WCCM
MEDITATION & COMMUNITY

WCCM SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK

3rd EDITION

MARCH 2026



What is safeguarding?

- Safeguarding is helping to protect vulnerable adults or children from abuse or neglect.
- It means making sure people who work with them are aware of good practice when working with these two groups
- Any organisation which asks its staff/volunteers to oversee vulnerable adults or children must see that adequate checks have been made on those staff/volunteers, and that they have had safeguarding training.
- That staff/volunteers do not put themselves in vulnerable positions
- That everyone knows how to deal with disclosures and/or concerns

WCCM's trustees take their responsibilities on Safeguarding seriously.

- We have safeguarding policies on children and vulnerable adults (see appendices)
- We have a code of conduct on safeguarding (see appendices)
- We have a confidential reporting email (listen@wccm.org) to report safeguarding concerns and issues
- We have a procedure for the International Office in the UK (See appendices)
- Our international communities are in the process of establishing their own policies and procedures

WCCM Trustees Safeguarding lead:

Mark Hansen

WCCM Safeguarding Officer:

Donal Guerin

- All Trustees and Guiding Council members are collectively responsible for Safeguarding, and National Coordinators (NCs) in their respective countries
- We send our Trustees for safeguarding awareness training

Action for Safeguarding Lead and National Coordinators

WCCM's Safeguarding lead needs to make sure that a clear understanding of safeguarding responsibilities is embedded and cascaded throughout the organisation.

We need to obtain assurances from our National Coordinators that national communities have their own Safeguarding procedures complying with their national laws and rules and that these have been disseminated throughout each WCCM national community.

The policies and procedures are intended to be globally applicable. WCCM National Coordinators should provide additional guidance on the need to comply with local and regulatory requirements in their jurisdiction

Action for National Coordinators

- **National Coordinators** are responsible for safeguarding arrangements in their own national communities
- You may wish to consider safeguarding coverage in your local **insurance arrangements** if you have not already done so
- You may consult the international office/safeguarding lead for advice

1. Sign the Code of Conduct on Safeguarding and then send to international office to retain on file
2. Take the WCCM International 'Procedures' document and
    a) Investigate how to produce a parallel version which takes account of your national legislation on safeguarding
    b) Translate it, if needed, into your language
    c) Disseminate the document throughout your community so that all are aware of their responsibilities.
    d) Ensure that anyone working with children/vulnerable adults are property vetted in accordance with procedures in your country.

CONSEQUENCES FOR WCCM FAILING TO FOCUS ON THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Institutions and organisations the world over have failed in safeguarding. – The churches have been culpable, but also world renown charities and organisations from Oxfam to the Football Association.

1. Children and Vulnerable Adults may not be safe with WCCM if our members, staff, and volunteers do not know what to do, or feel they need to 'protect' WCCM in the event of a disclosure.
2. We may increase risks if our staff, members, and volunteers feel they should first investigate a disclosure.
3. WCCM risks its global reputation
4. WCCM may be prosecuted and risk large fines, from which we are unable to recover.
5. Trustees of the WCCM may be prosecuted if there is evidence of wilful neglect of Safeguarding arrangements.
6. We may wreck John Main's legacy and defeat our core mission.

KEY PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE SAFEGUARDING PROCESS

- Safety first – Act immediately to protect anyone at risk
- Legal Compliance: Follow all mandatory reporting laws.
- Respectful and Fair to all parties – Treat all parties with dignity and impartiality
- Transparency: Explain the process clearly within confidentiality limits.
- Independent – Avoid any conflict of interests; separate investigative and decision-making functions
- Trauma-Informed Practice – Recognize the impact of abuse and minimize re-traumatization
- Documentation: Keep complete, accurate, and secure records.
- Accountability: Apply standards consistently and learn from each case.
- Ethics: Align actions with WCCM's principles and mission.

APPENDIX 1

The World Community for Christian Meditation

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:

The protection of vulnerable adults is a key aspect of safeguarding. It holds equal importance as the safeguarding of children and young people.

