

Palazzola Safeguarding Policy

Palazzola shares in the commitment of the Catholic Church throughout England and Wales to do all in its power to promote a safe environment for children and adults at risk. It is committed to the “One Church” approach to this matter through the promotion of a sustained culture of care and constant vigilance. All who live or work at Palazzola and all who visit are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and to be protected from harm.

Introduction

In 1920, Palazzola was purchased by the Venerable English College as a retreat from the sweltering heat of Roman summers and it is used by students of the Venerable English College (VEC) as a place of relaxation. The VEC also uses the venue for retreats, human development conferences and pastoral classes held throughout the academic year.

In recent times, Palazzola has increasingly functioned also as a place of recreation for many different groups of people. It provides accommodation and full board for retreat groups, religious orders, priests, conferences, students who appreciate the unique and beautiful surroundings.

There are many families and guests of all ages that come to stay at Palazzola during the year. This means that there may be guests from many different parts of the world staying in Palazzola together at the same time, unless a group has arranged for exclusive use. These guests would usually mingle together at meal times, at Mass in the Church and in the various social areas.

This means that children may sometimes be present. On occasion, there are visits from schoolchildren. Although on these occasions, children will ordinarily be accompanied by their parents or teachers, there are areas of the grounds where children (particularly those who are older) could be unsupervised.

Palazzola is committed to ensuring that a safe and supportive environment exists for all its guests and staff. Although situated in the diocese of Albano, as a venue that is normally used by English speakers it complies with the national safeguarding policies and procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, as adopted by the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. These policies can be found at www.csas.uk.net. Palazzola acknowledges the great damage done by crimes of sexual abuse within the Church and recognises that “a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church, so that personal sanctity and moral commitment can contribute to promoting the full credibility of the Gospel message and the effectiveness of the Church’s mission” (Pope Francis, *Vos estis lux mundi*).

Maintaining a Safe Environment, including E-safety

Palazzola strives to maintain a culture of safeguarding where all members of the community seek to protect children, adults at risk and one another.

When children or adults at risk come to Palazzola, parents and carers must take responsibility for their safety and welfare at all times.

As far as possible, no member of staff or priest chaplain should ever be out of sight or sound of another adult when in the company of a child or adult at risk within the grounds of Palazzola.

When a conversation of a more sensitive nature (e.g. a sacramental Confession) is sought by the child or adult at risk with the priest chaplain, this should take place in a public space where another adult can ensure (from a distance) the safety of both the child/adult at risk and the priest chaplain.

Should a member of staff or the priest chaplain find him/herself unavoidably alone with a child or an adult at risk, he should document the fact, the circumstances and the reasons why this happened and inform the Safeguarding Lead accordingly, so that a record can be kept.

In order to access the internet, every resident or guest must first sign a declaration saying that he or she will not browse illegal sites.

Every guest also signs a document about the protection of personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679) (GDPR).

Navigation of the internet of every user is monitored in accordance with surveillance laws and GDPR.

Staffing

There are three permanent members of staff: Giuseppe Piacentini, the Director and Administrator, his wife, Julie Piacentini, the domestic manager and Filomena Laurenza, the Dining Room, reception and conference coordinator. There are also other staff who come in on a temporary basis to assist in the kitchen and with the other domestic duties. Giuseppe and Julie Piacentini live onsite. Occasionally a Priest chaplain will come from a diocese in England and Wales to stay at Palazzola for a short time and provide the Sacraments for those in residence.

Palazzola is committed to providing regular safeguarding training for its staff. This training is provided on an annual basis.

Recruitment

All future staff recruited must have a DBS (or for Italian staff *Certificato Generale del Casellario Giudiziale*) and all current and future staff must be familiar with the Palazzola safeguarding policy.

The person responsible for the recruitment of staff is the Rector of the VEC.

When a priest chaplain is resident at Palazzola and ministering to other guests, he must possess an up to date *celebret* from his home diocese declaring that he is a priest in good standing. Before the priest chaplain arrives the diocese completes a testimonial of suitability to confirm this fact. The Vice-Rector keeps the originals at the VEC and Palazzola retains a copy on the premises.

Reporting Procedures

Palazzola is aligned to the CSAS (Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service) in England and Wales. The designated Safeguarding Lead is Julie Piacentini. The name and contact details of the Safeguarding Lead are publicly displayed.

If it is suspected that any child or adult at risk has suffered any form of abuse or neglect involving another guest or the priest chaplain, then this should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, who will then liaise with the Safeguarding Lead at the VEC about making contact with CSAS. If appropriate, the Diocese of Albano's "Diocesan Service for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults" will also be notified. If the allegation concerns the Safeguarding Lead at Palazzola, then the Safeguarding Lead at the VEC should be contacted directly by the person concerned, either by telephone (+39066868546) or email pastoraldirector@vecrome.org who will then report to CSAS and take any actions recommended.

If neither the Palazzola nor VEC Safeguarding Leads are available, the matter should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead of the Pontifical Beda College, or if that person is not available either, directly to CSAS (to report abuse +447855123398 or else +44207 9011920 or admin@csas.uk.net).

It is for CSAS to recommend when concerns are to be communicated to civil authorities – in Italy or the UK.

If a credible allegation is made against any member of staff, resident priest chaplain or guest it is to be investigated immediately and the alleged perpetrator will be asked to leave Palazzola while the investigation takes place. Here the recommendation of CSAS is to be followed. If a credible allegation is made against an Italian member of staff or Italian guest, it is to be referred to the Italian police.

Definitions

- a. A child is a person under the age of 18 years.
- b. Adults at risk are persons over the age of 18 years who have a need for care and support or who are experiencing or are at risk of neglect or abuse.
- c. Abuse can take many forms. It may be current, recent or something which happened in the past that the affected person is speaking about only now. Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, or financial and it may include neglect or bullying. Inappropriate use of power is frequently involved.
- d. Safeguarding refers to the actions taken to promote the welfare of children and adults in vulnerable circumstances and to protect them from harm.

Approved 16/03/2021 by Mgr Philip Whitmore (Rector)

Rev John Flynn (Vice-Rector)