



## OSA Volunteers Visiting Family Homes or Vulnerable Adults

While volunteers mainly fulfil their ministry in a church or pastoral centre, sometimes planned visits can be made directly to family homes and/or the homes of adult members of the faith community (e.g. Baptism, Eucharistic and/or Bereavement Ministries).

When you are active in your capacity as a representative of the local Augustinian Church or Parish, your behaviour should be imbued with Gospel values. As a volunteer in ministry, you should have received appropriate training and/or accompanied a more experienced volunteer on a previous visit. You should also have signed-up to the OSA Child Safeguarding 'Adult Code of Behaviour' and attended a Child Safeguarding Awareness Information Session and/or a Refresher Session in the past three years.

The OSA Vulnerable Adults Interim Policy (Dec. 2021) contains a separate *Code of Behaviour* that must be followed by all Church Personnel on home visitation (see <https://augustinians.ie/promoting-safe-and-sacred-spaces/>). Some core values include:

- *Adopt a person-centred approach.*
- *Treat vulnerable adults and all others with respect.*
- *Be transparent and open in your manner.*

In practical terms, the following guidelines draw on the OSA Vulnerable Adults *Code of Behaviour*. They highlight practices to follow when active in such ministries. Some adults may be vulnerable and therefore, it is vitally important that volunteers show great respect and always set out to ensure everyone's safety.

It is essential that all volunteers visiting homes be Garda Vetted. Visiting in pairs is preferable. Focus solely on your volunteer role and the ministry training you have received. Do not take on other responsibilities on behalf of the person or family you are visiting.

Here are some practices to bear in mind **Before, During and After the Visit**.

### **Before the Visit**

- Arrange an exact time for your visit with the person concerned and/or the Carer of that person.
- Only visit where permission has been granted.
- Inform the Ministry Co-ordinator of the details.
- If for any reason there is a need to change the timing on the day or defer until another day, then let the person, the Carer, your Co-Volunteer (if applicable) and Ministry Co-ordinator know, as appropriate.
- Have a lanyard with your name/photo and Augustinian Church name on it. Keep your mobile on.
- When accompanied, your Co-Volunteer must be an Augustinian Volunteer or Friar.
- Park safely and faced for home.
- Ask for dogs or pets to be safely secured for the duration of the visit, if necessary.



### During the Visit

- Be punctual. Late or early arrival can be upsetting for the person(s) or family you are visiting.
- If you are unavoidably delayed ring and explain the reason for the delay and give your approximate time of arrival.
- Introduce yourself on the first visit. Ask those present how they would like to be addressed.
- Be aware of any sensitivities that may exist around the family or person(s).
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect the privacy of the individual or family.
- If an adult is living alone, they may need a listening ear. Be cautious and careful with advice and opinions. Be aware you are attending as an Augustinian volunteer.
- As you enter ask your host to lead and you follow. Only enter the necessary room/rooms as requested.
- If the adult is confined to bed, knock and wait before entering the room. Sit on a chair, not on the bed.
- Never give or accept money.
- Where children are present in the home, it is important that no child hears any conversation that might be upsetting or worry them.
- Volunteers should never be alone in a room with a child/children and parents should be made aware of this safeguard.
- Should you feel uneasy in the home, for any reason, then leave immediately and calmly.

### After the Visit

- Record relevant details of the visit in a notebook: date, arrival & departure times and people present.
- Do not breach the confidentiality of the conversation(s) unless somebody may be at risk.
- Recording any concern (without the detail) is especially important, if you think there may be any safeguarding issue(s) present in the home.
- If you have a concern about the wellbeing of a child and/or an adult, then immediately inform the Ministry Co-ordinator and/or the Prior/PP who, if necessary, will seek the advice of the Designated Liaison Person.

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Following these basic guidelines will help to keep everyone safe and where necessary, allow volunteers to seek additional support, if the need arises.

### Useful Contacts:

**Tony Murphy OSA Designated Liaison Person:** 087 2211235 or [Safeguarding@augustinian.ie](mailto:Safeguarding@augustinian.ie)

**HSE Safeguarding & Protection Teams,** Health Centre, Tyone, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary.

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