What is meant by the term vulnerable adult

"Aged 18 years or over; Who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".
Safeguarding Adults NHS England 2017

Good safeguarding provision looks beyond official definitions of what might be a vulnerable adult. A vulnerable adult is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support. This also applies to moments in the life of any adult when he or she might feel particularly vulnerable. Such moments might be brief, longer term or recurring. They would include admission to hospital, periods of ill health, bereavement and other losses, life adjustments, transitions and other times of personal stress and distress.

Responsibility

The responsibility to care for and protect vulnerable adults is a shared one. Whilst as a registered charity, the World Community for Christian Meditation has a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults who come for many reasons to the various aspects of our work, it is also important to remember that there will be times when staff and volunteers might also find themselves vulnerable.

In exercising this important duty of care the World Community for Christian Mediation will be required to comply with the recording and reporting procedures which are in line with current practice in the UK. This will include reporting as required to the statutory services, health, social care, and the police. To assist in this process, it would be beneficial for each 'centre' in the UK to have a named police and social work contact. Centres in other countries should seek to link in a similar way to members of the appropriate civil authorities.

All staff, officers and volunteers for the World Community for Christian Meditation should:

understand their personal responsibility to report all vulnerable adult concerns in accordance with local authority procedures to be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;

be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to vulnerable adults; share information as requested by the local authority social services department so that an assessment can be made of the vulnerable adults' needs and circumstances;
contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of any vulnerable adult.

Definitions of abuse and neglect:

The abuse of vulnerable adults is a serious cause for concern within safeguarding. The serious nature and the inherent risks must be given a priority so that staff and volunteers are vigilant. Adults and children who have any form of vulnerability or additional needs are at a higher risk of being abused.

So often assumptions can be made that adults can take care of themselves or indeed that bullying is encouraged and enabled because it is part of the culture of the group and only meant as fun.
When abuse happens, it is rarely identified as one form of abuse. Alongside sexual abuse there is often physical and emotional abuse. Within a faith context this is often further complicated by spiritual abuse.

Physical abuse
As with the definition of physical abuse of children, the same applies for vulnerable adults and can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness. Other types of physical abuse include unnecessary restraint, deliberately making a vulnerable adult feel physical uncomfortable, force feeding or withholding of food and water, not responding to a call for assistance and physical punishments.

Emotional Abuse
Emotional or psychological abuse of vulnerable adults often happens under the generic term of bullying. It can also include name calling, failure to observe privacy, verbal abuse, intimidation, isolation, failure to attend to their needs, swearing and speaking to them in a patronising manner.

Sexual Abuse
As with the sexual abuse of children, the sexual abuse of adults includes grooming, forcing, or bullying a vulnerable adult to participate in sexual contact or non-contact of a sexually abusive nature. It is important to remember that sexual abuse might not include direct physical contact and would include forcing a vulnerable adult to watch pornography, look at pornographic images or to watch others engaged in sexual activity.

Sexual abuse of vulnerable adults can include rape, prostitution, penetrative or non-penetrative activities, in appropriate touch and exposure.

Spiritual Abuse

Any abuse which takes place within a faith context can include spiritual abuse. It is not unusual for the sexual and psychological abuse of vulnerable adults to be placed in a spiritual, context as if that is happening is the will of God or His divine judgement. It is very similar to emotional abuse in that it includes grooming behaviours but in a religious context. It can include coercive behaviours, the use of scripture or sacramental rituals, the teaching authority of the respective faith group, the power and position of authority held by those in leadership, the imposing of guilt and shame, encouraging emotional dependency

Neglect and Acts of Omission
Any failure to meet the needs of a vulnerable adult is a form of neglect. It can include failure to provide access to the basic requirements of food, shelter, and clothing. It can also include: failure to provide medication as prescribed, isolation, not allowing the person to communicate his or her needs. It includes acts of omission such as failing to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of a vulnerable adult who might be displaying signs of self-neglect**.**

Staff awareness

All staff will be made aware of this policy, in relation to the importance of safe-guarding vulnerable adults as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for volunteers, officers of the community and for all staff.

Where necessary or possible, staff will be expected to attend appropriate training courses and dependent on their role, they should attend regular update training sessions.

Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Allegations Involving a Members of Staff, Officer or Volunteer

The World Community for Christian Meditation is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. Where appropriate, key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children or vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children or vulnerable adults by those who work with them or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to The Safeguarding Officer.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with vulnerable adults has:

Behaved in a way which has harmed a vulnerable adult, or may have harmed a vulnerable adult; Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a vulnerable adult;

Behaved towards a vulnerable adult in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The Safeguarding Officer will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the local authority safeguarding team is required and/or whether action pending a disciplinary investigation is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the local authority safeguarding team and the Police; but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take. If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a vulnerable adult is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the Safeguarding Officer will immediately refer the matter to the local authority safeguarding team and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened straight away.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the local social services department. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the Safeguarding Officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;

2) Enquiries and assessment by Adult Social Care Services as to whether the vulnerable adult is in need of protection or in need of services;

3) Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

APPENDIX 2

The World Community for Christian Meditation

Safeguarding Children

Policy

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. As adults and staff, officers or volunteers, *everyone* has a responsibility to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Our organisation will not tolerate the mistreatment of children.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children – and in particular protecting them from significant harm - depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. As a registered charity, the World Community for Christian Meditation has a responsibility to contribute to arrangements for safeguarding children where appropriate. This will normally be regarding sharing information about individuals of concern with the relevant authorities (police and/or social services)

For those children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the child(ren) and – where necessary – to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against children.

All staff, officers and volunteers for the World Community for Christian Meditation should:

- understand their personal responsibility to report child protection concerns in accordance with local authority child protection procedures
- be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
- share information as requested by the local authority social services department so that an assessment can be made of the child's needs and circumstances;
- contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare
- sign the organisation's code of conduct on safeguarding

Definitions of abuse and neglect:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Staff awareness

All staff will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for volunteers, officers of the community and for all staff.

Where necessary or possible, staff, contractors, volunteers, and trustees will be encouraged to attend appropriate training courses.

Reviewing the Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every year, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

Allegations Involving a Members of Staff, Officer, or Volunteer

The World Community for Christian Meditation is committed to having effective recruitment and human resources procedures, including checking all staff and volunteers to make sure they are safe to work with children and young people. Where appropriate, key staff involved in recruitment processes will undertake Safer Recruitment Training.

However, there may still be occasions when there is an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Allegations against those who work with children, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, cover a wide range of circumstances.

All allegations of abuse of children by those who work with children or care for them must be taken seriously. All reports of allegations must be submitted within one working day to The Child Protection Officer.

The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;

Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the persons behaviour at work, at home or in another setting.

The Child Protection Officer will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the local authority safeguarding children's team is required and/or whether action pending a disciplinary investigation is appropriate.

Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the local authority safeguarding children's team and the Police; but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take.

If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the Child Protection Officer will immediately refer the matter to the local authority safeguarding children's team and ask for a Strategy Discussion/Meeting to be convened straight away.

Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the local social services department. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the Child Protection Officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate.

Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands:

1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
2) Enquiries and assessment by Children's Social Care Services as to whether the child is need of protection or in need of services;
3) Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

APPENDIX 3

The World Community for Christian Meditation (International)

WCCM SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

OVERVIEW

WCCM has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and exploitation of any kind – physical, verbal, emotional or sexual. WCCM's director, members of governance bodies, oblates, consultants, teachers, employees, contractors, and volunteers are called upon to be exemplary models of moral behavior and spiritual faith.

This Code of Conduct aims to:

- Ensure a safe working environment for all those engaged in WCCM's work
- Ensure the safety and well-being of the children, adults at risk/vulnerable adults and communities with whom we come into contact.

This Code of Conduct applies to all WCCM: its director, members of governing bodies, oblates, consultants, teachers, employees, contractors, and volunteers. Compliance with this Code of Conduct will be included in all employment/volunteering contracts and a copy of the Code of Conduct must be read and signed by anyone joining the organisation in such a capacity.

