and are confidential.

9.3. Appointment to a role will not be confirmed until a satisfactory DBS Disclosure check has been received and previous employment references confirmed as being acceptable.

On appointment, all new employees should 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.

9.4. Anyone who is 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.

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## **10. POLICY REVIEW**

10.1. This policy is approved by the SVD IBP Council and will be subject to an initial review in September 2023 and then every 3 years or sooner, if a need is identified.

Policy last updated: 25 June 2023

Name: Fr Nicodemus Lobo Ratu SVD

Date of next review: September 2023

Date: 25 June 2023