

DIOCESE OF CLOYNE

Safeguarding Children Policy

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FOREWORD

Children and young people contribute to the joy and vibrancy of the liturgy and the life of every parish. For this reason the Diocese of Cloyne values and promotes their inclusion and participation in the life of the parish faith community. All parish ministry involving children and young people strives to make a positive contribution to their spiritual, emotional and social development.

The Safeguarding Policy and Procedures aim at ensuring that all those who minister to children and young people create a respectful, caring and safe environment where the dignity of every child is valued and promoted.

The policy and procedures outlined so clearly here equip parishes to comply with best practice promoted by the Church and State. The principles underpinning *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne* are designed to create an environment of trust and transparency where children and young people feel safe. This is their God-given right. Nobody has a right to rob them of their childhood and threaten their future happiness.

I fully support and congratulate all those who have been involved in safeguarding children in our parishes; the committee, parish safeguarding representatives, trainers and committee and, of course, the priests who have fully supported this initiative since it was first put in place over seven years ago. In safeguarding children, we need to be constantly vigilant and I am grateful to all those who recognise this.

It is my intention to continue to put safeguarding children high on my agenda, the agenda of the Diocese and parish life. I, therefore, will continue to draw on the talents and time of those who give so much to the service of the parish community. Thank God, there is a much greater awareness among parents and the faithful at large of the potential dangers to their children and the need to be on guard at all times. We have a team of five hundred trained women and men who are active in every parish and in every corner of the Cloyne Diocese. They are truly “the salt of the earth”!

One morning last year, I went into the sacristy of a country church to confirm the children. The place was a hive of activity; servers, priests, the choir mistress, the sacristan, all busy with their own last minute preparations. I noticed a lady sitting all on her own in a corner away from all the hustle and bustle. I concluded she must have become weak or ill in the church. I approached her and said, “*Can I get you a glass of water Ma’am?*” “*No*” she said, “*I am the parish rep for child protection and would you be so good as to sign the book with everyone else on the bench over there, Archbishop*”. The full implications of child safeguarding were brought home to me in no uncertain manner!

In his letter to the Catholics of Ireland last year, Pope Benedict praised the work being done by those involved in this vital service.

“Since the time when the gravity and extent of the problem of child sexual abuse...first began to be fully grasped, the Church has done an immense amount of work in many parts of the world in order to address and remedy it. While no effort should be spared in improving and updating existing procedures, I am encouraged by the fact that the current safeguarding practices adopted by local Churches are being seen, in some parts of the world, as a model for other institutions to follow.”

I make bold to state that this policy document Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne is a road map to a new, a better and a safer place for children in the time ahead.
Bail ó Dhia ar an obair!

Most Rev. Dermot Clifford, DD,
Apostolic Administrator of Cloyne

Introduction

With the safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults as the ultimate goal, this document outlines safeguarding guidelines and procedures which are to be adhered to by all Church personnel/organisations in the Diocese of Cloyne. The safeguarding structures are described and resources and information provided to facilitate implementation.

Safeguarding Children In The Diocese Of Cloyne is designed to be user friendly and is divided into eight sections, for the user to ‘dip into’ for guidance, information, resources such as codes of behaviour or useful forms for copying or download. The Policy Summary in Appendix 1 is designed to help the user by giving a brief and accurate overview of the document.

This publication conforms to the criteria prescribed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church and we have extensively used material from the board’s *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. *Safeguarding Children In The Diocese Of Cloyne* replaces the previous policy document *Child Protection in the Diocese of Cloyne* and we wish to acknowledge the contribution of our predecessors who worked on the compilation of that document.

All forms in the appendix section are available for download. These forms, may be amended or adjusted to include specific parish details, but the HSE Reporting Form may not be altered.

We acknowledge the assistance which we received from a variety of individuals and agencies, during the drafting of this document. In particular we acknowledge the help of the National Board who have reviewed and approved it.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee

December 2010

CONTACT DETAILS FOR CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND COUNSELLING SERVICES

If you, or anyone you know, has a child protection concern, or wishes to report an allegation of child abuse directly to Church Authorities, please contact the Diocesan Designated Officer.

Diocesan Designated Officer: **Phone Number: 086 0368999**
Diocesan Deputy Designated Officer: **Phone Number: 086 7950437**

If you, or anyone you know, has a child protection concern or, wishes to report an allegation directly to the Statutory Authorities, please contact the Garda or the Local HSE and ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker.

HSE Office

Mallow / Fermoy

Phone Number: 022 – 54100

Cobh / Midleton / Macroom

Phone Number: 021 – 4927000

Local Garda Station

Phone Number: _____

In cases of emergency please contact An Garda Síochána.

HSE NATIONAL INFORMATION HELPLINE: 1850 24 1850 (callsave)
 This information line can be contacted from 8a.m. to 8p.m. Monday to Saturday.

For further HSE services see www.hse.ie

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA – DIVISIONAL OFFICES WITHIN THE DIOCESE:

Cobh Garda Station Tel: 021-4908530

Mallow Garda Station Tel: 022-31450

Midleton Garda Station Tel: 021-4621550

Macroom Garda Station Tel: 026-20590

Kanturk Garda Station Tel: 029-20680

Youghal Garda Station Tel: 024 92200

Fermoy Garda Station Tel: 025-82100

For further information on local Garda stations – www.garda.ie

NATIONAL OFFICE FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

All Church organisations and personnel can access specialist advice about Safeguarding Children issues through the National Office and contact the National Board:
 National Office for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland
 New House
 Saint Patrick's College
 Maynooth, Co.Kildare
 Tel: 01 505 3124
 Fax: 01 505 3026
 Website: www.safeguarding.ie

TOWARDS HEALING

A FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE AND COUNSELLING REFERRAL SERVICE FOR SURVIVORS OF CLERICAL AND RELIGIOUS ABUSE .

