

Safeguarding

We are all made in the “image and likeness of God.” Given this clear truth of faith, all abuse, always and everywhere, is wrong. It is a serious crime. We will do all that we can to eradicate it and to support anyone who is, or has been, a survivor of abuse, whether as a child or vulnerable adult. We do this inspired by the love and compassion of Jesus Christ and following the Safeguarding principles and policies of the Diocese of Brentwood. These are based on statutory guidelines and policies, which inform national guidance within the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

If you know or believe that a child or vulnerable adult is in danger of being abused, or is subject to abuse, then immediately dial 999 for the police, who will help you.

If you want to talk about an allegation of abuse, or if you are a survivor of historic abuse and want to talk about it with someone who will listen with sensitivity and care, then please contact our parish safeguarding representatives Nicola Crowther or speak with Fr Quentin; any of them will help you. An email or phone call to the parish office where you simply say you want to speak confidentially will ensure you are swiftly linked to the right person. safeguarding@stthomaswoodford.org

You can also phone the national “safe space” helpline on 0300 303 1056. This is a dedicated helpline for anyone who has been a victim of abuse in a Catholic or Church of England faith setting (church, school, or anywhere else run by the church). You will find more information at <https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/>

Our diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, Simon Moules will also help in any possible way and he can be contacted on simonmoules@brcdt.org

The **key principles** guiding Safeguarding in this Diocese are:

‘As Catholics we believe that human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative act of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with Him. Accordingly, we recognise that each human being, irrespective of age or circumstance, should be accorded the dignity and respect due to a child of God. The Church as a community has a duty to follow the command to love by valuing and protecting the vulnerable. Children are the most vulnerable and have the greatest entitlement to protection. The diocese confirms that in matters of the alleged abuse of children the ‘Paramount Principle’ will be maintained, that is the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in all matters concerning the protection of children. Legally, someone is defined as a child up to his/her 18th birthday.’