

Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Apostolic Mission in the UK (England and Wales)

Safeguarding – Key Roles and Responsibilities

Applies to England and Wales only

Review Cycle: Biennial

Document Owner	National Safeguarding Lead
Review Date	
Approved By	Rev. Dr. Louis Charuvilla (Trustee, Chairman of National Safeguarding Board)
Approval Date	21st March, 2026
Author:	
Next Review Due on	20th March, 2028

1. Introduction

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Apostolic Mission in the UK (England and Wales) is committed to ensuring that safeguarding is embedded across all aspects of mission life and ministry.

Safeguarding is the collective responsibility of the entire Church community. However, specific individuals and groups have defined roles to ensure that safeguarding policies, procedures and practices are effectively implemented.

This document outlines the key safeguarding roles and responsibilities within the governance structure of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Apostolic Mission in the UK (England and Wales). It aims to provide clarity regarding accountability, oversight and operational responsibilities in safeguarding matters.

These roles operate in accordance with the safeguarding policies of the Catholic Church in England and Wales and in cooperation with relevant statutory authorities and safeguarding agencies. The illustration below provides a simple view of the key roles that constitute the safeguarding structure of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church Apostolic Mission in the UK (England and Wales)

2. Apostolic Visitor

The Apostolic Visitor (His Excellency Most Rev. Bishop Kuriakose Mar Osthathios) has overall responsibility for safeguarding within the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Apostolic Mission in the UK (England and Wales). As the spiritual leader and trustee of the Apostolic Mission, the Apostolic Visitor ensures that safeguarding is prioritised throughout the mission and that appropriate structures are in place to protect children and adults who may be at risk.

The Apostolic Visitor's safeguarding responsibilities include:

- Providing leadership and oversight for safeguarding within the Apostolic Mission
- Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented across all missions
- Supporting a safeguarding culture based on transparency, accountability and compassion
- Appointing and supporting the Safeguarding Committee
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding governance arrangements are maintained
- Receiving safeguarding reports from the Safeguarding Committee where appropriate
- Ensuring cooperation with statutory authorities and safeguarding agencies
- Promoting pastoral care and support for victims and survivors of abuse
- Ensuring adequate resources are available to support safeguarding work

3. Safeguarding Committee

The Safeguarding Committee provides leadership, oversight and strategic direction for safeguarding within the Apostolic Mission.

The Committee supports the Apostolic Visitor by ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively and that safeguarding practices reflect the safeguarding standards of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

The Safeguarding Committee's responsibilities include:

- Advising the Apostolic Visitor on safeguarding matters
- Developing and reviewing safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance
- Supporting the implementation of safeguarding practices across all missions
- Providing oversight of safeguarding activities and safeguarding compliance
- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding training and awareness initiatives are implemented
- Supporting the work of the National Safeguarding Co-Leads
- Reviewing safeguarding reports and monitoring safeguarding activities
- Promoting continuous improvement in safeguarding practices
- Supporting initiatives for victims and survivors of abuse
- Ensuring safeguarding practices align with the expectations of safeguarding authorities

The Chair of the Safeguarding Committee leads the work of the Committee and ensures effective governance and coordination of safeguarding activities.

3. Safeguarding Committee Chair

The Chair of the Safeguarding Committee (Very Rev. Dr. Louis Charuvilla Pappy) provides leadership to the safeguarding governance structures of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Apostolic Mission in the UK (England and Wales). The Chair ensures that the Safeguarding Committee operates effectively, supports the Apostolic Visitor in safeguarding oversight, and promotes a culture of safeguarding across the Apostolic Mission.

The Chair acts as the primary point of coordination between the Apostolic Visitor, the Safeguarding Committee, the National Safeguarding Co-Leads and the National Executive on safeguarding governance matters.

The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Committee Chair include:

- Chairing meetings of the Safeguarding Committee and ensuring the effective functioning of the committee.
- Supporting the Apostolic Visitor in fulfilling safeguarding oversight responsibilities
- Working collaboratively with the National Safeguarding Co-Leads in the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures
- Ensuring that safeguarding matters are appropriately discussed and reviewed within the Safeguarding Committee

- Acting as a liaison between the Safeguarding Committee and the Apostolic Visitor
- Reporting the quarterly activities and progress report of safeguarding in the apostolic mission to the trustee.
- Reviewing safeguarding reports from the NSLs and identifying areas for improvement
- Promoting good safeguarding practice across the Apostolic Mission
- Act as the single point of contact for the safeguarding team of the Malankara Catholic Church UK Apostolic Mission for the external auditors (CSSA) and sister diocesan safeguarding representatives.
- Supporting communication and coordination between safeguarding leadership and mission communities where appropriate

4. National Safeguarding Co-Leads (NSLs)

The National Safeguarding Co-Leads are responsible for the operational implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures across the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Apostolic Mission in the UK (England and Wales).

