

SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK

**The Protection of Children
and Adults at Risk in the English
Province of the
Order of Preachers**

2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contact Details of the RLSS	2
Definitions	2
From the Acts of the Provincial Chapter 2024	3
1. The Five Rs of Safeguarding:.....	7
2. General Principles.....	8
3. Disclosures of Abuse	14
4. Priory Safeguarding Representatives.....	16
5. Planning and managing events	18
6. Visitors to the Priory	23
7. Lone Working	25
Appendix 1: An example of a male body map	26
Appendix 2: An example of a female body map	27

CONTACT DETAILS OF THE RLSS

The RLSS can be contacted on:

TEL: 0151 5562311

safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org

DEFINITIONS

A child is any person under the age of 18.¹

An 'adult at risk' is any person aged 18 or over who has need for care and support and as a result of this need is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.²

Whilst university students and young adults are not children and cannot be assumed to be at risk as a norm, a particular sensitivity to safeguarding issues and vulnerabilities is also necessary when working with this age group.

¹ See *Caring Safely for Others: Pastoral Standards and Safe Conduct in Ministry*. This document cites the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004 and *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* 1.2.

² *Ibid.* See also the Care Act 2014. *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* defines a 'vulnerable person' as "any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist offence" Art.1.2b.

FROM THE ACTS OF THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER 2024

167. We declare that the English Province of the Order of Preachers is committed to maintaining a pastoral environment that is safe for all. Following the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do not tolerate abuse within our communities.

168. We ordain that the Provincial Safeguarding Policy of the English Province of the Order of Preachers shall apply to every friar, employee, and volunteer associated with the Province. The practical norms found in the Province Safeguarding Handbook, and the safeguarding guidance found on the CSSA website, shall also apply in England and Wales. In Scotland, the guidance found in In God's Image Version 2 and the Province Safeguarding Handbook shall apply.

169. We ordain that each Priory, with the assistance of the Provincial and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, produce a Local Safeguarding Implementation Plan that applies these ecclesial and provincial norms to their own local circumstances. The Local Safeguarding Implementation Plan will include:

- a) A map which divides the spaces of the Priory into zones according to the following criteria: a space shall be marked as 'red' if it is a space that children or adults at risk may never enter; a space shall be marked as 'orange' if children and adults at risk may enter with permission under certain specified conditions; a space shall be marked 'green' if it is used for ministry to children and adults at risk; a space shall be marked 'white' if it is a public space.
- b) A clear definition of who has authority to allow children and adults at risk into orange zones, under what circumstances, and the controls that would need to be in place in these circumstances to mitigate risk.
- c) A safeguarding risk assessment of each space used for public ministry.

- d) A safeguarding risk assessment of regular events at the Priory and a plan for ensuring that one-off events future programmes are appropriately assessed for risk.
- e) A contingency plan in case of emergencies: e.g. if a child is not collected from an event or needs to be taken to hospital.
- f) A means of recording local Safeguarding concerns and incidents.
- g) A policy on guest Internet access and the recording of websites visited via the Priory's Internet connection.
- h) A record of who has access to the Priory's internet connection.
- i) A record of who has keys to the building.
- j) A policy on guests in the Priory.
- k) A clear summary of how Provincial and Ecclesial safeguarding norms concretely apply to each Priory's individual circumstances.
- l) Evidence that the brethren, employees, and volunteers in the community have been appropriately DBS/PVG checked and undertaken safeguarding training as well as a plan for recording future training undertaken by the brethren, employees, and volunteers and for appropriately DBS/PVG checking, training and inducting new brethren, employees, and volunteers.
- m) A plan for communicating to the congregation:
 - i) which areas are accessible to the public;
 - ii) the behaviour expected of all those using Priory spaces;
 - iii) the contact details of Priory, Provincial and wider Ecclesial safeguarding representatives if they have any concerns or questions.

