



# Buckfast Abbey

## Safeguarding Policy & Complaints Procedure

Policy Owner:	Safeguarding Coordinator
Approved:	Abbot David Charlesworth, Chair of Trustees after agreement by the Trustees on 14 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
Review Date:	December 2025

Version	Date	Summary of Change
1.1	27/02/2023	Policy adopted
2.1	06/06/2023	Complaints Procedure added
3	December 2024	Policy review

### 1. Purpose

Buckfast Abbey is committed to the application of the Safeguarding standards and policies of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. This involves taking all possible steps to protect children, young people and adults who may be open to any form of abuse or maltreatment, by promoting a safe environment. No child, young person, or adult at risk of harm should ever experience abuse of any kind whilst attending Buckfast Abbey. The Trustees recognise their responsibility to keep them safe and are committed to best practices which protect them.

### 2. Scope

2.1 The policy applies to the members of the monastic communities of Buckfast Abbey and St Gregory the Great; to all employees of Buckfast Abbey; Dart Abbey Enterprises Ltd; agency staff, volunteers, residents, students, visitors, and contractors.

2.2 This policy is non-contractual and may be varied at any time.

2.3 This policy covers the local arrangements at Buckfast Abbey, which is part of the English Benedictine Congregation.

2.4 This local policy does not replace the Legislation and Statutory Guidance applicable to Safeguarding, which will be the default position in any conflict that arises.

2.5 The principles and guidance contained in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young people', and those applying to Safeguarding Adults, Safer Recruitment, combined with the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) National Policies and Procedures will be the guiding structure for safeguarding at Buckfast Abbey.

- 2.6 This local policy will not conflict with the overarching principles and requirements of the national safeguarding policies and procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The CSSA Policies and Documents have the advantage of being regularly updated and readily available for operational use, and cover the routine processes and forms used. There is a large volume of information on this site which would be difficult to retain in practice, so it provides a current “live” resource for most scenarios. [www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)
- 2.7 The local Buckfast Abbey Policy will only cover items not contained in the above, where specific guidance or procedures are needed for effective Safeguarding.
- 2.8 To ensure the constant review of Safeguarding at Buckfast Abbey, a Safeguarding Risk Register is regularly updated as a live document. The register is reviewed at each Buckfast Abbey Safeguarding Sub-Committee of Trustees meeting.

### **3. Objectives**

- 3.1 To protect all children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm.
- 3.2 To ensure adherence to Devon County Council’s Adult Safeguarding Policies and procedures.
- 3.3 To manage the process of Reports and disclosures of abuse.
- 3.4 To protect against all categories of abuse as outlined in the Care Act 2014:
- a. Physical Abuse
  - b. Psychological Abuse
  - c. Financial and material abuse
  - d. Sexual Abuse
  - e. Domestic Abuse
  - f. Modern Slavery
  - g. Self-Neglect
  - h. Discrimination
  - i. Neglect and acts of omission
  - j. Organisational Abuse
- 3.5 To ensure adherence to local and national reporting mechanisms for modern slavery and child sexual exploitation as advised by the Local Authority Safeguarding Procedures for adults and children.
- 3.6 To promote equality, value diversity, and work inclusively across our organisation, including consideration of adults accessing the Abbey grounds who have of general vulnerability issues, needs and circumstances. Buckfast Abbey recognises that an adult’s vulnerability may not be isolated only to care and support needs, as identified by the Care Act.

- 3.7 To uphold principles in behaviours and practices toward all who access Buckfast Abbey site, including the opposing of all forms of discrimination and intolerance. To this end, a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, and victimisation is in place.
- 3.8 To protect against discrimination for those who work within or visit Buckfast Abbey. The Abbey recognises the following as protected characteristics:
- a. Age
  - b. Disability
  - c. Gender
  - d. Gender reassignment
  - e. Marriage and civil partnership status
  - f. Race
  - g. Religion or belief
  - h. Sexual orientation
  - i. Pregnancy and maternity
- 3.9 To ensure compliance with Buckfast Abbey Safeguarding policies for visiting groups. Any person leading a group visit will be given information about the Abbey's safeguarding policies, and informed that Buckfast Abbey has requirements and expectations of group leaders to comply with this policy.