Towards Healing, which has replaced Faoiseamh, will provide a more enhanced service for survivors of clerical and religious abuse, irrespective of where they are currently living. The enhanced service will include telephone counselling, a psychotherapy referral service, healing meetings, groupwork, practical workshops and a bridging service designed to link clients to services relevant to their needs.

Contact will be provided with accredited psychotherapists in your area for face to face psychotherapy, with the fees arising being paid directly to your psychotherapist by Towards Healing. Towards Healing can provide and pay for counselling for spouses/partners, parents and children of survivors of clerical/religious abuse.

Helpline Hours

Mondays & Wednesdays 11.00 am – 8.00pm

Fridays 11.00am – 4.00pm

Freephone (Ire) 1800-303416

Freephone (N. Ire & UK) 0800-0963315

Or contact:

info@towardshealing.ie

<http://www.towardshealing.ie>

Towards Healing is a Catholic Church response to Clerical/Religious abuse

CONNECT

Connect is a free phone counselling service for any adult who has experienced abuse, trauma or neglect in childhood. The service is also available to partners or relatives of people with these experiences. With Connect you can talk in confidence with a trained counsellor who can listen or help with questions you have. Connect is an out of hours service available Wednesday to Sunday, from 6-10pm.

To speak to a counsellor call: **1800 235 235 - Freephone counselling and support service** Website: www.connectcounselling.ie

NATIONAL COUNSELLING SERVICE (NCS)

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS) is for adults who were abused in childhood and was established in September 2000 in response to the recognition that a large number of adults had been abused as children while in care in State institutions in Ireland. The NCS offers confidential face to face counselling, free of charge, to adults who experienced physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect during childhood. Counselling is available at 60 locations throughout Ireland.

For an appointment at a location of your choice Freephone: 1800 234 116

More information at: www.hse-ncs.ie

CHILDLINE

Provides a 24 hour listening service for all children up to the age of 18.

Tel: 1800 66 66 66 www.childline.ie

ISPCC

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Tel: 01 6767 960
www.ispcc.ie

Section 1

DIOCESE OF CLOYNE

Safeguarding children/vulnerable adults policy statement

The Diocese of Cloyne recognises and upholds the dignity of all children and vulnerable adults¹ and is committed to ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Each child shall be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all. Everyone in the Church has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected.

The Diocese values and encourages the participation of young people in all parish liturgies and in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

Above all, the Diocese recognises the need to safeguard children and young people and aims to do this in a way that promotes their human dignity, integrity and worth as children of God.

The Diocese recognises that, while safeguarding children is primarily the responsibility of parents, it is indeed everyone's responsibility. In particular, all involved in working with children and young people have a special duty of care towards them. The Diocese has committed itself to putting procedures in place through which this care is put into effect. All Church personnel are required to comply with this policy.

Guiding Principles

1. That all children have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured, cared for and safeguarded.
2. That this right is embedded in Gospel values, best practice guidelines and international and domestic laws.
3. That in the light of the teaching of the Church, civil legislation and guidance, every part of the Church must be committed to taking the necessary steps to:
 - demonstrate that the right of the child to protection from harm is paramount
 - cherish and safeguard children and young people
 - foster best practice
 - demonstrate accountability through establishing effective structures

¹ The policies, guidelines, procedures etc contained in '*Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne*' apply to vulnerable adults as well as to children.

- support Church organisations² and personnel in safeguarding children
- establish clear recruitment and selection procedures for all Church staff and volunteers – aimed at preventing those who pose a risk to children from holding positions of trust
- maintain codes of behaviour – having clear guidelines that set out what is and is not acceptable behaviour as an essential part of keeping children safe
- operate safe activities for children – helping ensure they can play and learn in a safe environment
- report safeguarding concerns to the civil authorities without delay

The diocese has committed itself to ensuring that all aspects of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are managed professionally, promptly and justly and in the light of Church teaching, civil legislation and guidance. In keeping with this commitment, the diocese has:

- Provided information, procedures and guidelines to ensure appropriate responses to reports of alleged abuse
- Outlined communications, training and education strategies to help make the diocesan safeguarding message widely known and understood
- Established structures to facilitate: safe recruitment, Garda vetting, responding to allegations of abuse, provision of advice and support for those who have suffered abuse and for those against whom an allegation has been made
- Provided strategies for reviewing and monitoring the implementation of safeguarding policy

The diocese is committed to working in partnership with the statutory authorities. The diocese will adhere to statutory policy, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children³ and to instructions, guidelines and procedures issued by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.

A policy summary is provided immediately in Appendix 1 of this document. The summary is designed to provide you, the user with a quick and detailed overview of the content of *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne*.

² ‘Organisation’ is used as a generic term to cover a wide range of agencies, clubs or groups where activities or services are provided for children. Some of these might include: youth groups, faith based organisations, pre-school groups, out of school groups, day care agencies, leisure groups, recreational groups, drama and arts activities, holiday/play schemes, services provided by international development or aid agencies, and any other groups working with children or young people. It includes sports organisations but these are not covered by this publication.

³ *Children first* National Guidelines For The Protection Of Children (1999) and subsequent guidelines.

Section 2

RESPONDING AND REPORTING

2.1 Definitions

A **child** is defined as any person under the age of eighteen years excluding a person who is or has been married - in line with 'Children First'- National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1999 (this guidance is currently under review by the dept. - new guidance has been published but is not yet operational).