170. In order to bring our terminology into line with that of other organisations, and so enable better cooperation, we ordain that the office of Safeguarding Officer be renamed Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

171. We ordain that each priory shall have a Safeguarding Friar, who will be responsible, under the direction of the prior and in close collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the Province, for the monitoring and execution of the Provincial Safeguarding Policy and Local Implementation Plan in the priory. In particular, his responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, ensuring that requirements for certification and training are up to date for all the friars, employees and volunteers of the priory, that appropriate and up-to-date risk assessments are in place for the priory's premises and activities, and that the Local Implementation Plan is reviewed regularly and revised as necessary. The conditions of appointment, removal, and duration in office shall be the same as those established in LCO 328, 329 and 334 for the conventual bursar (cf. also Statute 23).

172. We ordain that each priory shall have a Lay Safeguarding Representative (LSR); in a priory to which a parish is attached this role shall be fulfilled by the Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR). In addition to any responsibilities assigned to this person by diocesan norms in respect of our public apostolate, the LSR/PSR will function as a person independent of the friars to whom safeguarding concerns or allegations can be reported. Their name and contact details will be displayed publicly in our priories and on our priory websites. PSRs will be appointed in accordance with diocesan norms; LSRs in our non-parochial priories will be appointed following the safer recruitment process for volunteers of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, and will be given appropriate training for their role.

173. We ordain that each priory in the Province hold a safeguarding chapter every year in which existing safeguarding practices are to be reviewed and updated as appropriate, and ongoing training provided for the brethren.

174. We ordain that the Safeguarding Working Group continue its work until the next Provincial Chapter, convened by a member of the provincial council designated by the Provincial with the consent of the council who will have oversight of Safeguarding in the Province on behalf of the trustees.

1. THE FIVE 'R'S OF SAFEGUARDING:

1. **Recognise:** It is each person's responsibility to gain a clear understanding of the different signs and symptoms of potential abuse, harm and neglect.
2. **Respond:** If you have a safeguarding concern, it is essential that you respond appropriately and do not ignore the situation.
3. **Refer:** It is the responsibility of the RLSS to pass on safeguarding concerns to the relevant statutory authorities. If the safeguarding risk is urgent and you suspect somebody is under immediate or severe threat, you should contact the relevant local authority or the police service immediately.
4. **Report:** Safeguarding concerns need to be reported without delay. Confidentiality is important, so only share information with those part of the safeguarding process.
5. **Record:** At the time of disclosure, only make very brief notes if this is appropriate. Do not investigate. **Focus on who, what, when, and where.** Write up what was said as soon as possible. Remember to include the **place, date, and time** of the disclosure as well as who was present. Use the actual words used by the person making the disclosure. Keep it factual: no interpretations or assumptions. If you have seen injuries, these should be recorded on a body map³ that is dated and attached to your record. Do not destroy your original notes. Submit to the RLSS without delay.⁴

³ An example of a body map can be found at the end of this handbook.

⁴ Taken from the *Safeguarding Lead Training Slides* of the RLSS.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- i. All friars, employees and volunteers in the Province must exercise prudence in their encounters with children and adults at risk for the wellbeing of all concerned. A particular sensitivity and awareness is necessary around our use of language, physical touch, and the way that our behaviour might be perceived by others.
- ii. The brethren working in England and Wales are to abide by the requirements presented in *Caring Safely for Others: Pastoral Standards and Safe Conduct in Ministry* which is “presented with the full authority of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales and is therefore applicable to every cleric, religious or diocesan, working in any of the parishes or ecclesiastical institutions within the territory of this Conference.”⁵
- iii. Brethren in Scotland should adhere to the standards set out in the document *I God’s Image v.2*, which is available online from the website of the Bishops’ Conference of Scotland, bcos.org.uk.

The following is required of all those carrying out ministry in the name of the Province:

A. Behaviour

- i. Equal kindness should be showed to everyone: do not show any favouritism. Prudence should be exercised in giving gifts.
- ii. An alertness to appropriate boundaries must be maintained: it is inappropriate to seek signs of affection or personal gifts from those to whom we minister.
- iii. People’s boundaries and privacy must always be maintained.

⁵ *Caring Safely for Others* p1.

