



'inspired by our faith we pursue justice and peace in and through community'

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Revised October 2023

CONTENTS

1. Our commitment
2. Defining Safeguarding
3. Code of Good Practice
4. The Iona Community Safeguarding Team
5. Recruitment and Training of Staff
6. Understanding abuse and maltreatment
7. Allegations and disclosures of abuse or maltreatment
8. Dealing with the press

1. Our Commitment

The Iona Community, as a Christian organisation, is committed to providing a safe environment in which every person can thrive and feel safe whatever their culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity.

2. Defining Safeguarding

What is Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a term to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people—especially children, young people and vulnerable adults—to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

What is Child Protection?

Child Protection is the actual action and processes we undertake to protect individual children we suspect have suffered or are suffering harm. We have clear procedures for leaders to follow to ensure any safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately and reported promptly. Anyone can report a Safeguarding Concern or allegation, not just our leaders.

What is Adult Support and Protection?

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act, 2007 defines an Adult as a person aged 16 years or over who meets ALL of the undernoted criteria.

- they are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
- they are at risk of harm; and
- because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity they are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

3. Code of Good Practice

All Employees and Volunteers must follow the Code of Good Practice, which is issued to all employees, volunteers and to anyone organizing an Iona Community event. i.e. a person responsible for safeguarding at an event.

The current Code states as follows:-

“YOU MUST:-

- Treat everyone with respect;
- Provide an example you wish others to follow;
- Respect everyone’s right to personal privacy;
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like;
- Create an environment where young people feel comfortable to talk to others about any concerns they may have;
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned;
- Recognise that sensitivity is required in moments when you are discussing issues such as bullying, bereavement, abuse or personal development;

YOU MUST NOT:-

- Permit harmful or abusive activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying, etc.)
- Have any inappropriate verbal or physical contact with people or make suggestive remarks or gestures;
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts;
- Exaggerate or trivialize child abuse issues;
- Show favouritism to any individual;
- Rely on just your good name to protect you;

WHAT HAPPENS IF:-

A. You suspect that a child is being abused, emotionally, physically, or sexually?

1. Immediately tell your local Safeguarding Officer, who will inform the Safeguarding Manager.
2. Record the facts as you know them.

You must refer; you must not investigate.

B. A child discloses abuse to you?

1. Allow the child to speak without interruption, accepting what is said, but do not investigate.
2. Alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement.
3. Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on.
4. Immediately tell your local Safeguarding Officer, who will inform the Safeguarding Manager.

5. Record the facts as you know them.

You must refer; you must not investigate.

C. You receive an allegation about any adult or about yourself?

1. Immediately tell your local Safeguarding Officer, who will inform the Safeguarding Manager
2. Record the facts as you know them.

You must refer; you must not investigate.

In any situation, if you think that a child is at immediate risk of harm, then contact the police or Children's/Social Services or relevant agency. If you are in any doubt about what to do, contact the Safeguarding Manager

4. The Iona Community Safeguarding Team

This section gives an overview of the responsibilities of the members of the Iona Community Safeguarding Team which comprises.

- Safeguarding Manager – Usually the Finance and Compliance Manager.
- Safeguarding Officers covering each Centre and the Mainland Office. Posters at each Centre will detail names and contact numbers.
- Safeguarding Trustee – Appointed by the Council of the Iona Community.
- Safeguarding Panel – A panel convened by the Safeguarding Trustee and drawn from Members of the two Iona Community Standing Committees (CLC and CRC).
- Safeguarding Appeals Panel – A panel Convened by the Convener of Iona Community Council and comprising Vice Convener of Council and the Conveners of CLC, CRC and the Appointments Panel.

The Safeguarding Team aims to:

- (a) ensure best practice in preventing harm or abuse to children and adults at risk and
- (b) ensure that the Community makes a timely and appropriate response when harm or abuse is witnessed, suspected or reported.

Preventing harm and abuse

The Safeguarding Team aims to prevent harm or abuse by ensuring that there is good recognition and reporting and provides:

- Support and advice with every-day safeguarding matters where there is not an incident of suspected or reported harm or abuse. This work is called safeguarding enquiries.
- Advice and support for the safe recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers: the process of checking a person's suitability to work with children or protected adults via membership of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act, 2007, (PVG Scheme). Safe recruitment is about ensuring that only people suitable to work with children and adults at risk, become part of the workforce.
- A Recruitment referral process to risk assess potential volunteers and paid staff, who have convictions on their PVG Scheme Record. This process demonstrates safe recruitment practice and it ensures that those with criminal offences that do not affect their suitability for the particular post can be safely employed.

