



WeBelieve Festival | Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

The WeBelieve Festival of Catholic Life, held at St. Mary's College, Oscott, is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants, especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults. This policy is aligned with the safeguarding principles of the Catholic Church and UK safeguarding law, ensuring the protection of every attendee.

2. Purpose

Adherence to this safeguarding policy will ensure that WeBelieve is an environment that:

- Protects children, young people, and vulnerable adults attending the festival.
- Supports staff, volunteers, clergy, and attendees in upholding safeguarding standards and protects their wellbeing.
- Fully complies with the UK law and the Catholic Church's safeguarding guidelines.

In this way, WeBelieve will be able to carry out its mission of gathering the UK Catholic community to celebrate the jubilee and share the hope they have in Jesus Christ.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the following groups during the week of WeBelieve, including the build and set down of the site (Monday 20th July - Wednesday 29th July) and the main festival event which opens at 12:00 on Friday 24th July and closes at 12:00 on Monday 27th July:

- All festival attendees, including children, young people, and vulnerable adults.



- Clergy, religious, and lay staff involved in the festival.
- Volunteers and external contractors providing services during the event.

4. Key Safeguarding Principles

WeBelieve is committed to:

- Creating a safe, attentive, and compassionate environment for all participants.
- Recognising the dignity and rights of all individuals, with particular focus on vulnerable people.
- Promoting a culture of vigilance where safeguarding concerns are identified and addressed immediately.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Festival Management

- The Festival Director and Safeguarding Lead are responsible for ensuring that all safeguarding measures are in place and adhered to during the event.
- The Safeguarding Lead is a trained professional with knowledge of both Church safeguarding policies and UK safeguarding laws.

5.2 Safeguarding Team

- A dedicated Safeguarding Team will be on-site to manage concerns, provide guidance, and ensure compliance with this policy.
- The team is responsible for handling allegations and ensuring appropriate actions are taken in accordance with the Management of Allegations & Concerns Policy.

5.3 Staff and Volunteers

- All staff and volunteers will undergo comprehensive safeguarding training and must adhere to this policy, reporting any concerns to the Safeguarding Team.
- The recruitment of staff and volunteers will follow the Safer Recruitment Policy, including DBS checks as per the DBS Processing Policy.

5.4 Clergy and Religious



- Clergy and religious are required to follow the safeguarding procedures outlined in this policy, ensuring their interactions with children, young people, and vulnerable adults are appropriate and in line with Church guidelines.
- The safeguarding policy of our hosts, St Mary's College, Oscoot, states that members of the clergy must provide their celebret, or a testimonial of suitability, ahead of the event.

5.5 Attendees

- Attendees are encouraged to be vigilant and report any safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Team. In this way each attendee can live out the Gospel values and respect the dignity of each person by upholding a culture of safeguarding.

6. Safer Recruitment Policy

The recruitment process for all staff, volunteers, and clergy will be rigorous, adhering to the Safer Recruitment Policy. All individuals working at the festival will undergo background checks, including DBS checks for those in roles that regularly interact with children or vulnerable adults, to ensure that only those who are safe and suitable are permitted to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. The Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders will be followed to ensure fairness while maintaining safeguarding standards.

7. Management of Allegations & Concerns

Any allegations or concerns regarding the conduct of staff, volunteers, or clergy will be handled swiftly and in accordance with the Management of Allegations & Concerns Policy. The Safeguarding Lead will take immediate steps to protect individuals at risk and initiate any necessary investigations in line with UK law and Catholic Church guidelines.

8. DBS Processing and Complaints Handling

The festival will follow a clear DBS Processing Policy to ensure that all necessary checks are conducted in a timely and efficient manner. Any complaints related to DBS processes will be addressed through the Handling of DBS-Related Complaints Policy, ensuring transparency and accountability.

10. Safeguarding Procedures



10.1 Reporting Concerns

- Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Team.
- The Safeguarding Lead will assess the concern and take appropriate action, including contacting statutory authorities if necessary.
 - Email: safeguarding@caob.org.uk
 - Phone: 0121 230 6240

10.2 Responding to Disclosures

- All disclosures will be handled with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- The Safeguarding Team will follow the procedures set out in the Catholic Church's safeguarding guidelines and UK law, prioritising the welfare of the child, young person, or vulnerable adult.

10.3 Record Keeping

- Detailed records of all safeguarding concerns, disclosures, and actions taken will be securely maintained by the Safeguarding Team in the festival's Incident Log Book in accordance with data protection laws.

11. Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct, outlining appropriate behaviour and interactions with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, will be provided to all staff, volunteers, clergy, and participants.