- iv. It is important to be aware that a power dynamic exists between a minister of religion and those he serves. Sacred acts, holy things and confidential or sensitive information must not be abused in order to gain undue influence over another person.
- v. It is never appropriate to manipulate another person psychologically or spiritually, or to foster a sense of dependence.
- vi. Behaviour that can arouse feelings of shame, inadequacy, fear, and guilt in others must be avoided.

B. Language

- i. Do not indulge in any allusions or jokes of a sexual nature and do not behave in a manner that might encourage such language.
- ii. Be aware of power dynamics in conversations and avoid jokes or comments about sensitive issues.
- iii. Pejorative or racist language is unacceptable.

C. Physical Contact

- i. Any gesture or touch that might appear romantic or sexual in its aim is forbidden.
- ii. Gestures of physical affection or consolation in a pastoral situation should not be initiated.
- iii. Physical violence is unacceptable.

D. Pastoral Spaces

- i. Each Priory should be zoned: red zones are spaces that children and vulnerable adults may never enter. Orange zones are spaces that children and adults at risk may enter with permission under certain conditions

defined by each Priory in its Local Safeguarding Implementation Plan. Green zones are spaces that are used to minister to children and adults at risk. White zones are public spaces.

- ii. A confessional should be available which has a physical barrier between the penitent and the confessor and in which the confessor is visible from the outside. If such a confessional is not available, a confession of a child should be held in view of the child's parent or guardian.⁶
- iii. One-to-one pastoral meetings should take place in rooms which have windows in the doors so that the encounter is in principle visible to others. This is for the safety of both the brethren and the people that we serve.
- iv. No one should be alone in an enclosed space such as a car or a room with a child. If this happens accidentally or unavoidably then the doors to rooms should be opened and another adult summoned as soon as possible. If a brother is obliged to be alone with a child in a car or room this should be recorded as soon as possible.⁷
- v. Residential retreats and transport to events should be organised in accordance with the guidelines on the CSSA website.

E. Electronic Communication

- i. All communication, including online, between an adult and a child or young person should take place via the most public means of communication appropriate without jeopardising the prevailing data protection legislation.
- ii. If it is deemed that the most effective way of communicating with children is via a social networking site or email, it is advisable to set up a

⁶ *Creating a Safe Environment* 12.

⁷ *Creating a Safe Environment* 10.

custom account in the name of that group, parish or body that multiple people have access to.

- iii. How the Priory intends to communicate with children should be made explicit to both the children in question and their parent or guardian. The explicit permission of a parent or guardian must be obtained before these means of communication are used.
- iv. The social media channels of the Province should be moderated by at least two DBS checked adults.
- v. For matters that are sensitive or private, online communication should be avoided due to the possibility of misunderstanding and, if used, parents should be included.⁸
- vi. All pastoral communication via email while undertaking a ministry on behalf of the Province should take place via a province email account.
- vii. For guidance on pastoral communication via electronic messaging systems please refer to the Province's social media policy.

F. Communicating safeguarding information.

- i. Sufficient information must be available in an easily accessible manner for both children and adults to make safeguarding concerns known. The brethren are encouraged to make use of the CSSA template poster as found in the resource section on the CSSA website.
- ii. The following paragraph should be included in any newsletters of publications:

The [Insert entity name here] operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the Safeguarding Policies of the Catholic Church in England and Wales [or Scotland] at all

⁸ *Creating a Safe Environment* 8.

times. Our Parish/Lay Safeguarding Representative[s] is/are He/She/They can be contacted at [Do not use personal emails or telephone numbers]. The Local Safeguarding Friar is.....He can be contacted onAlternatively the Religious Life Safeguarding Service can be contacted on 0151 5562311or safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org if you have any concerns.

- iii. The following safeguarding statement should be in a prominent place on the websites and noticeboards of the Province and all our communities:

The English Province of the Order of Preachers [Or the name of the Community] is firmly committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We adhere strictly to the safeguarding norms established by the Catholic Church in England and Wales and maintain a zero-tolerance stance towards all forms of abuse and maltreatment.

