

The Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux, Stansted Mountfitchet

Safeguarding Policy Statement

Every human being has a value which we acknowledge as coming directly from God's creation of male and female in his own image and likeness. We believe therefore that all people should be valued, supported and protected from harm. We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable people towards whom the Church has a special responsibility. We accept our responsibility towards the Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults within our Parish Community.

The Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux values, supports and protects its vulnerable members; their dignity and rights.

The Catholic Church and hence the Parish St. Theresa of Lisieux will undertake appropriate steps to maintain a safe environment for all, by practising fully and positively Christ's Ministry towards children, young people and adults and responding sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm. This is demonstrated by the provision of carefully planned activities for children, young people and adults, caring for those hurt by abuse and ministering to and robustly managing those who have caused harm.

The Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux has policies and procedures to protect and support a safe environment.

The Catholic Church of England and Wales, the Bishops and Religious Congregational Leaders are committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church and affirm a 'One Church' approach¹ to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk through the promotion of a sustained culture of constant vigilance. The 'best interests' or 'paramount chief principle', which underpins and is enshrined in child and adult protection legislation, shall be the primary consideration in all matters of safeguarding. This 'One Church' approach should also be adopted by lay associations of the faithful ministering to children and adults at risk in the name of the Catholic Church. This includes leaders and groups using our Parish facilities.

The Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux is committed to the 'One Church' approach.

The Catholic Church has in place a Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA). It is mandated by the Conference of Bishops and Conference of Religious Congregations and has regulatory powers across Dioceses and Religious Congregations to ensure that standards are met, and policies are implemented. Established in 2020, the CSSA is built on a 'One Church' strategy to safeguarding – a commitment across all the dioceses and Religious Life Groups to be One Church when it comes to safeguarding, with all organisations, including the Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux, Stansted, working to a common standards-based approach and transparency and accountability in the fulfilment and upholding of these standards. This sets the strategic direction of the Church's safeguarding policy for children, young people and adults at risk.

¹ The One Church approach refers to the commitment by the Catholic Church in England and Wales to using the same policies, procedures, standards and systems in relation to safeguarding.

The Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux is committed to and follows the guidance of the CSSA and that of the Diocese of Brentwood.

The Church authorities and those within the Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux, Stansted Mountfitchet always report allegations of abuse to the statutory agencies in accordance with national procedures to ensure that they are dealt with promptly and properly, and where appropriate, perpetrators are held to account. The Church, and those within the Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux, Stansted will act in an open, transparent and accountable way in working in partnership with social care services, the Police, health agencies, probation services and other relevant agencies to safeguard children and adults at risk and assist in bringing to justice anyone who has committed an offence against a child or adult.

The Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux through its safeguarding representative and assistants will always report allegations of abuse in accordance with CSSA procedures. It will work in partnership with the appropriate external agencies to safeguard and support our children and vulnerable adults and assist the justice process.

The Church seeks to ensure that its parishes, religious congregations and lay associations of the faithful acting in the name of the Church have the confidence to enable vulnerable people to have peace of mind, knowing they will be cared for and loved by their Christian community. All churches, faith communities and lay associations that are working in the name of the Church with children and adults at risk are expected to have in place arrangements which include:

- Procedures to respond to and report concerns and allegations
- Codes of conduct
- Safer recruitment procedures
- Information sharing arrangements
- Support and supervision of staff and volunteers
- Training on safeguarding

The Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux has in place policy, procedure, and arrangements to ensure vulnerable members of our community may be confident they are cared for, loved and supported by its Catholic Community. The Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux has a bi-annual safeguarding audit which forms the basis of its action plan. The Parish Safeguarding Representative and other “trusted” adults hold certificates in Safeguarding. The Safeguarding Representative has completed additional training.

Bernadette Horton, Parish Safeguarding Representative

This Policy Statement has been informed by the CSSA the ‘One Church’ approach