WCCM's National Communities will be expected to have their own Code of Conduct and procedure which reflects the national legislation regarding safeguarding and specific context in which they are working.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF WCCM'S SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK

- We take a zero-tolerance approach to harm, abuse or exploitation of any kind and this code of conduct aims to place the emphasis on the safety and well-being of those connected with our work.
- We take individual and organisational responsibility for safeguarding and provide appropriate staff with training and guidance to fulfil their obligations.
- We insist on professional, responsible conduct from all connected with us. We take a robust approach to dealing with any breaches.
- We will endeavour to maintain contextually appropriate best practice throughout our worldwide community by the sharing of up-to-date information and learning, through our regular community meetings and communications, and by membership of appropriate external advisory bodies.
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BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- Compliance with WCCM's Code of Conduct is mandatory under all circumstances.
- WCCM's director, members of governing bodies, oblates, consultants, teachers, employees, contractors, and volunteers have an individual responsibility to promote a safe working environment and to ensure the safety and well-being of the children, adults at risk/vulnerable adults and communities with whom we come into contact.
- WCCM's director, members of governing bodies, oblates, consultants, teachers, employees, contractors, and volunteers have a responsibility to model appropriate behaviour and ensure that all understand and comply with this Code of Conduct.
- All concerns must be reported to the Safeguarding Team, which consists of Donal Guerin, Mark Hansen, and the National Safeguarding Officer.
- All concerns and allegations will be taken seriously and it is the policy of WCCM to report all allegations of abuse to statutory authorities, regardless of whether the abuse occurred recently or in the past or whether the accused is living or deceased. If a victim is unwilling to report the matter, the allegation will still be reported but the reporting of their details will be considered on a case-by-case basis and anonymity cannot always be guaranteed. Anonymity will be respected where possible and appropriate, but is not absolute and cannot be guaranteed where to do so could obstruct statutory/regulatory obligations to make external referrals
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, termination of contracts and, where required, referral to other agencies such as the police.

PERSONAL PLEDGE

CONTRIBUTING TO A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- I recognise that both my personal and professional conduct can potentially damage the reputation of WCCM and will uphold WCCM's values throughout, setting a good example.
- I will treat all colleagues with dignity and respect, even when our opinions may differ.
- I will not engage in or condone any form of harassment, intimidation, abuse, or exploitation.
- I will not engage in or condone any behaviour that is illegal or could bring the organisation into disrepute in any way.
- Wherever possible, I will challenge inappropriate conduct directly. In addition, I will report all concerns to either my line manager or to the Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours of it arising.
- I understand that making intentionally false or misleading allegations against a colleague is a serious matter and could result in disciplinary action, or legal action depending on the severity.

COMMUNITY VISITS

- I will only visit or have contact with WCCM communities with the express approval and knowledge of WCCM.
- I will not engage in any forms of abusive, degrading, or exploitative behaviour.
- I will ensure that I am aware of and follow WCCM's safeguarding procedures at all times.
- I will ensure that I am aware of any additional safeguarding measures required in a particular community and will follow any instructions or guidance provided by staff/volunteers.

- I will not exchange money, offers of employment, goods or services for sexual activity with community members, adults at risk/vulnerable adults or children. I will only take photos and/or video where written consent from parent/guardian or carer has been obtained and with prior approval of the WCCM safeguarding representative/National WCCM community leadership.
- I will not take photos or videos on personal devices unless I have explicit approval from WCCM. I will share any photos/videos taken on personal devices with WCCM and delete them from my personal device as soon as possible. I will not post them on any form of social media unless written consent has been provided.
- I will not possess, use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst on community visits.
- I will avoid unnecessary risk to the safety, health and welfare of myself and others, including the communities I meet.
- I will observe local laws and if I become aware of any illegal activity, I will make it known to the appropriate authorities.
- I will be sensitive to local customs and seek to learn from and respect the experience and knowledge of the local communities that I meet.
- I will not take or post pictures or links to pictures of children on any form of social media or publication without written consent of parent/guardian.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & ADULTS AT RISK/VULNERABLE ADULTS