#### 4. Definitions

For the purposes of this Safeguarding Policy & Complaints Procedure, the following are definitions used:

- 4.1 A **Child** is a person under the age of 18.
- 4.2 A **young person** is a person who has reached the age of 16 but is under the age of 18.
- 4.3 An **Adult at Risk** is a person over 18 years' old who has care and support needs and is experiencing or is at risk of abuse and/or neglect, and, as a result of their needs, is unable to protect themselves against it. An adult's vulnerability may not be isolated only to care, and support needs as identified by the Care Act – The Abbey recognises the need to be inclusive and protect all adults with vulnerabilities not only those with care and support needs. Adult Safeguarding processes will determine the necessary course of action required.
- 4.4 **Abbey Personnel** includes everybody at Buckfast Abbey - both monks and staff.
- 4.5 **Public Place** is an area which can be seen by other people, or where other people are, or which is open to other people. Areas such as the numerous gardens, Grange Restaurant or Abbey Church is a public place.
- 4.6 A **Complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction, disquiet, or a concern, about how a safeguarding service has been delivered.

- 4.7 The **Chief Executive Officer** is the senior manager responsible for directing the implementation of the Abbey Trustees' Strategy.
- 4.8 **The Abbey** refers to Buckfast Abbey.
- 4.9 **The Abbot** is the Monastic Superior in charge of Buckfast Abbey and is Chair of the Buckfast Abbey Trust. In the absence of an Abbot, those duties are fulfilled by an appointed Monastic Superior.
- 4.10 **The Religious Safeguarding Lead** is a member of the Monastic Community appointed to provide pastoral care, and to represent the Abbot in an area or activity of the Abbey.
- 4.11 **Independent Investigator** is a person who is not directly involved in a situation or dispute, and who is able to investigate problems and make independent recommendations. This person may be a member of Abbey Personnel, or external to the Abbey.
- 4.12 **Person concerned** is the person being complained about, or that the complainant is unhappy with in respect of delivery of the safeguarding service.
- 4.13 **Safeguarding Service Complaint** is a complaint about the delivery of a safeguarding service.
- 4.14 **Safeguarding Lead** is the most senior lay role in the Safeguarding Department, i.e. the Safeguarding Coordinator.

## 5. Procedures for all Abbey Personnel

- 5.1 All Buckfast personnel will receive safeguarding awareness training. Access to free online safeguarding training is available alongside face-to-face internal safeguarding training. This will provide some knowledge of our Safeguarding policies in relation to children, young adults, and adults at risk of harm. It will define safe working practice and provide clear advice on what to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed.
- 5.2 Most personnel at Buckfast Abbey do not work directly with children, young people or adults at risk of harm, however as part of their day-to-day work they may encounter them. For example, residential areas could be visited by personnel for cleaning or maintenance, fire alarm testing and many other legitimate reasons. Therefore, it is a requirement that all personnel receive training. If an employee or volunteer receives a report or is concerned about the welfare of a child or adult at risk, they must report this in the first instance to the group leader, manager, safeguarding lead or Safeguarding Coordinator.
- 5.3 If a child or adult is considered to be at immediate risk of harm, the matter must be referred directly to the Police, and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator must be notified at the earliest opportunity. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will usually seek consent from parents/carers to make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Services Department. However, if the concerns are considered to be a Child Protection matter,

no consent is required since to involve the parents (or their refusal to make the referral) might compromise the safety of the child. Information will be shared with families, unless to do so would compromise a child's safety, as directed by statutory agencies.

5.4 Any member of personnel who works, or may have individual contact with children, young persons, or adults at risk of harm will be recruited by the Safer Recruitment Process. Any member of personnel who works or might be reasonably expected to have individual contact with children and/or adults at risk of harm will be asked by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service form.

5.5 All Buckfast Abbey personnel will be issued with identification, which should be clearly displayed.

## **6. Safeguarding in the Education Centre**

The Education centre at Buckfast Abbey engages with approximately 10,000 children per year. These children range from 4 years old to 18 years of age.

6.1 Children, young persons, and adults involved in Education department activities do so as part of organised groups or as part of a visiting educational facility. Buckfast Abbey will ensure that all visiting children, young persons, and adults who may be at risk of harm are suitably supervised by staff and carers and that appropriate safeguarding background checks have been completed within their own organisations. Any person bringing or accompanying groups of children or young persons will be made aware of our safeguarding policies and their own responsibilities.