A **vulnerable adult** is defined⁴ as a person who is aged 18 years or over and who:

- is living in residential accommodation, such as a care home or a residential special school
- is living in sheltered housing
- is receiving domiciliary care in their own home
- is receiving any form of healthcare
- is detained in a prison, remand centre, young offender institution, secure training centre or attendance centre
- is under the supervision of the probation services
- is receiving a specified welfare service, namely the provision of support, assistance or advice by any person, the purpose of which is to develop an individual's capacity to live independently in accommodation or support their capacity to do so
- is receiving a service or participating in an activity for people who have particular needs because of their age or who have any form of disability
- is an expectant or nursing mother living in residential care
- requires assistance in the conduct of their own affairs.

(i) Definitions - physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

(ii) Definitions - emotional abuse

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

⁴In the absence of a legal definition in Republic of Ireland, we are using the Northern Ireland legal definition- "Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (N. Ireland) Order 2007."

- It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

(iii) Definitions - sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (oral sex). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/ or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

(iv) Definitions - neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and failure to access appropriate medical care or treatment.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, such as the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may also occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

2.2 How to recognise child abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. You do however have a responsibility and duty to act in order that the statutory agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child. The following information should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

2.2.1 How to recognise physical abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally.

An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury or when it appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g., on the cheeks or thighs.

A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

(i) The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- cigarette burns
- bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds

(ii) Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- depression
- withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home

2.2.2 How to recognise emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix / play with other children.

(i) The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. in hospital or away from their parents care
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

(ii) Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self-harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

2.2.3 How to recognise sexual abuse

Adults, who use children to meet their own sexual needs, abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

(i) The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital area
- bruising or bleeding near genital area
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

(ii) Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)

- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

2.2.4 How to recognise neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

(i) The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions

(ii) Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/ or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive but only to serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too, to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between their parents/carers etc.

2.3 Reporting procedures and key principles

Key Principles

The safety of the child is always paramount.

Investigation is a task for the professional Safeguarding Children agencies, following a referral to them of the concerns about the child. It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred.

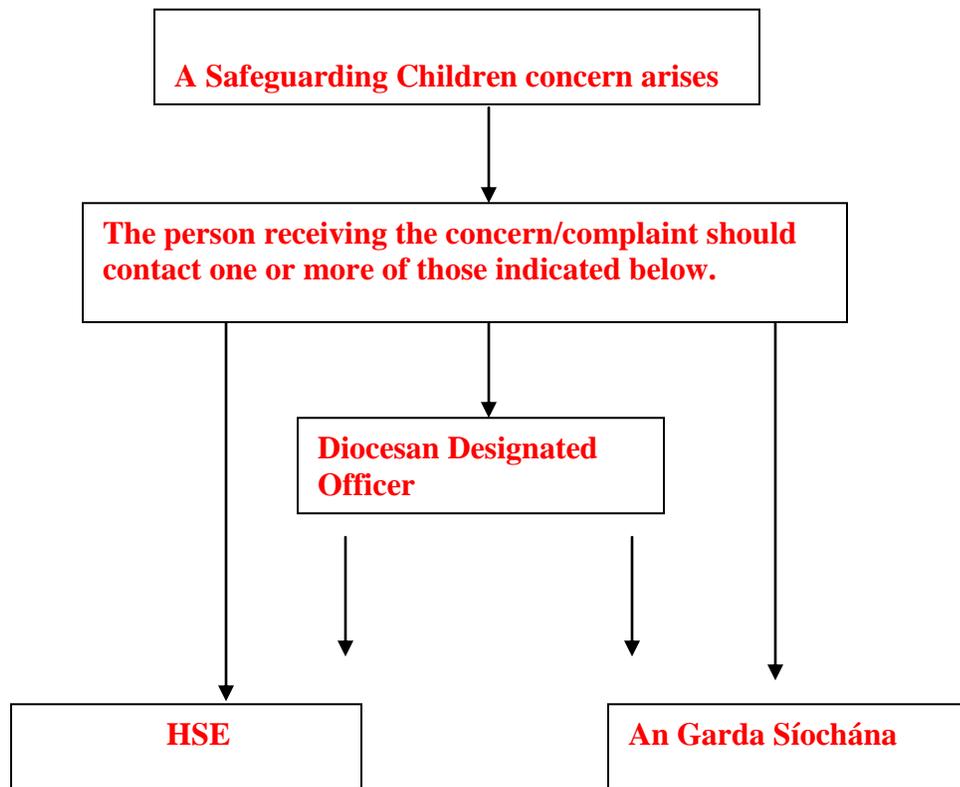
It is diocesan policy to report all concerns of a child protection nature to the civil authorities. There are structures in place to enable reporting within the church context. (See reporting diagram).

It is important to maintain confidentiality –you only reveal the details to those to whom you are making the report. Please refer to Confidentiality Statement (Section 2.8).

Reporting Procedures

These procedures set out the action that must be taken by a Church staff/volunteer if any concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure, relating to safeguarding children is made.

The flow chart outlines the overall reporting picture. More detailed guidance on reporting is provided in Example A and Example B.



Procedures to follow for all Church staff and volunteers, and anyone else wishing to raise a concern, in which a member of Church staff or volunteer is the person against whom the allegation is being made.

Reporting Procedures -Example A

All Church staff and volunteers who wish to raise a concern, in which any member of Church staff or volunteer is the person against whom the allegation is being made, will normally:

1. Report the concern to the Diocesan Designated Officer

2 The Designated Officer will

(a) Pass on the information, as appropriate to the Gardai, HSE, and s/he will:

(b) Notify, as appropriate the Bishop and Congregational Leader

(c) Confirm in writing to the referrer of the information that the concern has been passed to the civil authorities, and if not why not

OR

All Church staff and volunteers and anyone else who wishes to raise a concern, in which any member of Church staff or volunteer is the person against whom the allegation is being made, may report the matter, as appropriate to the Gardai, HSE.