12. Supervision and Ratios

Adequate adult-to-child ratios will be maintained during all activities involving children and young people, with specific measures in place to prevent unsupervised contact between adults and minors.

13. Health and Safety

The festival site will be regularly inspected to ensure it meets health and safety standards, particularly in areas where children and vulnerable adults are present. First aid facilities and trained personnel will be available on-site.

14. Photography and Media



The use of photography and media at the festival will be controlled, with written consent obtained from parents/guardians before photographing or filming children and young people.

16. Monitoring and Review

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually or after any significant incident to ensure it remains effective and up-to-date.

17. Contacts

- **Designated Safeguarding Officer:** Elizabeth Wordley
- **Deputy Safeguarding Officer:** John Withers
- **Safeguarding Team:** safeguarding@webelievofestival.com
(contact via info@webelievofestival.com from September to May)
- **Diocesan Safeguarding Department:** safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk

18. Conclusion

WeBelieve is dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all participants. This safeguarding policy is integral to ensuring that the festival is a place of joy, faith, and security for everyone involved. All staff, volunteers, clergy, and attendees are required to comply with this policy and contribute to the safeguarding of our community.

Management of Allegations & Concerns Policy

Policy Statement: At the WeBelieve Festival, hosted by the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom at St Mary's College, Oscott, we are unwavering in our commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all attendees. Any allegations or concerns related to misconduct, especially those involving vulnerable individuals, will be promptly addressed with fairness, confidentiality, and integrity.

Key Elements:

- **Zero Tolerance:** The WeBelieve Festival has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse, neglect, or misconduct. All allegations will be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate actions will be taken.



- Confidentiality: All information related to allegations will be treated as confidential, with disclosure restricted to those directly involved in managing and investigating the concern.
- Responsibility: The safeguarding lead at the WeBelieve Festival is responsible for overseeing the management of allegations, ensuring that all procedures are strictly adhered to.
- Fair Process: All parties involved will be treated fairly and with respect, adhering to the principles of natural justice throughout the investigation process.

1.1 Management of Allegations & Concerns Procedure

Procedure Steps:

1. Reporting Allegations:
 - Concerns should be reported immediately to the safeguarding lead at the WeBelieve Festival, either in person, via email, or through a dedicated phone line.
 - Reports can be made by any festival attendee, including staff, volunteers, participants, or visitors.
2. Initial Assessment:
 - The safeguarding lead will conduct an initial assessment of the allegation within 24 hours to determine its seriousness.
 - If deemed serious, the safeguarding lead will notify the relevant authorities (e.g., police, social services) without delay.
3. Investigation:
 - A formal investigation will be initiated, which may include interviews with the parties involved, witnesses, and a review of any relevant evidence.
 - The investigation should be concluded within 30 days where possible.
4. Outcome and Action:
 - Based on the findings, appropriate actions will be taken, such as disciplinary measures, referrals to external authorities, or support for those affected.



- The individual who reported the concern will be informed of the outcome, maintaining confidentiality.
5. Follow-up:
- The safeguarding team will ensure that corrective actions are implemented and that support is provided to those affected.

Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy Statement: The WeBelieve Festival is committed to safeguarding all attendees, particularly vulnerable individuals. This commitment is reflected in our rigorous recruitment process, ensuring that only suitable individuals are selected to work or volunteer at the festival.

Key Elements:

- **Rigorous Screening:** All candidates undergo thorough background checks and evaluations to ensure their suitability for the roles.
- **DBS Checks:** All positions involving contact with vulnerable individuals require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- **Training:** All staff and volunteers must complete safeguarding training before beginning their roles.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Regular reviews and monitoring of staff and volunteers will be conducted to ensure continued adherence to safeguarding standards.

2.1 Safer Recruitment Procedure

Procedure Steps:

1. **Job Description and Advertisement:**
 - Each role at the WeBelieve Festival will have a clear job description that includes safeguarding responsibilities.
2. **Application and Screening:**
 - All applicants must complete a detailed application form, including a declaration of any criminal history.
 - References will be obtained.



3. DBS and Background Checks:
 - Successful applicants must undergo a DBS check appropriate to their role.
4. Induction and Training:
 - Safeguarding education will be provided to ensure continued awareness.

DBS Processing Policy

Policy Statement: The WeBelieve Festival requires all individuals working with vulnerable groups to undergo a DBS check to ensure their suitability for the role. This policy outlines our process for obtaining and handling DBS checks in accordance with legal requirements.

Key Elements:

- **Mandatory Checks:** A DBS check is required for all roles involving contact with vulnerable individuals.
- **Confidentiality:** Information obtained through DBS checks will be handled with strict confidentiality and used solely for safeguarding purposes.
- **Compliance:** The WeBelieve Festival complies with all legal requirements related to DBS checks, ensuring the safety of all participants.

