

Safeguarding Policy

Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Mary Magdalene and Community Hall

St Margaret's Rd, St Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 6EW

Under the Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain and Northern Ireland

1. Introduction

The Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Mary Magdalene is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming, and protective environment for children, young people, and adults at risk. This policy sets out the safeguarding standards, procedures, and responsibilities that apply to all church and community activities.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the safeguarding requirements of the Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the relevant safeguarding duties and procedures applicable in East Sussex, including those of East Sussex County Council. It will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required by changes in law, guidance, or practice.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- Sunday School
- Children's clubs
- Youth groups
- Community clubs and classes
- Public events and gatherings
- All activities taking place within the Church and Community Hall
- All clergy, volunteers, staff, visitors, and contractors

3. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

Name: Mario Panciuc

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is responsible for receiving safeguarding concerns, maintaining safeguarding records, ensuring safer recruitment procedures are followed, and liaising with the Archdiocese and statutory agencies as required.

3.2 Deputy Safeguarding Officer

Name: Irina Nechifor

The Deputy Safeguarding Officer supports the PSO and acts in their absence.

3.3 Parish Priest and Parish Committee

The Parish Priest and Parish Committee are responsible for ensuring:

- adoption and annual review of this policy
- adequate resources for safeguarding
- compliance with Archdiocese safeguarding requirements
- a safeguarding culture within the parish and community hall

3.4 Volunteers and Activity Leaders

All volunteers and activity leaders must:

- follow this safeguarding policy
- complete DBS checks where required
- attend safeguarding training
- report concerns immediately
- work in accordance with the approved code of conduct

4. Safer Recruitment

All volunteers and staff working with children or adults at risk must follow safer recruitment procedures. These include:

- completion of an application or volunteer form
- interview or informal suitability discussion
- two references
- enhanced DBS check where required
- agreement to follow the Code of Conduct
- completion of safeguarding training

No volunteer may begin regulated activity until all required checks and safeguards are completed.

5. Code of Conduct

All volunteers and staff must:

- treat all individuals with dignity and respect
- avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult where possible
- maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries
- never use abusive, aggressive, or inappropriate language
- never engage in favouritism or private communication with children
- report all concerns immediately

6. Sunday School and Youth Activities

Activity leaders must ensure that:

- a minimum of two adults are present at all times
- children are signed in and out by a parent or guardian
- rooms are safe, clean, and appropriately supervised
- first aid equipment is available
- no adult is ever alone with a child behind a closed door
- toileting procedures follow safe practice and no adult accompanies a child into a cubicle

7. Community Clubs and Public Events

Organisers must:

- ensure adequate supervision
- follow health and safety requirements
- maintain clear fire exits
- report any safeguarding concerns to the PSO

8. Photography and Online Safety

Photography or video recording of children is only permitted when:

- parents or guardians have given written consent
- images are used appropriately and stored securely
- no child is identified by name without permission

Church social media and online communication must:

- be managed by authorised adults
- never allow private messaging with children

9. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All concerns must be taken seriously.

If someone is at immediate risk, call 999.

9.1 Reporting Procedure

- Report the concern to the Parish Safeguarding Officer immediately.
- If the PSO is unavailable, report to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.
- The PSO will record the concern and decide the next steps.
- The PSO may contact the Archdiocese Safeguarding Office, East Sussex County Council, or the police, if required.
- No volunteer or member of the parish should investigate concerns themselves.

10. External Reporting Contacts

Children: East Sussex County Council

Single Point of Advice (SPOA)

Phone: 01323 464222

Out of hours: 01273 335906 / 01273 335905

Adults: East Sussex County Council

Health & Social Care Connect

Phone: 0345 60 80 191

Out of hours: 01273 335906 / 01273 335905

11. Record Keeping

The PSO will maintain secure, confidential safeguarding records including:

- concern forms
- incident reports
- actions taken
- communications with statutory agencies

Records will be stored securely and retained according to Archdiocese guidance and applicable legal requirements.

12. Risk Assessment

All activities involving children or adults at risk must have a written risk assessment covering:

- supervision ratios
- environment and equipment safety
- fire safety
- first aid provision
- arrival and departure procedures

13. Training

All volunteers must complete safeguarding training provided by:

- the Archdiocese, or
- approved external safeguarding bodies

Training must be refreshed every three years, or sooner if required by role, policy change, or safeguarding need.

14. Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is shared only:

- on a need-to-know basis

- with statutory agencies when required
- in accordance with data protection law

15. Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Parish Committee and updated as required.

Date of approval: _____

For further information, please contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Church Office.