- I will always behave appropriately in other people's presence and refrain from language that may cause discomfort or which could be deemed sexually provocative.
- I will listen to what the children/adults at risk/vulnerable adults are saying and respond appropriately.
- I will avoid spending time alone with individual children and I will ensure that I am always accompanied by another community member I am with children.
- I will not initiate physical contact with a child as this could be misinterpreted and cause fear or discomfort.
- I will never hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or adults at risk/vulnerable adults.
- I will not develop relationships with children or adults at risk/vulnerable adults that could in any way be considered exploitative or abusive and will never engage in any form of sexual conduct with them, including a relationship, verbal banter, or flirtation.
- I will not act in ways that shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade anyone and any child or adult at risk/vulnerable adult.
- I will not discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- I will obtain written consent from parents/guardian/carer to speak to children/young people on teleconferencing or social media platforms setting out the clear purpose of the meeting and notifying them of the organisers of the event, and be accompanied by a person with safeguarding training.
- I will not take or post pictures or links to pictures of children on any form of social media or publication without written consent of parent/guardian.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- I will not seek to obtain or access personal information on the communities and children/adults at risk/vulnerable adults WCCM works with unless this is strictly necessary within my role and I have authorisation from the safeguarding lead to do so.
- I will not disclose or transfer personal information relating to children, young people, adults at risk/vulnerable adults or WCCM communities unless authorised to do so.

- I will follow WCCM's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal information.
- I will not use the organisation's computer, laptop, or other equipment to view, download, create or distribute inappropriate material (such as pornography) or any material which is criminal in nature.

I have read and understood the Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it.

Signature :	
Print name:	
Date:	
Signature of Safeguarding Officer:	
Date	

This code of conduct has been drafted with advice from the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency.
https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/

For further information or advice please refer to their website or contact them – admin@catholicsafeguarding.org.uk

Updated spring 2025

APPENDIX 4

WCCM Safeguarding Reporting Policy

Policy Title: Reporting Suspected Safeguarding Violations

Effective Date: [Insert Date]

Policy Owner: WCCM International Safeguarding Lead / WCCM Trustee responsible for Safeguarding (Mark Hansen)

1. Context

WCCM has global safeguarding policies. These policies are to protect vulnerable adults and children in our communities. The policies can be found on the WCCM website:
https://wccm.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Safeguarding-Vulnerable-Adults-WCCMv2.pdf
https://wccm.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Safeguarding-Children-WCCMv2.pdf

Each WCCM National Committee has been requested to adopt safeguarding policies, procedures and codes of conduct that are tailored to their specific environment and jurisdiction. They should provide additional guidance on the need to comply with local legal and regulatory requirements in their jurisdiction. They are also requested to name a community member who will be responsible for safeguarding.

Because suspected safeguarding incidences can give rise to reputational risk for WCCM, it is important that National Committees and responsible persons inform WCCM International of any suspected safeguarding violations or incidents. This is important to ensure that WCCM International can appropriately support the national group, as well as mitigate any potential reputational risk.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures for reporting suspected safeguarding violations to the WCCM International's head office. It ensures a clear, confidential, and effective process that promotes the safety and well-being of all individuals, especially vulnerable persons, in contact with WCCM.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all WCCM members in all locations where we operate.

4. Definitions

Safeguarding: Measures to protect the health, well-being, and human rights of individuals, especially children and vulnerable adults, from harm, abuse, or neglect.

Violation: Any action or omission that places an individual at risk of harm or breaches safeguarding protocols.

Reporter: The individual raising a concern or suspicion of a safeguarding violation.

5. Responsibility to Report

The National Safeguarding Responsible Person (or the National Coordinator if there is no identified Safeguarding Responsible Person) has a duty of care and mandatory responsibility to report any:
- Suspected or actual abuse or exploitation;
- Breaches of safeguarding policy or code of conduct;

6. Reporting Procedure

6.1 Immediate Action (if a person is at risk of harm):

- Ensure the person is safe.
- Contact local emergency services if required.

6.2 How to Report to WCCM Head Office:

- By Email: listen@wccm.org
- By Phone: **+44 20 7278 2070**, Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm (and ask to speak with Donal Guerin)

Include the following in your report:
- Date and time of incident
- People involved (including name of victim and the alleged violator)
- Nature of the concern
- Any immediate actions taken
- Your contact details

7. Confidentiality and Protection

- All reports are handled confidentially and only shared on a need-to-know basis.
- No retaliation will be tolerated against anyone who reports a concern in good faith.

8. Follow-Up and Investigation

- The WCCM Safeguarding Officer will assess the report within 3 working days.
- Where necessary, an internal or external investigation will be initiated.
- The reporter will be informed of the outcome or next steps, as appropriate.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant safeguarding incident or regulatory change.