***Please refer also to the Reporting Procedures - Example B outlined below.**

Reporting Procedures –Example B

All Church staff and volunteers, and anyone else who wishes to raise a concern, in which a member of Church staff or volunteer is **not** the person against whom the allegation is being made, will normally:

Report the matter, as appropriate to the Gardai, HSE.

2.4 Reporting procedures: information for people who wish to raise a child safeguarding concern

There are a number of ways that you might become aware of actual or likely occurrence of abuse.

- You might be or have experienced it yourself
- Someone might tell you
- You might see physical injuries that have no satisfactory explanation
- A child's behaviour may indicate that s/he might be being abused
- Something about the behaviour of an adult in the Church, perhaps in the way they relate to a child, makes you feel uncomfortable in some way
- You might observe abuse

To whom should I talk?

If you wish to talk to someone about a concern or suspicion of abuse it is important to do so as soon as possible. You will be listened to and what you say will be taken seriously.

If you have suffered abuse in the past, again, please tell someone about the abuse. You will be listened to and what you have to say will be taken seriously.

Understandably, many people find it difficult to tell anyone about the abuse they have suffered.

It may be many years after the event before a disclosure is made, perhaps when the victim is an adult. Even then, the Church will act.

If you want to raise a concern or voice your suspicions, or make an allegation or disclosure, you can choose who to talk to. You may choose to contact the HSE or local Garda Síochána.

There are some people in the Church who have special safeguarding jobs; they are called Local or Parish Safeguarding Representatives (at least one in every parish) and Designated Officers (at least one in every diocese and religious congregation). Details of your Diocesan/ Congregational Safeguarding Team can be found at the back of your local Church or via the relevant Diocesan or Congregation website. Alternatively, please contact the National Office for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, and we will be able to give you the contact details.

Alternatively, you may prefer to tell someone in the Church that you already know, such as a priest or a youth leader. They will refer you to sources of support and also let the Designated Officer know that they need to address a child protection matter.

What happens next?

The Designated Officer will contact you to listen further to what you have to say. They will also explain to you what will happen next.

It will be necessary to give details of the matter you are raising, to certain other people externally, including the HSE and An Garda Síochána for their investigation. Once the

civil authorities have looked into your concerns, there will be an internal Church Inquiry, the aim of which is to ensure the safety of other children.

All allegations or disclosures will be addressed sensitively, and in a timely manner.

You will also be offered a Support Person to help and advise you of the process as any inquiry progresses.

If you are a child or you are raising a concern about a child, the Designated Officer will not interview a child, as he/she will not be trained to do so.

The Designated Officer will talk with the HSE / An Garda Síochána about what to do next.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at an immediate and serious risk of harm, the Designated Officer will make an immediate referral to the / An Garda Síochána. You can also contact the Gardai and HSE if you are concerned about a child.

If your concern is about the behaviour or actions of an adult in the Church, then that person will be informed. He or she will be allowed to respond, unless to do so would put the child and others at greater risk. The person may also be asked to stand aside from his or her role while the matter is being investigated.

If the concern relates to abuse that has occurred to you in the past, following the civil authority investigation, the Designated Officer will ask you to provide a description of what happened, including the background and circumstances. You will be given plenty of time to do this.

The Designated Officer is not involved with the statutory investigation, but will keep in contact with the HSE / An Garda Síochána. The Designated Officer will normally be informed when the statutory investigation has concluded. The Church inquiry process will then continue.

What happens next may vary depending on whether the concern raised is about a priest or religious, or a lay employee or volunteer. This is because each is subject to their own internal procedures.

As the process unfolds, you will be regularly informed about what is happening.

For more details regarding the process, please refer to the – *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. You can obtain this by contacting the National Office or visiting www.safeguarding.ie

2.5 Responding to concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers

The Catholic Church is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and protection of children and takes all concerns, allegations, suspicions and disclosures of abuse very seriously.

This procedure sets out the action that must be taken if any concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure is made, whether current or historical, that indicates a member of the Church staff (current or former) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- committed a criminal offence against a child or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Applies to: All Church staff and volunteers.

2.5.1 Initial contact

Procedure: Action to take when you receive a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse

Remember! It is not your role to investigate.

(i) If you receive a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse, you must act immediately and refer the matter to your Designated Officer as soon as possible; the Designated Officer will refer the complaint to the HSE / An Garda Síochána.

(ii) Whenever possible and practical, take notes during the conversation. Always ask permission to do this and explain the importance of recording all information. Where it is not appropriate to make notes at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards and in any case before the end of the day.

(iii) Record the time, date, location (or if the matter has been communicated by letter or telephone), and persons present. The record should be signed and dated by the author. The record would also normally include:

- a. accurate identifying information as far as it is known. This should include the name and address of the person who has raised a concern (as well as their date of birth, and parents'/carers'/ names and addresses where the person who has raised a concern/allegation is a child)
- b. the name of the individual against whom the concern/allegation is being raised and any other identifying information
- c. as much information as possible about the circumstances that led to the concern/allegation being raised, why is the person worried about the welfare and safety of the child or children
- d. dates when the concern arose, or when the incident(s) occurred
- e. circumstances in which the concern arose, or the incident(s) occurred
- f. any explanation offered to account for the risk, injury or concern

g. the child's own statement using the words they used to describe the events or incident(s), if possible.

Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of words used

h. details of any action already taken about the incident/concern/allegation

i. any views expressed by the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) about the matter.

(iv) Do not be selective. Include detail which to you may seem irrelevant. It may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation.

(v). Use the suggested form for this purpose. This initial recording will form the first entry in a file of information about the case which will be retained by the relevant Designated Officer. (See Appendices and also pp 89-92 of the *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*.)

(vi) All original records, including rough notes, must be passed immediately to the relevant Designated Officer. Any copies of records retained must be kept secure and confidential.