This commitment is rooted in the Christian belief that every individual is made in the image of God and possesses inherent dignity and worth. Each person has the right to receive care, protection, respect, and encouragement within a safe and supportive environment.

If you have any safeguarding concerns, we strongly encourage you to come forward. Should you suspect or become aware of abuse, please do not hesitate to report immediately to the statutory authorities, contacting the police directly via 999 if someone is in immediate danger. Safeguarding concerns can also be reported to the Religious Life Safeguarding Service at 0151 556 2311 or safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org.

We pledge full cooperation and transparency with statutory agencies to ensure allegations are promptly reported, thoroughly investigated, victims and survivors supported compassionately,

and perpetrators held accountable. Together, we strive to create and sustain an environment where everyone feels safe, respected, and valued.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the English Province of the Order of Preachers is Fr. John Patrick Kenrick OP, who can be contacted directly at safeguarding@english.op.org.

[The name and contact of the LSF should also be included and the lay safeguarding representatives]

- iv. The names and contact details of diocesan safeguarding officers as well as independent contacts such as Child Line or the NSPCC may also be displayed.
- v. A 'Safe Spaces' poster should be displayed on the public noticeboard.
- vi. The safeguarding norms of the Priory must be communicated in such a manner that low-level concerns can be readily identified and reported by those to whom we minister.

G. Mandatory Reporting

- i. It is the Province's policy to refer all allegations of abuse to the RLSS or to an equivalent safeguarding agency in Scotland. Where appropriate, the RLSS or equivalent Scottish agency will refer information on to the relevant statutory authorities on our behalf.

3. DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE

A. What to do if someone makes a disclosure of abuse

- i. Remember that for many people, disclosing abuse for the first time is a frightening experience that requires great courage. It may be that they have chosen to make this disclosure to you because there is something about you that they trust. It is important to honour this trust by responding with empathy and generosity.
- ii. At the time of the disclosure **only make very brief notes *if this does not interfere*** with the intimacy or flow of the disclosure. Allow the person to tell the story in their own way. Do not investigate or ask leading questions that could later compromise the evidence. Try to focus on **who, what, where, when**.
- iii. Write up your notes as soon as possible after the disclosure. Ensure you record the time, place and date of the conversation and who was present.
- iv. Do not destroy your original notes.
- v. Record the actual words used; including any swear words or slang.
- vi. Depending on the age of the person disclosing, you might want to go through your written record with them afterwards to ensure that you have captured everything correctly. They may or may not wish to do this, they may wish to add their own written notes. Be led by the wishes of the person disclosing.
- vii. You can record observations but not your own interpretations or assumptions. Keep it factual.
- viii. If you have seen an injury, use a body map to record the details. Ensure that the map is dated and attached to the person's comments relating to the injury. An example of a body map can be found at the end of this handbook.

- ix. Save and date any artwork that formed part of the disclosure. Ensure these are submitted with the written report.
- x. Submit the written record to the RLSS without delay. If you suspect someone is in imminent danger contact the police and write the report afterwards.⁹
- xi. The RLSS or the relevant bodies in Scotland will advise on how to proceed and contact the relevant statutory bodies on behalf of the Province.
- xii. Local Safeguarding Friars should consider have a stock of properly filled out 'Isaiah Journey' leaflets printed out to help those making a disclosure to understand the process that begins once a disclosure is made.

THE RLSS CAN BE CONTACTED ON:

0151 5562311 or via e mail safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org.

B. Low-level concerns.

- i. If anyone associated with the mission of the English Province of the Order of Preachers has any concerns about behaviour that they have witnessed, or has been brought to their attention, including breaches of these safeguarding norms and the Safeguarding Policy of the Province, they should communicate their concern to the Local Safeguarding Friar, the Lay Safeguarding Representative, or to the Provincial Designated Safeguarding Lead.

⁹ Taken from the RLSS training for Safeguarding Leads.