- Safeguarding training programs to meet the particular learning needs of different groups of people.

Responding to disclosures of harm or abuse, or risk of abuse

The Safeguarding Team:

- Provides verbal and written advice in situations where harm or abuse is witnessed, suspected or reported. This work is called managing safeguarding referrals.
- Advises and works alongside Managers working with those who pose a risk to ensure their safe inclusion in Community life.

The Role and Responsibilities of Iona Community Council, Community Life Committee and Community Resources Committee

The Iona Community Council and standing committees are responsible for ensuring that the Community adheres to and implements the Safeguarding Policy. Safeguarding should appear as a standing item on the agenda of these Committees. Council will appoint one of their members to be the Safeguarding Trustee who will be responsible for ensuring that the Safeguarding team are complying with this policy and will work with the Safeguarding Manager to ensure that the policy and working practices are reviewed and updated.

5. Recruitment and Training of Staff

Recruitment

The Iona Community Recruitment Policy outlines rules for safe recruitment of staff and Volunteers.

The undemoted are the key Safeguarding principles contain in the Recruitment Policy:

- References are obtained for all employees and volunteers.
- Prior to recruitment all employees are requested to complete a form disclosing unexpired criminal convictions.
- For posts which fulfil the relevant criteria, employees and volunteers are required to join the PVG Scheme.

People at risk to children

If individuals have been convicted of a relevant offence this will debar them from working as an employee or volunteer within the organisation, where the post involves direct contact with children or access to children's details. Please note: this includes all posts in the Islands centres as well as posts within the mainland Youth Team. In addition, there may also be restrictions regarding the above individuals participating in certain Iona Community events.

Where the post does not involve direct contact with children or access to children's data, a thorough risk assessment will be carried out and a contract drawn up and agreed by all necessary parties concerned, before consideration is given to employment/placement or continuing employment.

Should a member of staff undertaking regulated work be charged with an offence which relates to the potential harm of children or vulnerable adults, or be placed on bail, they will be suspended on full pay until criminal justice procedures have been dealt with.

This section of the Safeguarding Policy applies to:

Current staff/volunteers within the Iona Community.
 Current Members and Associate Members of the Iona Community.
 Adult guests/participants at Iona Community events.
 Anyone organising and leading an Iona Community event.

Pastoral Role

The Community recognises the need for pastoral support for offenders – and will seek to offer this from within or outside the organisation, where appropriate.

Risk Assessment and Contract for Known Offenders

The Safeguarding Manager will be the initial point of contact to coordinate a risk assessment involving the allocated criminal justice social worker (for Scotland) or probation officer (for England), police and any other relevant parties, so that any agreement about involvement with the organisation is known about and seen as part of a multi-agency approach.

The risk assessment will aim to clearly outline measures required, boundaries of involvement with the Community and supervision systems (an external Risk Assessment may already exist which may help inform this process). The Iona Community Risk Assessment should be presented to the Safeguarding Team, who will decide whether the individual should be permitted to have involvement with the organisation. If approved, a contract should be drawn up, outlining requirements and responsibilities of all parties and signed by the individual and designated supervisor (see Appendix for an example).

For known offenders already living within the wider community and wishing to be involved in the Iona Community, the procedures above will also apply.

Monitoring Group

The Safeguarding Team will fulfill the function of a monitoring group and the contract will be reviewed as required. When key personnel change or leave post, it is important to ensure continuity of awareness and provision of pastoral support for the offender.

Who Needs to Know

Should an offender be attending events where their identified supervisor is not present, key people, especially those responsible for leading children's activities, need to know that the offender is attending the overall event, that they will not be having contact with the children and that they will never be on their own with children and young people.

Who else is told needs to be weighed against any need for confidentiality or pastoral sensitivity. The need to know must be balanced with the danger that the offender may be the victim of discrimination or even hounded out of the organisation/wider community (to the detriment and greater danger of other children if they decide to maintain a lower profile).

Awareness of the organisation's policy, however, will be promoted and the following key aspects of procedures explained:

- i. People who need to know because they work with children are informed.
- ii. The organisation liaises with concerned agencies.
- iii. The Safeguarding Team will act as a monitoring group.
- iv. There will be a contract.
- v. Arrangements will be reviewed regularly.

The information – (i) to (v) above – will be particularly important for survivors.

Disqualified from Working with Children List

The Iona Community has a duty to make a referral under the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 in the event of an Employee, Volunteer or Member harming or putting a vulnerable person at risk when the person is removed from their position as a consequence of their action.