(vii) Not all persons raising a concern will wish to go through the process described below. Nonetheless, information about the existence of a potential allegation **must** always be communicated to the relevant Designated Officer.

(viii) In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, an immediate report should be made to the HSE as well as to the relevant Designated Officer. Where the appropriate HSE staff are not available, An Garda Síochána should be contacted to ensure that **under no circumstances a child is left in a dangerous situation pending HSE intervention**.

Consideration should, in all cases, also be given to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve, and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of potential evidence or forensic evidence.

(ix). Explain to the child/person raising the concern what will happen next. Indicate who will be made aware of the information given by them. Leave the contact details of the Designated Officer in case the referrer needs to ask questions later.

(x) **Confidentiality:** It is important not to discuss the incident/concern with anyone other than those detailed in these procedures.

2.5.2 Guidance on how to respond to people making an allegation

It is often very difficult for people to talk about abuse so it is important to make sure that you are patient, listen carefully and actively, and create a safe environment in which they feel able to tell you as much as they can remember. This will help those people whose responsibility it is to investigate the incident(s) do so as thoroughly as possible.

(i) People may tell you about:

- abuse that's happened to them now – current

- abuse that happened to them some time ago – historical
- something they've been told by someone else and that they strongly believe is true
- seeing signs of abuse, such as physical injuries on a child
- something that they have witnessed, such as the behaviour of an adult to a child that made them feel uncomfortable.

(ii) Where information is given in person, consider the following.

- Listen carefully to that person, but do not ask intrusive or leading questions
- Stay calm, take what the person raising the concern says seriously, and reassure them
- Allow the person to continue at his/her own pace
- Check with the person to make sure that you have understood what they actually said. Do not suggest words, but use theirs
- Make no promises that cannot be kept, particularly in relation to secrecy, but listen carefully to what is being sought
- Explain these procedures and the referral procedures to the person
- Offer to accompany the person to the Support Person
- Do not make any comments about the respondent, make assumptions or speculate
- Be aware that a person's ability to recount his or her concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, nationality and upon any disability which may affect use of language and range of vocabulary
- Adopt a listening style which is compassionate, calm and reassuring. If the information given to you shocks, disgusts or distresses you, do not allow these feelings to show. If you do, you may inadvertently dissuade the person from giving any further information
- Avoid statements about your belief or otherwise, of the information given
- Do not question beyond checking what has been said. It is the job of the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána to investigate. There must be no probing for detail beyond that which has been freely given

Listening does not mean telling a person to stop when they are freely recalling events, because some facts are only ever told once, the information given must be fully and accurately recorded.

However, it is better that such detail is given directly to a professional from one of the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána, to allow proper procedures to be observed and to avoid the distress of having to repeat the account more than once.

A priest must be clear about the status of such a conversation. Make sure there is no misunderstanding about whether the Seal of Confession applies.

2.5.3 Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

Children will occasionally tell an adult they are being abused if they feel they can trust this person. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is if they do tell you they are doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information.

If a child begins to tell you about abuse it is important that you

Do:

- stay calm
- listen carefully and take them seriously
- ask questions for clarification only if you are unclear what the child is saying
- allow the child to continue at his/ her own pace
- reassure the child that, in disclosing the abuse, they have done the right thing
- tell them they are not to blame for the abuse
- let them know you will do what you can to help
- report the child's disclosure to your manager or the designated person immediately (or in the absence of the designated, or if the disclosure in any way involves the designated person, then seek advice from the National Safeguarding Board Support Team).

As soon as possible, write down everything that you were told by the child, using their own words to describe the abuse. Sign and date this record and pass it onto the designated person.

Do not:

- dismiss the concerns
- panic
- probe for more information/ ask other questions
- promise not to tell anyone or say you'll keep it a secret
- make negative comments about the accused person
- make assumptions or speculate
- disclose details of the allegation to anyone else – even if the allegations involve them in any way.

Find an opportunity to explain that it is likely that this information will need to be shared with others and at the end of the discussion tell them what you plan to do next and with whom this information will be shared.

Remember: It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is **not** responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional safeguarding children agencies following a referral to them of the concerns about the child.

2.5.4 Listening to a person who admits abusing a child

It is necessary to tell a person who admits an offence against a child or young person that such information cannot be kept confidential. If such an admission is made to you, even

where the admission relates to something which happened a long time ago, you must refer the matter to the Designated Officer as soon as possible who will follow the procedures for referral to the HSE / An Garda Síochána.

2.5.5 Anonymous allegations or concerns

Anonymous complaints are to be treated carefully. Anxiety and fear may persuade some people not to reveal their identity immediately. It is sometimes difficult to act on information under these procedures unless at some point the name of the person raising the concern/making an allegation becomes known. The person raising the concern should be informed that anonymity might restrict the ability of professionals to access information or to intervene to protect a child. As much openness as possible should be encouraged.

2.6 Disciplinary Processes

When a member of staff or volunteer is the subject of an allegation

If the allegation/disclosure/suspicion raised concerns about a current employee or volunteer of a Church organisation, the Designated Officer will refer the matter to be dealt with under the grievance and disciplinary procedures of the body concerned, to be investigated in accordance with the applicable procedures of employment law and any other relevant laws. (When a priest is the subject of an allegation, disciplinary procedures are the responsibility of the bishop).

The documents or other material arising from the investigation are to be kept in accordance with the practices of the employing authority and any relevant laws.

Disciplinary Procedures will operate at the same time as and in parallel with the Reporting Procedures. In general it is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the employment issues. It is preferable to separate these issues and manage them independently.

There will be consultation with the HSE and Gardai regarding protective measures for child/children, always aware that the safety of children is paramount.