4. PRIORY SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVES

- i. Every Priory or House should have one, and preferably two, appropriately trained lay safeguarding representatives.
- ii. The Lay Safeguarding Representative should meet where necessary and at least once a year with the Local Safeguarding Friar to monitor standards, share information, and discuss best practice.
- iii. The Lay Safeguarding Representative should be provided with a designated safeguarding mobile phone and an English.op.org email address in their own name.
- iv. The name and contact details of the Lay Safeguarding Representative should be clearly displayed in the public spaces of the Priory. The designated safeguarding phone and the english.op.org email address should be advertised in all publicity rather than a person's personal email or telephone number.
- v. The Lay Safeguarding Representatives should be included in all communications that touch upon safeguarding in the life of the priory, including the circulation of event plans, risk assessments, and incident reports.
- vi. Every Priory or House should have a Local Safeguarding Friar, who will be responsible, under the direction of the prior and in close collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Lead of the Province, for the monitoring and execution of the Provincial Safeguarding Policy and Local Implementation Plan in the priory.
- vii. It is the responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Friar and the Lay Safeguarding Representative, with the support of the Provincial Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Working Group, to liaise with local diocesan safeguarding authorities and ensure that our

ministries and spaces also comply with the safeguarding expectations of the local Church.

5. PLANNING AND MANAGING EVENTS

- i. For further information about planning and organising activities, see the ['Creating a Safer Environment'](#) Guidance and 'A brief guide to planning and organising parish or diocesan events and groups' on the CSSA website. The following principles are drawn from these documents unless otherwise indicated, the brethren in England and Wales are advised to familiarise themselves thoroughly with the CSSA's practice guidance. Brethren in Scotland should be familiar with *In God's Image* v.2.

A. Planning and risk assessment

- i. For all events and groups safeguarding risk assessment should be conducted for each event using templates provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Attention should be paid to transitions from one space to another and how this might be safely managed. The impact that time and place will have on the nature of the group and its operation must also be considered. For example, transport to and from the event, and access for people with disabilities.
- ii. Regular events in the same location may be assessed for risk once and the conclusions reviewed annually.
- iii. Contingency plans should be prepared, for example, if a child is not collected because of transport disruption or another unforeseen event.

B. Leaders and helpers for running the event or group

- i. There must always be a minimum of two adults linked to every children's group for all activities. A general guide for minimum supervision ratios provided by the DfE is:

One adult leader for every 3 children under 5;

One adult leader for every 6 children aged 5-7;

One adult leader for every 10-15 children aged 8-11;

One adult leader for every 15-20 children aged over 11.

When children and young people have additional needs, an appropriate level of support must be established in a dialogue with the child's parents.

- ii. In the planning stage the roles required to run the event or group should be considered in order to establish whether a sufficient number of appropriately skilled and trained leaders have been recruited.
- iii. Leaders and volunteers should be recruited according to the safer recruitment guidelines on the CSSA website.
- iv. Leaders must be made aware of the Provincial and national safeguarding standards and respond to safeguarding situations accordingly.
- v. All adults working with children, young people and adults should understand how to respond in the event of an allegation. The 'Quick Guide -responding to allegations', 'Children – management of allegations and concerns', and 'Adults – management of allegations and concerns' are all available on the CSSA website and are useful in this regard.
- vi. Any safety incidents must be recorded.

C. Advertising, Photography and filming

- i. People should be made aware that filming or photography may be taking place during an event.
- ii. People should also be aware of what will happen to the images.
- iii. Form PHOTO1 on the CSSA website can be used to gain consent for their picture to be taken at an event.
- iv. Photographs may not be taken of children in such a way that they are identifiable without the consent of a parent or guardian.

D. Consent

- i. A child may only attend events and groups organised for children if a parent or guardian has given their consent. Form CASE4 from the CSSA website is used for this purpose.
- ii. Care should be taken to ensure that any sensitive information on the consent forms is shared on a need-to-know basis only.