DBS Processing Procedure

Procedure Steps:

1. Requirement Identification:
 - Determine the appropriate level of DBS check for each role (e.g., standard, enhanced).
2. Application Process:
 - The festival will guide candidates through the DBS application process.
 - The cost of the DBS check will be covered by the WeBelieve Festival.
3. Verification and Submission:



- The applicant's identity will be verified using official documentation before submitting the DBS application.
4. Receiving and Handling Results:
- The results of the DBS check will be reviewed by the safeguarding lead.
 - Any concerns flagged will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with appropriate actions taken if necessary.
5. Record Keeping:
- All DBS check records will be securely stored and kept confidential.
 - DBS records will be regularly updated to ensure ongoing compliance.

Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

Policy Statement: The WeBelieve Festival recognises the value that ex-offenders can bring to our community and will consider their applications on a case-by-case basis. However, safeguarding remains our top priority, and we will ensure that no unsuitable individuals are given roles involving vulnerable groups.

Key Elements:

- Fair Assessment: Each application from an ex-offender will be assessed individually, taking into account the nature of the offence and its relevance to the role.
- Transparency: Applicants will be informed that a criminal record does not automatically disqualify them from a role.
- Safeguarding Priority: Ensuring the safety of vulnerable individuals is paramount, and decisions will be made with this priority in mind.

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Procedure

Procedure Steps:

1. Application Disclosure:
 - Applicants must disclose any criminal history on their application form.
2. Assessment of Disclosure:



- If a DBS check reveals a criminal record, the safeguarding team will conduct a risk assessment to determine the individual's suitability for the role.
 - Factors such as the nature of the offence, time elapsed, and the applicant's behaviour since the offence will be considered.
3. Decision-Making:
- The decision to hire will be made by senior management in consultation with the safeguarding lead.
 - The applicant will be informed of the decision and the rationale behind it.
4. Record Keeping:
- Details of the decision-making process will be documented and securely stored.

Handling of DBS-Related Complaints Policy

Policy Statement: The WeBelieve Festival is committed to transparency and fairness in its DBS processes. This policy ensures that any complaints related to the DBS process are addressed promptly and fairly, in line with our commitment to safeguarding.

Key Elements:

- **Right to Complain:** Individuals have the right to raise complaints regarding the DBS process.
- **Impartial Investigation:** All complaints will be investigated impartially by the designated safeguarding officer.
- **Resolution:** The festival will seek to resolve complaints in a fair and satisfactory manner for all parties involved.

Handling of DBS-Related Complaints Procedure

Procedure Steps:

1. Lodging a Complaint:



- Complaints regarding the DBS process should be submitted in writing to the safeguarding lead or HR department.
- 2. Acknowledgment:
 - The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
- 3. Investigation:
 - An impartial investigator will review the complaint, conduct interviews if necessary, and assess the DBS process.
- 4. Outcome and Communication:
 - The complainant will be informed of the investigation's outcome within 30 days.
 - If the complaint is upheld, corrective action will be taken.
- 5. Escalation:
 - If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the complaint to the festival's senior management or an external body.

Whistleblowing Policy

The WeBelieve Festival promotes a culture of transparency and accountability. This policy provides a framework for staff, volunteers, and participants to report any concerns about wrongdoing, including safeguarding issues, without fear of retaliation.

Key Elements:

- **Encouragement of Reporting:** We encourage anyone who has concerns about wrongdoing at the festival to report them.
- **Protection from Retaliation:** Whistleblowers are protected from retaliation, ensuring that they can report concerns without fear of repercussions.
- **Confidentiality:** All reports will be handled with strict confidentiality, and investigations will be conducted impartially.

Whistleblowing Procedure

Procedure Steps:



1. Reporting a Concern:
 - Concerns should be reported to the designated Whistleblowing Officer or the safeguarding lead at the WeBelieve Festival.
2. Confidential Submission:
 - Reports can be submitted confidentially through a dedicated email address or in writing, marked as 'Confidential.'
3. Acknowledgment:
 - The Whistleblowing Officer will acknowledge receipt of the concern within 5 working days.
4. Investigation:
 - The concern will be investigated impartially, with an emphasis on confidentiality and fairness. The investigation will include gathering evidence, interviewing relevant parties, and reviewing documentation.
5. Outcome and Feedback:
 - The person who raised the concern will be informed of the investigation's outcome within 30 days. If more time is required, they will be updated on the progress.
6. Protection Measures:
 - The festival ensures that no adverse action will be taken against whistleblowers who report concerns in good faith.
7. Escalation:
 - If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the handling of the concern, they may escalate the issue to senior management or an external body.