Training

Resident Staff - All islands resident employees will receive basic Safeguarding training at the start of each season and will be joined by mainland youth work employees / volunteers, as appropriate. Further Safeguarding training will be carried out if identified as necessary. Employees and volunteers in key posts relevant to Safeguarding who are not able to attend the 'start of Season' training will be given training at the earliest opportunity. This training will include an explanation of this Policy and relevant Guidance.

Volunteers at the islands centres (including 'Abbey Hosts') and on the mainland, will receive the "Code of Conduct" and sign the declaration form, indicating they have read and understood these, before starting work. The Code of Conduct is also available in the form of Safeguarding Cards and are informed of the location of Safeguarding Policy and procedure for contacting Safeguarding Officers. Anyone involved in Regulated Work or in a position of responsibility where vulnerable adults may be present should read this policy.

Safeguarding training is provided for youth week volunteer leaders, volunteers working with children, and any other voluntary positions with substantial contact with children.

All staff should:

- 1) Aim to ensure that events being run for children/young people or vulnerable adults are planned to avoid situations where abuse may occur.
- 2) Report to a Safeguarding Officer any concern regarding the safety or welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult, no matter how small, at the earliest opportunity.
- 3) Prioritise instructions given by a Safeguarding Officer, above normal duties, if requested.
- 4) Assist in maintaining minimum disruption to the rest of the group, by assisting with the programme, should the Safeguarding Officer and other staff be involved in dealing with a Safeguarding issue.

There are regular opportunities for employees and volunteers to meet with their Line Manager to review and plan their work, on a supportive basis, and this provides a setting for discussing the wellbeing of children and young people. In addition, further support will be provided for staff who have received a disclosure or witnessed an incident of abuse.

If a staff member or volunteer has concerns about another employee or volunteer's practice in relation to their work with children, young people or vulnerable adults they have a responsibility to share the concern with a Safeguarding Officer. Guidance on how to do this is contained within the Community's Whistle Blowing Policy.

6. Understanding abuse and maltreatment

Child Abuse

There are many different forms of child abuse, the main categories being physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect. The Scottish National Guidance **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (www.gov.scot)** gives some helpful information regarding types of abuse and neglect.

Some children are in situations that make them more vulnerable to abuse. These situations could include living in care or in violent or abusive homes, having physical or learning disabilities, sexuality, using drugs or alcohol or living with parents or carers who use drugs and alcohol, and living with mental health problems.

Adult Abuse

There are many different forms of adult abuse, the main categories being physical, sexual, financial, domestic and neglect. The Age UK website [Safeguarding order people from abuse and neglect \(ageuk.org.uk\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk) has more information about the types of abuse and recognising the signs of abuse or neglect.

Common Misunderstandings:-

“Vulnerable people often fantasise or make up stories about being abused. They have very active imaginations”

In fact it is extremely rare for people to lie or make up stories about being sexually abused. The far bigger problem is that they are often too frightened to tell anyone. Abusers often tell their victims that no one will believe them if they report what has happened.

“Disabled people are less likely to be abused.”

Actually, disabled people are more likely to be abused because they are more vulnerable, dependent on others and some people, because of a specific disability, may be less able to communicate what has happened to them.

“Abusers have deprived backgrounds and are of below average intelligence.”

Abusers come from a very wide range of social and intellectual backgrounds and may be well liked and respected members of society. The majority of abusers are male, particularly when considering sexual and physical abuse, although women do commit abuse. Many people want to be able to identify a category of individuals who are more likely to abuse. In fact, there is no 'type' of person who is an abuser - they come from every class, professional, racial and religious background. They are also often very skilled at manipulating people and situations, at creating trust and respect within their community and profession. Most people who are abused know the person who abuses them.

“People are always safe in groups.”

This is not always true: young children have, for example, been sexually assaulted in nursery school while other adults and children were present.

7. Allegations and disclosures of abuse or maltreatment

There is Safeguarding Guidance for staff which gives more detailed guidance on what to do if someone discloses harm or abuse to you. It is mandatory for anyone undertaking Regulated Work to have read this guidance during their induction.

8. Dealing with the Press

Where there is an approach by either the local or national press on the subject of Safeguarding, Staff, Volunteers, Trustees or Members (including Associate Members) must not engage in any discussion with members of the Press about the matter. All such communications will be dealt with by the Communications Manager in consultation with the Safeguarding Manager.

Staff will be informed before any press communication is released.