E. Record Keeping

- i. Each Community should have a securely stored file with the following information: The Province Safeguarding Policy, the Provincial Safeguarding Handbook, the Local Safeguarding Implementation Plan.
- ii. The Local Safeguarding Implementation Plan will include:
 - a. A map which zones Priory spaces according to the following criteria: a space shall be marked as 'red' if it is a space that children or vulnerable people may never enter; a space shall be marked as 'orange' if children and vulnerable people may enter with permission under certain specified conditions; a space shall be marked 'green' if it is used for ministry to children and vulnerable adults; a space shall be marked 'white' if it is a public space.
 - b. A clear definition of who has authority to allow children and vulnerable people into orange zones, under what circumstances, and the controls that would need to be in place in these circumstances to mitigate risk.
 - c. A safeguarding risk assessment of each space used for public ministry, that is, green spaces, orange spaces and the church.
 - d. A safeguarding risk assessment of regular events at the Priory and a plan for ensuring that one-off events and future programmes are appropriately assessed for risk.

- e. A contingency plan in case of emergencies: e.g. if a child is not collected from an event or needs to be taken to hospital.
 - f. A means of recording local Safeguarding concerns and incidents.
 - g. A policy on guest Internet access and the recording of websites visited via the Priory's Internet connection.
 - h. A record of who has access to the Priory's internet connection.
 - i. A record of who has keys to the building.
 - j. A policy on guests in the Priory.
 - k. A clear summary of how Provincial and Ecclesial safeguarding norms concretely apply to each Priory's individual circumstances.
 - l. Evidence that the brethren, employees, and volunteers in the community have been appropriately DBS/PVG checked and undertaken safeguarding training as well as a plan for recording future training undertaken by the brethren, employees, and volunteers and for appropriately DBS/PVG checking, training and inducting new brethren, employees, and volunteers.
 - m. A plan for communicating to the congregation: a) which areas are accessible to the public; b) the behaviour expected of all those using Priory spaces; c) the contact details of Priory, Provincial and wider Ecclesial safeguarding representatives if they have any concerns or questions.
 - n. A plan for how long working visits are recorded.
- iii. For residential events involving children and young people, a written record of those present, what happened at the event and any safeguarding incidents should be kept in line with the Province's data retention policies. Form CASE5 on the CSSA website is used for this purpose.

- iv. Permission slips for regular events such as a first Holy Communion group should be kept in line with the Province's data protection policies. Open access events such as a Christmas fare or Children's liturgy do not require a register of attendees if the children are being supervised by their parents.

6. VISITORS TO THE PRIORY

- i. The Priory has a dual function. It is a private residence, and its spaces are used for the mission. These functions should be kept clearly separate and the distinction of spaces clearly demarcated.
- ii. An up-to-date key register should be maintained detailing who has keys to the premises and who has access to the internet.
- iii. All those who work within the priory should have clear job descriptions and be recruited in accordance with the CSSAs safer recruitment procedures as found on the CSSA website.
- iv. Unknown visitors should not be allowed to stay at the Priory. For guests staying for more than a short occasional visit e.g. two weeks:
 - a. Suitable references should be obtained (in the case of a cleric or religious this should be a *celebret* or testimonial of suitability).
 - b. The Local Safeguarding Friar shall ensure that these guests are inducted into the local safeguarding arrangements and expectations of the priory.
 - c. Agreement must be given to adhere to the national safeguarding policies and procedures.
 - d. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted as to whether a DBS check or overseas equivalent is required.
 - e. These stipulations do not need to be applied to occasional visits from family and friends.