Those who are the subject of an investigation may be asked to step aside from their ministry and duties for the duration of the investigation. While the matter is pending the respondent enjoys the presumption of innocence and the right to his or her good name.

Staff/volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support should be made available. The primary goal is to protect the child while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

2.7 Complaints procedures – independent reviews

2.7.1 What if I am unhappy with the way my concerns were dealt with?

If you are unhappy with the way that the Church dealt with your concerns, you can ask for it to be independently reviewed. You cannot ask for the matter to be re-investigated but you can ask for the process (i.e. how it was dealt with) to be reviewed.

You must ask for a review within three months after the Church's investigative process has finished, but this timeframe can be extended in certain circumstances.

You should write to The National Board (St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare), setting out the reasons why you are unhappy with the process. If you have any difficulty in doing this, please contact the National Office to discuss other ways they may be able to help you to ask for a review.

The review will be conducted by an independent review panel of three persons with specialist expertise.

The Review Panel cannot review the outcome of the process, but will look at the manner in which the process was conducted and ensure that all the required steps were followed.

At the end of the review the Review Panel will then make a recommendation. The person who your concern/allegation was about is also entitled to seek such a review if he or she is unhappy with the way the process was conducted.

For further details of the review process, please see the procedures outlined in p80 *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* or contact the National Office for further information.

2.7.2 Procedures for independent reviews

1. If the person who raised a child protection concern/made an allegation or the person they raised the concern about (the respondent) is unhappy with the way in which the concern/allegation was managed they can ask for this process to be reviewed.
2. The person requesting a review will normally be required to provide written reasons for his or her dissatisfaction with the process. There may be circumstances where this is not possible for example, where the person making the allegation is a child or has an impairment. In these situations their request will be accepted verbally and assistance will be offered to enable them to access a review.
3. The person's written request for a review should be forwarded to the National Board within three calendar months of the conclusion of the investigation of the matter. However, the National Board can accept requests for review outside this timeframe if it feels it is appropriate.
4. The Review of Process is an independent evaluation, not only of whether the child protection procedures have been properly observed, but also of whether the Standards established in the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* have been adhered to. This review of process shall not, however, include or extend to a review of the outcomes determined under the child protection procedures.
5. A review under these procedures is to be conducted otherwise than in public and, save as appears below, in confidence. The review will be carried out with respect to similar confidentiality guidelines as the initial inquiry.
6. The National Board will appoint three Reviewers from the National Review Panel, who will arrange for a review to take place. The Reviewers will be independent and they will decide how best to conduct the review in line with these procedures.

7. The National Board will inform the Church authority concerned that a review of process has been requested and approved. The National Board will also ensure that both the complainant and/or respondent are informed that a review has been requested and will take place.

8. The Reviewers can use their discretion after looking at the information and decide not to carry out a review or to discontinue a review if they consider the request to be inappropriate.

9. In any case where a request is made to the National Board for a review and the Reviewers, having been appointed, decide not to carry out a review they will write to the person who has requested the review and the National Board outlining their decision.

10. The Reviewers can ask to interview any person concerned (other than a child), and will, in the case of a Church organisation or Church authority, be given, and have access to, all such information and documentation relating to the matter in the possession of the body or authority. Some information and documentation may be given, or access afforded, to the Reviewers may be legally privileged material⁵ This will be done to ensure that the Reviewers have all they need to properly, fully and effectively carry out their role. It will also ensure full transparency, openness and cooperation, and so foster confidence and trust in the child protection process as a whole, and assist in facilitating the best possible handling of child protection concerns generally.

⁵ Such material, which is exempt from disclosure in court, and other relevant proceedings, comprises the following types of written and/or oral communications - confidential communications between a client and his professional legal adviser, which communications are made in the course of a professional legal relationship between them for the purpose of either seeking or giving legal advice (not other advice, and not mere legal 'assistance'); and confidential communications between a client and his professional legal adviser, or between the client and a third party, or between his professional legal adviser and a third party, the dominant purpose for which was preparation for pending, contemplated or reasonably apprehended litigation.

Any such material will be disclosed on the following bases:

- a. there being no intention whatsoever, in giving and/or affording access to the material to abandon or waive legal professional privilege over the material concerned;
- b. access being afforded for the specific and limited purposes of the Review, and in the context outlined above;
- c. access being afforded on the strict condition and understanding that the confidentiality of the material, which it is the intention of the Church organisation / Church authority to maintain into the future, be strictly observed by the Reviewer, and, without prejudice to the generality of this, the following strictures be abided by:
 - In the case of documents, access to the material will be given by means of inspection only (copies will not be made) in a confidential setting, at the premises of the Church organisation/Church authority where the relevant files are normally kept.
 - Any notes made on foot of any inspection, interview or other disclosure of the contents of the material for the purposes of the Reviewer carrying out the Review, be kept secure and confidential, and be promptly destroyed once used for those purposes; and
 - Disclosure of the material, or its contents, not being effected to any third party (including any other party to a Review), without the prior, written, consent of the Church organization.

11. If, at any stage during the course of a review, the Reviewers have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, they will inform the Health and Social Services or An Garda Síochána if this has not already occurred.

12. The Reviewers will carry out the review within three calendar months, unless the National Board agrees an extension. The Reviewers shall prepare a draft report upon conclusion of the review.

13. The Reviewers shall be free to make interim recommendations to the Church authority in the course of its work and, in so doing, shall afford to the Church authority the opportunity of responding to such interim recommendations.

14. The Reviewers shall check for factual accuracy in the report and to this end, the Reviewers shall provide excerpts of the draft report, containing those parts of the report which refer to or affect the person who has raised a concern/made an allegation, the respondent and the Church authority respectively, to each of those persons, for their checking of the facts.