They provide leadership, guidance and support to clergy, Mission Safeguarding Representatives and mission communities to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are understood and implemented effectively.

The responsibilities of the National Safeguarding Co-Leads include:

- Implementing safeguarding policies and procedures across the Apostolic Mission
- Providing safeguarding advice and guidance to clergy and mission communities
- Supporting the Mission Safeguarding Representatives in their safeguarding roles
- Responding to safeguarding concerns, allegations or disclosures in accordance with safeguarding procedures
- Liaising with statutory safeguarding authorities where required at the direction of the Safeguarding Committee
- Supporting appropriate reporting and case management processes
- Promoting safeguarding awareness and training across the Apostolic Mission
- Maintaining safeguarding records and documentation where required
- Conducting internal self-audits and report finding to the Safeguarding Committee
- Supporting safeguarding audits or reviews
- Reporting safeguarding matters to the Safeguarding Committee

The National Safeguarding Co-Leads work collaboratively to ensure safeguarding practice is consistent across all missions.

5. Mission Priest-in-Charge

The Mission Priest-in-Charge has primary responsibility for safeguarding within the mission community they serve. They ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented locally and that safeguarding practices are integrated into mission life and ministry.

The Mission Priest-in-Charge works closely with the Mission Safeguarding Representative and the National Safeguarding Co-Leads to promote safeguarding awareness and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

The responsibilities of the Mission Priest-in-Charge include:

- Ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented within the mission
- Ensuring safeguarding communication strategy is appropriately implemented in the mission
- Recruitment of Mission Safeguarding Representatives and Supporting the work of the Mission Safeguarding Representative
- Promoting safeguarding awareness within the mission community
- Ensuring safeguarding information is visible and accessible within the mission
- Ensuring volunteers working with children or adults at risk follow safeguarding procedures
- Supporting safeguarding training and safer recruitment practices
- Responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns and referring them to the National Safeguarding Co-Leads
- Cooperating with safeguarding investigations where required
- Supporting pastoral care for those affected by safeguarding concerns

6. Mission Safeguarding Representatives (MSRs)

Mission Safeguarding Representatives play a key role in promoting safeguarding within each mission community. They support the Mission Priest-in-Charge and the National Safeguarding Co-Leads in ensuring safeguarding practices are implemented effectively.

The responsibilities of Mission Safeguarding Representatives include:

- Acting as the local safeguarding contact within the mission
- Promote a Culture of Safeguarding and raising safeguarding awareness within the mission community
- Sustaining a safe environment in your parish
- Implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures at the mission level
- Safe Recruitment of volunteers (including DBS applications)
- Encouraging a culture where safeguarding concerns can be raised safely
- Reporting and Responding to all Safeguarding concerns in the mission
- Ensuring safeguarding information and contact details are displayed within mission premises
- Providing guidance to volunteers on safeguarding matters
- Participating in safeguarding meetings or training where required
- Supporting safeguarding training initiatives

Mission Safeguarding Representatives do not investigate safeguarding concerns but ensure that concerns are reported through appropriate safeguarding procedures.

7. National Executive

The National Executive plays an important governance and oversight role in supporting safeguarding within the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church Apostolic Mission in the UK (England and Wales).

The National Executive ensures that the structures and resources required for safeguarding are in place and supports the work of the Safeguarding Committee.

The responsibilities of the National Executive include:

- Supporting the appointment of the Safeguarding Committee as per the guidelines of the safer recruitment practices
- Supporting the appointment of the National Safeguarding Co-Leads as per the guidelines of the safer recruitment practices
- Providing governance oversight of safeguarding structures within the Apostolic Mission
- Ensuring adequate resources are available to support safeguarding activities
- Providing financial support for safeguarding initiatives, training and implementation of safeguarding policies
- Supporting safeguarding awareness and initiatives within the Apostolic Mission
- Managing safeguarding escalations from a governance perspective where appropriate
- Supporting the Apostolic Visitor and Safeguarding Committee in maintaining effective safeguarding structures

8. Shared Responsibility for Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the responsibility of every member of the Church community. All clergy, volunteers and members of mission communities are expected to:

- Respect and promote the dignity and safety of others
- Follow safeguarding policies and procedures
- Participate in safeguarding training where required
- Raise safeguarding concerns promptly and responsibly
- Support a culture of safeguarding within the Church

9. Review of this Document

This document will be reviewed biennially to ensure that safeguarding roles and responsibilities remain clear and consistent with safeguarding policies and practices of the Catholic Church (CSSA) in England and Wales.

The review will be overseen by the Safeguarding Committee in consultation with the Apostolic Visitor and National Executive.