6.2 Groups of children or young adults will not be allowed onto the site unless accompanied by the approved supervisor(s) in the ratios recommended by best practice.

6.3 Personnel entering the Education centre (or any buildings or rooms where there are school groups) must contact the Education Officer or member of the Education Department staff to ensure it is safe to do so. Persons not connected with, any attending schools or organisations can only attend the educational facilities having made an appointment.

6.4 Teachers and group leaders must ensure that any person not known to them will be refused entry into the Education Centre whilst children are present.

## **7. Safeguarding the Grounds at Buckfast Abbey**

7.1 Many areas of Buckfast Abbey are secluded and out of the public eye. There may be many reasons why children, young persons, or adults at risk of harm could be in such areas. Whatever these reasons (e.g. trespassing, lost persons) a duty of care is still required. If any person is seen in such areas not normally accessible to the public, that person should be asked their reason for being in that location.

- 7.2 External Contractors will be provided with information about the Safeguarding Policies and will be informed that the Abbey has certain expectations and requirements of them. External Contractors will be expected to follow the same working practices and requirements as Abbey personnel. All contractors working at Buckfast Abbey should have identification from their company.
- 7.3 External Contractors will be informed that Buckfast Abbey will not engage any individual in any position who has been disqualified from working with children, young persons, or adults.

## **8. Safeguarding in Residential Accommodation**

### **8.1 Monastery Retreat Quarters:**

- a. Men are welcome to stay for a few days or more in the monastery retreat quarters. This building is an integral part of the monastery itself. Guests can join the monastic Community in their daily Office and Mass. All meals are taken with the monks in their refectory and are usually taken in silence.
- b. Some guests may present a risk to the Monastic Guest Master or other guests, whilst others may pose a risk to children and adults at risk of harm who may be staying in other areas of the Abbey. Risk assessments will be made by the Monastic Guest Master in relation to potential risks caused by guests and how these risks are managed.

### **8.2 Northgate House Hotel and Grangehurst House:**

- a. Buckfast Abbey expects and requires appropriate supervision levels at all times in accordance with DofE, Diocesan or other relevant Youth Organisation guidelines, within the accommodation (with special reference to domestic arrangements), the house grounds, and generally around the site.
- b. Permission must first be sought before entering any of the above areas for any purpose. Entry may be refused if the rooms are in use, or about to be used.
- c. Personnel entering one of these buildings must always be in possession of Abbey identification. Personnel must not enter bedrooms, toilets, and bathrooms without authorisation from the Head of Accommodation. Personnel must not work in rooms where there are children unless a supervising adult is present. With external maintenance and gardening, care must be taken around windows (especially bedroom and bathroom windows). The privacy of groups needs to be respected.

## **9. Internet Usage**

Buckfast Abbey has a system in place for monitoring the use of the internet. A report is produced weekly for the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Abbot. This records the usage, timings, and location of activity. Any inappropriate use with regard to children will be investigated immediately and appropriate action taken, involving the statutory authorities if necessary.

## 10. The Live-Streaming of Services

Some services and funerals (and other special events) are broadcast via live stream to Facebook and YouTube, and recorded to be shared on the Abbey website and social media platforms. This practice is carefully and strictly monitored to ensure consistency with our Safeguarding Policy and Data Protection / GDPR legislation.

## 11. Complaints Procedure

11.1 **Purpose:** This policy covers complaints from persons in receipt of a service from the safeguarding department, persons who have received a service in the past and persons entitled to have received a service. The Abbey has adopted the complaints policy and procedure of the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSSA) to:

- a. work in a transparent and open way;
- b. encourage resolution of complaints by informal means wherever possible;
- c. offer recourse to somebody more senior if informal resolution cannot be achieved;
- d. ensure all complaints are investigated fairly, consistently and in a timely way;
- e. ensure that explanations are provided, and solutions offered, where possible;
- f. ensure that wherever possible, relationships are repaired;
- g. gather, record, review and utilise information, to help us to improve service delivery.