15. After considering any comments provided by the person raising a concern, the respondent and the Church authority, the Reviewers shall then prepare a written final report containing recommendations. A copy of the report shall be provided to the National Board and, insofar as they have given their reasonable co-operation to the process, the Church authority, the Church organisation, the person raising the concern/making an allegation and the respondent. The report shall not be published.

16. If the Reviewers consider that there has been a failure to observe the required processes, the National Board will discuss the case with the Reviewers. Upon such consideration of the report, the National Board shall make such recommendations as it sees fit to the Church authority in relation to the child protection matter.

17. The Church authority, having considered the recommendations, will decide upon the appropriate course of action and inform the person who has raised the concern/made an allegation, and the respondent.

18. The Annual Report of the National Board shall contain a summary of the learning identified through such reviews carried out during the previous year, with care being taken to ensure that the identity of all persons involved, including the Church authority, is not revealed.

19. The Church authority shall bear all ordinary and reasonable expenses of the review.

2.8 Confidentiality statement and guidelines

The Diocese of Cloyne recognises the importance of ensuring people's rights to confidentiality and is committed to keeping confidential all personal information about children and their families. The only exception may be when safeguarding children or welfare concerns arise in relation to a child. In this situation, information will be shared on a need to know basis, in the best interest of the child as follows: Giving information to an appropriately designated person and/or statutory authority for the protection of a child/young person is not a breach of confidentiality.

Primary carers have a right to know if personal information is being shared and a report is being made to the HSE, unless informing them could put the child at further risk

We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child are at risk.

2.8.1 Using images/photographs of children

Ensure that:

- Parents and children consent to the use of an image and that this is recorded
- Photographs/ images likely to be published in press or on the Internet are not used in conjunction with the children's full names (first name and surname) and detailed addresses
- Parents and children are aware of the way the image will be used to represent the Church group, organisation or activity
- Images of a child will not be used for any other reason without the consent of the parent/carer.

We cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public liturgies/events (For further information refer to Section 3 -Photographs and Film Section of the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers).

2.9 Record keeping and storage of information

Record keeping and storage of information will be in accordance with:

- Diocesan policy on storage of completed documents
- Confidentiality statement and guidelines
- Data protection legislation including data protection rules as outlined in the European Communities (Data Protection) Regulations 2001, (See www.dataprotection.ie)
- The guidelines of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church

The Church should retain all case management files and safeguarding records for a period of 100 years. All other records pertaining to safeguarding should be stored for a period of 20 years. (See ‘Record Keeping’ at the National Board’s website www.safeguarding.ie).

Each parish group will be responsible for storing in a confidential way an accurate record for each activity involving children including, but not limited to, programme details, attendance, parental consent, necessary medical information etc.

2.9.1 Documents and official forms

(a) Blank forms.

A supply of blank official forms will be maintained in the sacristy, will be available from the sacristan, and, *inter alia* will include:

- Parental Consent Forms
- Participant Application Forms
- Accident/Incident Report Forms
- Adult Volunteer Application & Volunteer Forms
- Garda Vetting Forms

(b) Completed documents

Completed documentation will be regarded as confidential and will be retained securely in the parish priest’s office.

Copies of documentation relating to vetting of parish personnel will also be retained securely in the parish priest’s office when they become available. Sensitive personal information should not be stored on computer, unless it is done in compliance with Data Protection legislation.

Section 3

PREVENTION

3.0 Preventing harm to children

The diocese is committed to developing a culture of safety that minimises risk to children and to adhering to best practice in regard to:

Safe recruitment and vetting practices – helping prevent those who pose a risk to children from holding positions of trust

Codes of behaviour – having clear guidelines that set out what is and is not acceptable behaviour as an essential part of keeping children safe

Running safe activities for children – helping to ensure a safe environment for children

Responsibility for prevention of harm at parish level

Responsibilities of the Parish Priest

At parish level, the Parish Priest/Administrator has overall responsibility for ensuring that all processes are in place in order to prevent harm to children. He is responsible for ensuring that any activities that are run under the auspices of the parish are provided in a manner that ensures the safety and security both of the children and of the leaders involved. He may be assisted where appropriate by curate(s)/parish staff/parish council, parish safeguarding committee, parish safeguarding representatives, (See Section 8 Structures and Descriptions of Roles and Responsibilities.)

Responsibilities of the person or people who manage the parish facilities that are being loaned to groups, or rented

It is a condition for groups using the facility that they have child safeguarding policy and procedures and that they have insurance.

Responsibilities of group leaders for record keeping and storage of information

Each parish group will be responsible for ensuring adherence to codes of behaviour for staff and volunteers and children, for adherence to best practice and for storing in a confidential way an accurate record for each activity involving children. (Sections 2.9 and 3.4).

Codes of behaviour**Code of behaviour for staff and volunteers**

A code of behaviour, which respects the dignity and rights of the child, should be drawn up for staff and volunteers in regard to their work with children. It should state that corporal punishment of children is never permitted and that discipline problems should be handled in a positive way, in partnership with parents and guardians.

This code should include a disciplinary procedure to be used in the event of a worker or volunteer breaching the code. It should be read, understood and signed by every worker and volunteer before starting in their role. (See Section 3.2, 3.2.1)

Code of behaviour for children

A code of behaviour for children involved in parish-related activities should be drawn up, in consultation with children and parents/guardians. (See Section 3.6)

The issue of the appropriate response to breaches of discipline and to disruptive behaviour should be covered in the code. A copy of the code will be made available to all children and young people participating in activities and to their parents or guardians. The code should be read, understood and signed by every child.

3.1 Recruitment and selection procedures

When situations become vacant those responsible for filling them should be aware of best practice in recruiting employees and volunteers for work with children – this will include submitting completed application and declaration forms, providing the names of referees, references (which are verbally checked), attending at interview and submitting to garda vetting.

