

# Protection of God's People Policy

The Orthodox Catholic Monastic Community of Saint Brigid and Saint Dymphna Orthodox Catholic Church (hereafter referred to as "the Church") is unwavering in its commitment to ensuring a safe and sacred environment for all members of our community, especially children and vulnerable adults. This "Protection of God's People Policy" is designed to unequivocally prevent, address, and respond to all forms of abuse. This policy also incorporates the National Church's Holy Safe policies and procedures. This policy is mandatory for all clergy, monastic members, employees, volunteers, and anyone participating in Church activities.

## Definitions

- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18.
- **Vulnerable Adult:** Any person aged 18 or older who, due to physical or mental conditions, is unable to protect themselves from abuse.
- **Abuse:** Any form of physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, exploitation, or maltreatment.

## Policy Statement

The Church maintains a zero-tolerance stance towards any form of abuse. Our unwavering commitment includes:

1. Absolute protection of children and vulnerable adults.
2. Rigorous prevention measures through comprehensive awareness and training.
3. Immediate and decisive action in response to allegations or incidents of abuse.
4. Strict adherence to all legal requirements and the National Church's Holy Safe policies and procedures.

## Reporting Procedure

1. **Immediate Reporting:** Any individual who suspects or becomes aware of an incident of abuse must report it without delay to the designated Safeguarding Officer.
2. **Detailed Documentation:** The reporter must meticulously document the incident, including specifics such as date, time, location, individuals involved, and any witnesses.
3. **Strict Confidentiality:** All reports will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality to protect the privacy and dignity of all individuals involved.

## Investigation Procedure

1. **Immediate Assessment:** The Safeguarding Officer will conduct an urgent initial assessment to establish the credibility of the report.
2. **Prompt Notification:** The Safeguarding Officer will immediately notify Church leadership and relevant authorities in accordance with legal requirements and the National Church's Holy Safe policies.
3. **Comprehensive Investigation:** A thorough investigation will be conducted by an appointed Investigation Team, ensuring:
  - Fair treatment for both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.
  - Collection and careful review of all relevant evidence.

- Transparency and completeness in the investigative process.
- 4. **Supportive Care:** Pastoral care and counseling will be provided to both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator throughout the investigation.
- 5. **Decisive Outcomes:** The Investigation Team will present findings and recommendations to Church leadership for immediate and appropriate action, which may include disciplinary measures, legal action, or other necessary remedies.

## **Preventative Measures**

1. **Mandatory Training:** Comprehensive and ongoing training on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults for all clergy, monastic members, employees, and volunteers.
2. **Rigorous Screening:** Thorough background checks for all individuals aged 18 and older who will have direct contact with children and vulnerable adults will be processed through the National Church for greater transparency and accountability.
3. **Vigilant Supervision:** Ensuring strict supervision of activities involving children and vulnerable adults.

## **Compliance with National Church's Holy Safe Policies**

The Church will rigorously adhere to the National Church's Holy Safe policies and procedures, ensuring:

1. **Policy Consistency:** Our policies align with national standards without exception.
2. **Regular Updates:** Regular review and updating of our policies and practices to reflect changes in national guidelines.
3. **Collaborative Efforts:** Active collaboration with the National Church to promote and implement best practices in safeguarding.

## **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will undergo an annual review by the Church leadership and the Safeguarding Officer to ensure its continued effectiveness and adherence to the National Church's Holy Safe policies and procedures.

## **Conclusion**

The Orthodox Catholic Monastic Community of Saint Brigid and Saint Dymphna Orthodox Catholic Church is resolute in its dedication to the safety and sanctity of all its members. By implementing this policy, we reaffirm our steadfast commitment to protect God's people and respond with urgency and integrity to any incidents of abuse.

## **Contact Information:**

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Fr. Matthew Kennedy

Phone: 623-252-0297

Email: [abbot@ocsb-monastics.org](mailto:abbot@ocsb-monastics.org)

Address: 10700 N. 85<sup>th</sup> Ave, 2592, Peoria, AZ 85380