

Safeguarding in Independent Schools associated with Religious Congregations

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1. The Responsibility of Religious Congregations for Safeguarding in Independent Schools Associated with them

Religious Congregations are responsible for:

1. Promoting the safety and welfare of children in any school with which it is associated; and
2. Ensuring that any Catholic school associated with it complies with the safeguarding policies and practices required by the relevant authorities and, where applicable, those of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

The school's Safeguarding policies will need to be approved by the relevant statutory authorities, and the school inspection will include an inspection of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Schools can be structured in a variety of ways, and the legal responsibilities of the Religious Congregation will differ depending on the way in which each school is structured. Religious Congregations must ensure they know where the responsibilities rest for their schools.

2. Responding to Allegations in an Independent School Formerly Run by Religious

An allegation may be made that abuse was committed in a school which was formerly run by religious. If the allegation is reported to the Congregation leader, the national safeguarding procedures relating to the management of allegations must be followed.

Some of the more important points are:

- To do nothing is never an option;
- The person making the allegation must be listened to seriously, without judgments being made;
- If the allegation is made in the course of a meeting, a written record should be made of what is said and done;

- The person making the allegation should be told that this will be reported without delay to the Safeguarding authorities;
- The alleged abuser must never be alerted at this stage;
- The allegation and all information must be passed on without delay to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is responsible for the Congregation's safeguarding.