



A Letter for Safeguarding Sunday from Bishop Patrick

To be included in parish newsletters and / or put on the noticeboard on the weekend 13th / 14th May 2023

Today is Safeguarding Sunday, an opportunity to reflect a little on our ongoing journey as a diocese to build a safer environment for every person. You will recall that the Elliott review in 2020 recommended that the Catholic Church in England and Wales put in place a national Safeguarding body. In July 2021 the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency was formed. Its task is to ensure that all dioceses are regulated to meet the national standards in Safeguarding.

As a diocese, we have worked well to develop clear structures and guidance for our Safeguarding practices so as to help ensure safe environments through the promotion of best practice. This has included, regular training in Safeguarding for the clergy, diocesan staff and parish volunteers; ensuring that everyone is safely recruited; that victims and survivors are carefully listened to and supported, and that we are always transparent and accountable in the way that allegations and concerns are managed effectively. I welcome this opportunity to thank our central Safeguarding team, Rachael Campion, Alan Booth and Jane Black, for all their good work. I would also like to express my gratitude to the parish Safeguarding Representatives for their hard work and commitment. Through them we are now embedding excellent Safeguarding practice across our parishes and chaplaincies to make our churches safe and welcoming. The diocesan website has all our Safeguarding information and the support that is offered to our parishes and chaplaincies.

Finally, thank you for all that you each do to help ensure that our churches are safe and welcoming. I say this because we cannot simply delegate this duty to parish Safeguarding Representatives or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Keeping everyone safe is part and parcel of the DNA of every Christian; an essential characteristic of our identity as Christ's followers, and so it must be reflected in the way we respect, protect, and treat each other with care. Only if each one of us is engaged in this way of thinking and acting can we continue to embed a culture of safeguarding throughout our diocese.

Your parish has someone who has generously volunteered** to help support the parish community in making your church a safe place to be, particularly for children, young people and vulnerable adults. But building this safe culture in our parishes can't just be left to them – it is the responsibility of all of us. Today, I urge everyone to give your parish rep your full support. Please join with them in fostering a deeper and more evident culture of safeguarding, care and protection for everyone in your parish. We can all play our part in ensuring that every single individual feels respected, safe, and loved, just as Our Lord asked of us: *"as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us."* (John 4:12)

With prayer and good wishes,

+ Patrick

Rt Rev Patrick McKinney
Bishop of Nottingham

****Footnote to priests / deacons:** *If no parish rep is currently in place please use the opportunity to raise this with the parish and to ask if anyone would be interested in finding out more about this role. As you know, Rachael and the central Safeguarding team offer excellent training.*