11.2 This complaints procedure does not cover complaints regarding:

- a. Reports or expressions of concern about the welfare of children or adults at risk;
- b. Reports about failure to follow safeguarding processes where these are already managed under the national safeguarding policy and procedure;
- c. issues raised by individuals who have not been directly affected by the matter being complained about;
- d. complaints about safeguarding services that are delivered via contractual arrangements or covered under a Memorandum of Understanding or canonical arrangements, between the abbey and other church bodies or organisations;
- e. grievance, capability, or disciplinary matters, which are addressed using other Abbey policies and procedures;
- f. any other complaints unrelated to the provision of a safeguarding service which must be addressed via alternative routes;
- g. whistleblowing which is addressed by a separate policy and procedure;
- h. complaints relating to a member of a Religious Congregation which must be addressed to the Religious Leader;
- i. complaints against members of a religious congregation who are employed by an external agency under a civil contract or who offer their services to such an agency voluntarily, against whom there is a complaint in relation to their employment or voluntary work within that agency. These complaints must be addressed to the agency concerned;

- j. concerns or complaints relating to safeguarding in organisations outside the abbey, which must be addressed to the organisation concerned; and
  - k. subject access requests.
- 11.3 A representative can complain on a person's behalf where that person:
- a. is a child;
  - b. has requested the representative to act, as confirmed in writing to the diocese;
  - c. lacks mental capacity, as assessed under the Mental Capacity Act 2005; (i.e. lacks the capacity to make a specific complaint)
  - d. has appointed a person as a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) for health and welfare;
  - e. has an appointed Independent Advocate;
  - f. has passed away.
- 11.4 Anonymous complaints will always be considered but it may not be possible to fully investigate or resolve complaints where the complainant cannot be contacted for further information. Learning from anonymous complaints will inform service improvement in the same way as learning from complaints from named individuals.
- 11.5 If a person making a complaint needs somebody to help them put their complaint to the abbey, they can ask a friend, family member or somebody else that they know to assist or support them.
- 11.6 All complaint information will be handled sensitively and in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation, subject to the need to disclose information as required by statutory authorities. It will be necessary to share information with people who need to know for the complaint can be investigated. If this includes contacting another organisation, the complainant's written consent to share relevant information with the other organisation will be sought.
- 11.7 Stages of the complaints process:
- a. The Informal Stage
  - b. The Formal Stage
  - c. The Appeal Stage.
- Detailed guidance is provided within the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency Website regarding each of the stages.
- [www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/resources/national-safeguarding-policy/](http://www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/resources/national-safeguarding-policy/)
- 11.8 **Making a complaint:** Complaints at any of the 3 stages can be made in writing (by post or email) or by telephone. Where a complaint is taken by telephone, a record of the conversation will be taken and sent to the complainant for agreement before any further steps are taken. Where necessary, reasonable adjustments can be made to vary the way in which complaints can be made, including face to face meetings.



- a. Stage 1 and Stage 2 safeguarding service complaints about safeguarding employees and volunteers, are to be addressed to:

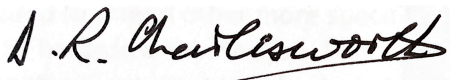
Philip Arkwright *Chief Executive Officer*  
Buckfast Abbey  
Buckfastleigh  
Devon  
TQ11 0EE  
[parkwright@buckfast.org.uk](mailto:parkwright@buckfast.org.uk)

- b. Requests to proceed to Stage 3 are to be addressed to:

Abbot David Charlesworth OSB  
Buckfast Abbey, Buckfast Abbey,  
Buckfastleigh  
Devon  
TQ11 0EE

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Signed on behalf of the Trustees by



**Abbot David Charlesworth**  
*Chair of Trustees, Buckfast Abbey*

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## KEY CONTACTS

### Safeguarding Co-Ordinator

Andrew Kings

[akings@buckfast.org.uk](mailto:akings@buckfast.org.uk)

01364 645577

### Safeguarding Religious Advisor

Dom Prior Daniel

[brdaniel@buckfast.org.uk](mailto:brdaniel@buckfast.org.uk)

<b>MASH</b> Multi-Agency safeguarding Hub	0345 155 1071
<b>NSPCC</b> helpline <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a>	0808 800 5000
<b>Childline</b>	0800 1111
<b>Adults</b> Care Direct	0345 155 1007

### Useful Information and Documents:

Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) 0207 901 1920

Devon County Council 03451551015 or 0845 155 1015

Working Together to Safeguard Children;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)