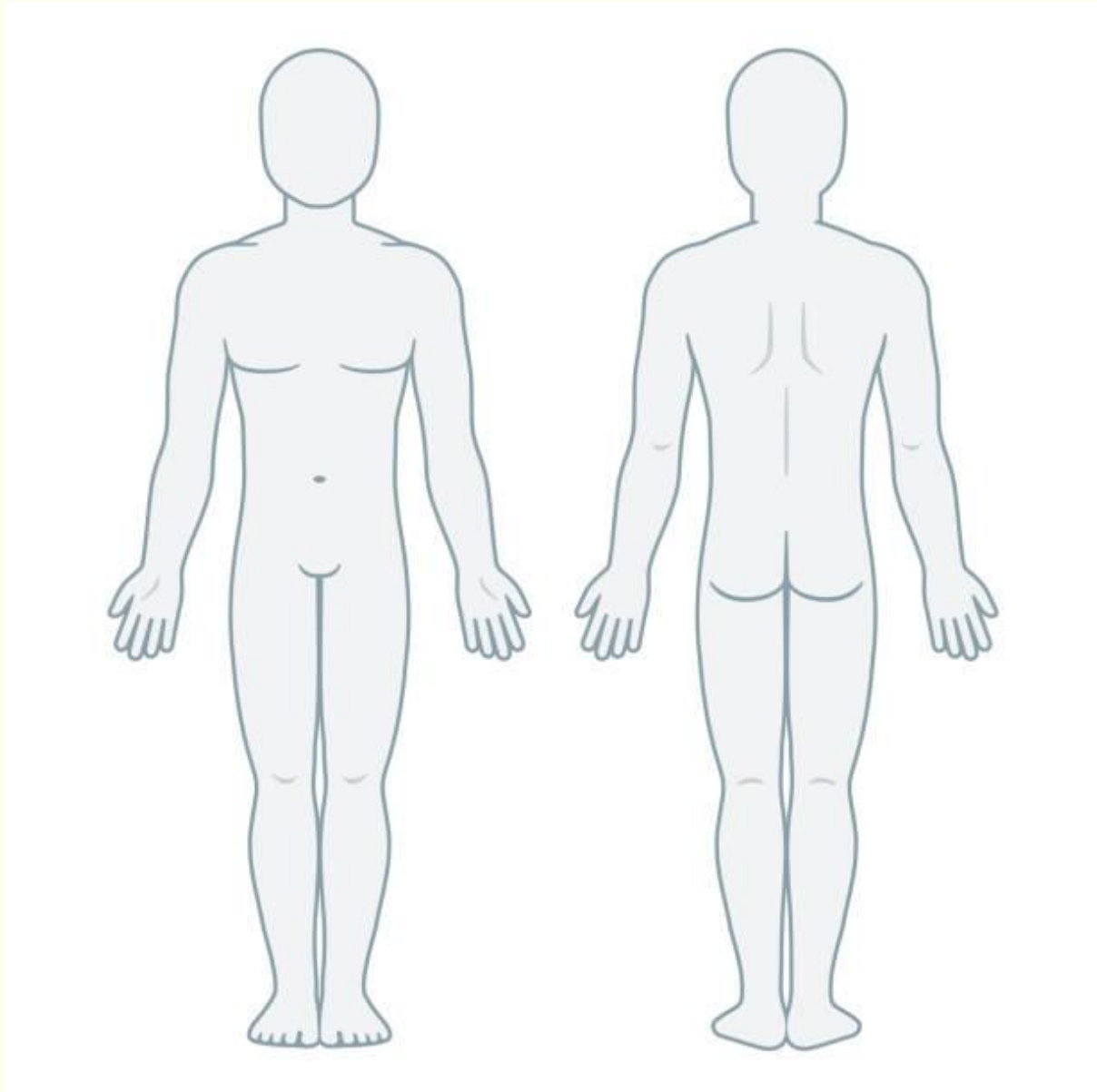
- f. Visitors should not be permitted to invite other persons to stay and no children should be permitted to stay at a Priory or House of the Province.¹⁰

¹⁰ *Creating a Safe Environment* 4.

7. LONE WORKING

- i. Friars or volunteers who make pastoral visits alone, for example, a communion round or a visit to the sick, will be given particular safeguarding training in advance.
- ii. If a brother or volunteer makes a pastoral visit to someone's place of residence, the dates and times of the visit will be recorded in a manner established by each Priory.
- iii. It is encouraged that pastoral visits to people's homes to be made in pairs where possible and appropriate.
- iv. In order to protect the personal safety of all concerned, the brethren and volunteers are advised to inform another person either in person or electronically when they are making a pastoral visit and to message again when the visit is over.

APPENDIX 1: AN EXAMPLE OF A MALE BODY MAP



APPENDIX 2: AN EXAMPLE OF A FEMALE BODY MAP