Approved by:
[Angelene Chan – Chair of the WCCM Board of Trustees
[23 March 2026

APPENDIX 5

TO BE AMENDED AND ADAPTED TO THE NATIONAL LEGAL JURISDICTION

Procedures for raising concerns about the welfare of an adult or child at risk

These are the procedures you must follow if you are concerned, while executing your work at WCCM, about the welfare of a child or an adult at risk/vulnerable adult, or if an allegation of abuse is made. This policy applies to WCCM'S Directors, members of governing bodies, oblates, consultants, teachers, employees, contractors, and volunteers.

[NB: These guidelines apply to the staff, volunteers etc as listed above, of WCCM International Office based in the UK. WCCM in the UK (Christian Meditation Trust) have their own guidelines. WCCM Communities outside of the UK will also have their own guidelines, and you should follow those if you are overseas.]

1. If you receive an allegation or concern, or have your own concerns regarding a child or adult at risk/vulnerable adult then please report this in the first instance to the event leader you are working with as soon as possible and in any event, within 24 hours.

2. The event leader will make a report to our Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours of being informed. Notify WCCM Safeguarding Officer Donal Guerin *Donal.Guerin@wccm.org , WCCM Safeguarding Trustee Mark Hansen mark.hansen@wccm.org and copy to confidential email listen@wccm.org*

3. If a child/adult at risk/vulnerable adult discloses information, it should be taken seriously, reassurance should be given and a note made using the language articulated by the complainant with no embellishment. No personal judgements should be given, and confidentiality should not be promised, but an undertaking given that information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. The accused/suspect should not be informed, so that no-one is placed at any risk.

4. If a child or adult at risk/vulnerable adult is considered to be at immediate risk of harm, the matter should be referred directly to Police and the national Safeguarding lead [or other nominated person] must be notified at the earliest opportunity.

5. The safeguarding lead will usually seek consent from parents/carers to make a referral to the statutory authorities. However, if concerns are considered to be a child protection matter, no consent is required as to involving the parents as refusal to make the referral might compromise the safety of the child. Consent will be sought from adult victims but if a victim is unwilling to report the matter, the allegation will still be reported but the reporting of their details will be considered on a case-by-case basis and anonymity cannot always be guaranteed. Anonymity will be respected where possible and appropriate, but is not absolute and cannot be guaranteed where to do so could obstruct statutory/regulatory obligations to make external referrals. If the person reporting the matter is a "mandated reporter" under the national law, then they must file the reports as required under their national law.

6, Information will normally be shared with families, unless to do so would compromise an adult at risk/ vulnerable adult/child's safety as directed by statutory agencies.

7. A record of concerns and actions must be made in writing and provided to the national safeguarding lead within 24 hours.

8. If the concerns/allegations made relate directly to the Safeguarding Officer, then the person to be contacted will be the WCCM Trustee with lead responsibility on Safeguarding, Mr. Mark Hansen (mark.hansen@wccm.org) Please refer to the flow chart overleaf for a summary of the above instructions.

QUICK GUIDE TO RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK

All concerns must be brought to the national Safeguarding Lead, who in turn will contact the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer. Never delay taking action If you are unable to contact the safeguarding Lead/WCCM Trustees Lead on Safeguarding, you can contact Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency or Thirtyone:eight if you require advice.



FOLLOW UP OF ALLEGATIONS/ COMPLAINTS IF MADE AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS OF WCCM

Any disclosure (i.e. when a specific allegation of abuse is made against a named individual working for or on behalf of WCCM) and/or suspicion (i.e. when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place or be in prospect) will always be investigated and acted upon swiftly. The child or adult at risk/vulnerable adults' welfare will always be the paramount consideration. If deemed required, an allegation will be reported to statutory authorities, e.g., Police or Social Care.

Confidential information will be handled in a sensitive and respectful manner but it may be necessary to share with other safeguarding Professionals on a 'need to know basis.'

WCCM will be guided by the relevant statutory authority regarding the individual remaining in role whilst an investigation takes place. If removal from role is recommended by the relevant statutory authority and/or Donal Guerin, in consultation with WCCM's Trustee Safeguarding Lead, Mark Hansen, and WCCM's Executive Director, where possible, the individual will be suspended from duties on full pay for the duration of the investigation. This will be regarded as a neutral act and will not prejudice any internal investigation.

