

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 Mission Together and 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 statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education** (updated 2020) which *is issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2015.* Employees/volunteers should familiarise themselves with Part One of this guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- Children includes everyone under the age of 18

Missio is also fully committed to working actively and constructively within the framework set out in the Care Act 2014/Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and associated statutory and good practice guidance.

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 Manager who will record and follow up the concern. Disclosures are stored confidentially by the HR Adviser for a period of 3 years in a sealed envelope.

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

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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 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;
- 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;

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- 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.

Responding to disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from pupils, adults, parents or other members of the public. We recognise that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, all employees/volunteers will handle disclosures with sensitivity. Such information must be reported and employees/volunteers must immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated safeguarding lead with responsibility for safeguarding within the visited establishment and make a contemporaneous record. In all other situations, concerns and allegations must be reported to Nicky Pisa (Missio Fundraising & Communications Director).

Employees/volunteers must not make any attempts to investigate but must, wherever possible, listen, record and pass on information to the designated safeguarding lead of the visiting establishment in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Employees/volunteers will:

- Listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information as serious;
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing and provide support as far as possible;
- Clarify the information and immediately make a written record of what the person has said using the exact wording as reported by the person. Do not substitute words. Include the date and time of the conversation;
- Try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' 'Is there anything else I should know?' rather than 'Did x hit you?';
- Try not to show signs of shock, horror, surprise or disbelief;
- Not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed somebody;
- Not promise secrecy and will explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the designated safeguarding lead. eg 'I'm going to talk to someone else that will be able to help us';
- Explain what will happen next that only those who 'need to know' will be told.

Allegations made against employees/volunteers and volunteers of Missio

Any disclosure (i.e. when a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual working for or on behalf of Missio) and/or suspicion (i.e. when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place or be in prospect) will always be followed up and acted upon swiftly. The welfare of the alleged victim will always be the paramount consideration, consequently any allegation will be reported to statutory authorities, e.g. Police for investigation.

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Any information offered in confidence will be received on the basis that it will be shared with relevant authorities.

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 020 7821 9755
- 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 the 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.

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. After taking advice, parents or carers will also be informed, if appropriate. Apart from this, careful confidentiality will be observed;
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.

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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.

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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.

This policy will be reviewed annually and/or as required.

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Missio is the Pope's charity for world mission and part of the worldwide network of Pontifical Mission Societies

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