

THE ORATORY SOCIETY
Safeguarding Policy

Children, Young People, and Adults at Risk

Date adopted	Thursday, March 12, 2026
Review date	March 12, 2027
Designated Safeguarding Lead	[Insert name and contact details]
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	[Insert name and contact details]

1. Our commitment

The Oratory Society is committed to keeping people safe in every part of its worship, ministry, pastoral care, outreach, teaching, and community life. We believe that every person should be treated with dignity, respect, and care. No child, young person, or adult at risk should be harmed, neglected, abused, bullied, exploited, or mistreated in any way. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all of us. Everyone who serves in the name of the Oratory Society must help to create a safe and respectful church.

2. Purpose of this policy

This policy exists:

- to protect children, young people, and adults at risk
- to set clear expectations for clergy, office-holders, and volunteers
- to make sure concerns are reported and dealt with properly
- to support a culture of care, accountability, and safe ministry

This policy applies to all clergy, lay ministers, office-holders, postulants, volunteers, and anyone acting on behalf of the Oratory Society.

3. Who we mean by children and adults at risk

For this policy:

- a child is anyone under 18
- an adult at risk is any adult who may be more vulnerable because of age, illness, disability, mental distress, trauma, dependence on others, communication needs, or personal circumstances

Abuse can take many forms. It may be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, online, or caused by neglect or controlling behaviour.

4. Our approach

We will keep people safe by:

- listening to them
- treating them with respect
- taking concerns seriously
- acting quickly when something is wrong
- working with the proper authorities when needed
- making sure those in ministry are suitable, trained, and accountable

We will take special care in any situation where there is trust, authority, dependence, or vulnerability.

5. Safeguarding roles

The Oratory Society will appoint:

- a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- a Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Their names and contact details should be clearly available to clergy, members, and anyone who needs to raise a concern. The bishop, or the person with senior oversight, has overall responsibility for making sure safeguarding is taken seriously and this policy is followed.

6. Responsibilities of clergy, leaders, and volunteers

All clergy, leaders, and volunteers must:

- follow this policy
- complete safeguarding training required for their role
- keep proper boundaries in ministry and pastoral relationships
- never ignore, dismiss, or hide a concern
- report concerns without delay
- never try to investigate an allegation themselves

Anyone in ministry must act in a way that is safe, respectful, and above reproach.

7. Safer recruitment and suitability

The Oratory Society will take proper care in choosing those who serve in ministry. As needed, this may include:

- an application or discernment process
- references
- identity checks
- criminal record checks
- safeguarding declarations
- induction, supervision, and review

No one should begin unsupervised work with children or adults at risk until the necessary checks are complete and approval has been given.

8. Good practice in ministry

We will encourage safe practice in all areas of church life. This includes:

- avoiding situations where a child is alone with one adult unless there is a clear and safe reason
- maintaining proper boundaries in pastoral care
- avoiding secretive, controlling, or over-dependent relationships
- using care in visits, transport, online contact, and social media
- making sure church activities are well supervised
- treating bullying, harassment, discrimination, and spiritual pressure as serious matters

9. What to do if there is a concern

If someone discloses abuse, or if you see or suspect that someone may be at risk, you must:

1. listen calmly

2. take what is said seriously
3. not promise complete confidentiality
4. not ask leading questions or try to investigate
5. make a clear written note of what was said or seen
6. report it straight away to the DSL, or to the police or social services if there is immediate danger

The safety of the person comes first.

10. Reporting to the authorities

Where there is a risk of harm, or where abuse may have taken place, the matter must be reported without delay to the appropriate statutory authority, including the police and social services where necessary. The Oratory Society will not deal with serious safeguarding allegations only in house. We will cooperate fully with the proper authorities.

11. Allegations against clergy or church workers

Any allegation against a member of clergy, office-holder, or volunteer must be taken seriously. In such cases:

- the DSL must be informed at once
- the bishop or senior authority must be informed at once
- the person concerned may be asked to step back from ministry, or may be suspended, while the matter is being looked into
- this will apply regardless of office or rank

The aim is to protect all involved, ensure fairness, and allow proper investigation.

12. Adults at risk

When working with adults at risk, we will respect their dignity and listen carefully to their wishes. Where possible, we will seek their agreement before sharing information. But if there is a serious risk of harm, or a legal duty to report, we may need to act even without consent.

13. Records and confidentiality

All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, and actions taken must be recorded clearly, factually, signed, and dated. Records must be kept secure and shared only with those who need to know. Confidentiality is important, but it must never be used as a reason for failing to protect someone from harm.

14. Training and review

The Oratory Society will make sure that clergy and relevant volunteers receive safeguarding training and refresher training as needed. This policy will be reviewed regularly, and at least once each year, to make sure it remains clear, workable, and fit for purpose.

15. Raising a concern

Anyone who has a safeguarding concern should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. If the concern involves immediate danger, contact the police or emergency services at once. If the concern involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead, it should be reported directly to the bishop or the appropriate senior authority.

16. Key contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead	[Insert name, phone, and email]
Deputy Safeguarding Lead	[Insert name, phone, and email]
Bishop / Senior Oversight	[Insert name, phone, and email]
Police	[Insert local police contact / emergency 999]
Social Services	[Insert local trust / social services contact]
Other relevant contact	[Insert additional safeguarding contact if needed]

17. Approval

Approved by	[Insert governing body / chapter / committee]
Date adopted	[Insert date]
Next review due	[Insert date]