Reporting

If any member of staff or volunteer suspects abuse, or if a child/young person or adult at risk/vulnerable adult makes a disclosure, or if a person external to WCCM reports to WCCM a suspicion or allegation relating to WCCM employees, volunteers, or activities, including activities carried out in partnership with WCCM by other organisations, the following steps should be taken:

In case of immediate danger:

- If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or adult at risk/vulnerable adult, do not delay in contacting the police, using the local emergency call number if a child or adult at risk/vulnerable adult is believed to be in immediate danger.

Other cases:

- Immediately record the incident/concern or report;
- Pass the report to Donal Guerin, Safeguarding Officer & Head of Operations and to Mark Hansen, Trustee & Safeguarding Lead. Upon receipt of any report, Donal Guerin will assess and review within 24 hours. If urgent action is required to protect children, this will be done immediately.
- No employee or volunteer will prejudice their own standing or position within WCCM by responsibly reporting potential or suspected child abuse.
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Investigating and responding to Reports

As stated above, if you believe a child or adult at risk/vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, do not delay in contacting the police using the local emergency phone number. In concerning but slightly less time critical cases, WCCM will nevertheless act immediately, prioritising the safety of the child,

young person or adult at risk/vulnerable adult, in the event of a concern or allegation of abuse being reported following the process:

1. Donal Guerin or in his absence Mark Hansen will assess and review within 24 hours.

2. A discussion will take place between safeguarding professionals to consider the case and the required action. This discussion can include Police, Social Care, Education, Health, and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Confidential information will be handled in a sensitive and respectful manner but it may be necessary to share with other safeguarding professionals on a 'need to know' basis.

3. At the conclusion of any Statutory Authority investigation, an internal investigation on the part of WCCM may take place to establish whether there has been a breakdown of organisational policy and to agree appropriate action to take.

4. An enquiry will gather material and speak to relevant parties to establish the facts and make recommendations to WCCM Trustees about action needed to be taken in relation to the staff member, on improving policy and practice that may have contributed to the incident and reinforce WCCM's safeguarding procedures. WCCM's Director will be informed and updated regarding the progress and outcome of the investigation. WCCM's Director and Trustees will then decide upon a course of action.

Confidentiality
Children, young people and adults at risk/vulnerable adult's safety is paramount. The anonymity of any WCCM employee or volunteer who raises concerns of serious malpractice will be respected if they come forward in good faith with serious concerns, but anonymity cannot absolutely be guaranteed.

False & Malicious allegations
Deliberate malicious or false allegations are a serious disciplinary offence and will be investigated in accordance with WCCM's disciplinary policy and procedure.

The subject of the complaint (alleged perpetrator) and all WCCM witnesses must co-operate fully and openly with internal and statutory investigations and hearings. Their confidentiality will be protected **where possible** and information which could identify them will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Anyone who knowingly communicates confidential information, in any way, and particularly on any form of social media about a case may be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.

If a WCCM ***employee*** is the subject of a safeguarding allegation they may be immediately suspended on full pay until an investigation has been completed, subject to guidance from the relevant statutory authority. If a WCCM d*irector, contractor, member of governing body, oblate, consultant, teacher, or volunteer* is the subject of an allegation of abuse they will be withdrawn from their work until statutory and internal investigations have been completed. In both cases, it should be made clear that suspension does not imply prejudgment of the investigation outcome but rather protects all parties while an investigation is undertaken.

Note: This set of procedures have been drafted based on advice from the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA). Further information can be found on the CSSA website https://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/ or via

Safeguarding Operations Manager
Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)
39 Eccleston Square
London
SW1V 1BX
020 7901 1920

admin@catholicsafeguarding.org.uk

Change Record

Date of Change	Version	Change
19/12/2018	Ver. 1	
11/6/2023		Policy reviewed and re-passed by WCCM CIO Charity
June 2023		Policy reviewed by CSSA and reapproved by WCCM CIO Trustees
November 2025	Ver. 2	Policy updated, reviewed by CSSA and reapproved by WCCM CIO Trustees
March 2026	Ver.3	Policy updated, new sections on Safeguarding investigations and Confidentiality & Disclosure reviewed by Bates Well legal counsel and approved by WCCM CIO Trustees