The following should be observed:

Develop clear job descriptions, skills descriptions and person specifications for all paid and voluntary posts.

All remunerated vacancies should be openly advertised.

Application Forms should be used for recruitment to all posts, including those to be filled by volunteers. Application forms should include a **Declaration Form** which applicants should be required to sign stating that they do not have criminal charges, cautions or convictions against them, or any other reason why it may be inappropriate for them to work with children.

The diocesan policy and procedures for garda vetting should be applied.

Applicants should be required to provide the names of two referees who can attest to their suitability for working with children and young people. References must be checked by the parish priest or by someone designated by him.

Suitable applicants should be interviewed by an interview panel of at least two people with appropriate competence and authority.

Written references should be obtained in respect of all candidates being considered for part time paid, full- time paid or voluntary appointment. All written references must be followed up by verbal contact with referees.

3.1.1 Recruitment - record keeping

The application forms, declaration forms and all other documentation should be stored securely. Access will be restricted to the Parish Priest/Administrator, who will share the information on a need to know basis.

See - Section 2.8 Confidentiality Statement and Guidelines

-Section 2.9 Record Keeping and Storage of Information.

-Section 3.1.3 Data Confidentiality and Data Protection.

3.1.2 Recruitment and selection – garda vetting

Garda Vetting is one component of a good practice recruitment framework, which includes such practices as verification of identity, gathering of personal details, interview and references.

Clergy, seminarians and religious within the diocesan setting, full-time or part-time staff and/or volunteers/voluntary lay faithful in diocesan offices, agencies and parishes, and ancillary staff in schools who have direct access to children or vulnerable adults must be vetted.

Vetting is provided to the diocese by the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) based in Thurles.⁶

Garda Central Vetting Unit

The Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU), is the single point of contact in An Garda Síochána to conduct garda vetting. Vetting forms cannot be sent to the GCVU directly but must be processed at diocesan level by the Diocesan Garda Vetting Administrator – who has been formally enrolled in this task by the GCVU. Garda vetting is not conducted for individual persons on a personal basis.

Within current disclosure policy, the GCVU issues details of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in the state or elsewhere as the case may be, to the authorised liaison person in the registered organisation. The Diocesan Garda Vetting Administrator handles garda vetting applications on behalf of the Diocese of Cloyne.

Recruitment/vetting best practice

In accordance with best practice, garda vetting should be sought in respect of each applicant prior to the offer of employment/engagement and approximately every 5 years thereafter, or at any time or times within the said 5 year period as deemed necessary. Applicants should be informed early of the requirement for garda vetting - ideally at the time of advertising. It is recommended that no person should start work or be engaged, until garda vetting procedures have been completed. This is discretionary depending on whether working with children. For example it may be possible for an applicant to start work, subject to vetting, but not with children or until the vetting process has been completed. However, advice should be sought, and a Garda Vetting Form should be completed before taking up any duty.

Vetting process in the Diocese of Cloyne

Legal responsibility for employment and duty of care remains with the organisation that enters into a contract of employment or engages an applicant.

⁶ Vetting of teachers is facilitated through the Teaching Council.

1. Garda Vetting Forms are available from the **Diocesan Garda Vetting Administrator**.
2. The applicant⁷ is responsible for completing the form truthfully and fully and returning it to the organisation. Applicants are required to make a full and complete declaration. Failure to do this may jeopardise the offer of employment/engagement. (Applicants should note that a false declaration will be viewed very seriously and may affect the offer of employment/engagement.)
3. It is the responsibility of the organisation⁸ to ensure that completed forms are returned to the ‘Administrator.’
4. The form is forwarded by the organisation to the ‘Administrator’ who will examine it for any omissions, mistakes or lack of clarity.
5. An incomplete form is dated and returned to the organisation with a cover letter requesting the form’s correction and resubmission. Changes cannot be made other than by the applicant on the authorised form.
6. When the ‘Administrator’ is satisfied with the form, the applicant’s details are entered into the Diocesan Database for Garda Vetting.
7. As soon as possible, the ‘Administrator’ forwards the form to the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU), either singly or in batches.
8. Forms are returned to the ‘Administrator’ (usually between 4-6 weeks, but this timescale can vary). The organisation is informed of the outcome.
9. When the vetting information is returned, the organisation will make a decision to offer employment/engagement depending on all of the information that is available including interview, education and qualifications achieved, skills assessment, previous employment history/experience, references and medical checks where appropriate etc.
10. Where the returned form contains information relevant⁹ to the employment / engagement of the applicant, the organisation must consider seriously whether or not a review meeting is appropriate. (Further guidance will be issued by the National Board. See www.safeguarding.ie).

3.1.3 Garda vetting - data confidentiality and data protection

All information passed to other appropriate and relevant staff must only be done on a basis required by the recruitment process.

- Any member of staff of the diocese who breaches confidentiality in the management of vetting information may face disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Other serious sanctions may apply in respect of non-staff members. All organisations that avail of this service from the diocese are required to be vigilant about confidentiality and will be expected to treat breaches of

⁷ *Applicant* refers to those individuals applying for Garda Vetting – i.e. clergy, students, staff members and church volunteers.

⁸ *Organisation* refers to the parish, religious order or church body – including the diocese itself - which has required that Garda Vetting be sought and to which the applicant is directly accountable.

⁹ *Relevant information* –where mentioned, refers to disclosures within the Garda Vetting process of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in the State or elsewhere. (The scope of disclosures may change depending on future legislation).

confidentiality on the part of any member of their staff in similar fashion to the diocese.

- In the case of a review meeting, the applicant's information must be protected.

Data protection

Information on the vetting outcomes must be:

- stored securely
- retained in line with data protection laws
- retained only for as long as is reasonably necessary

3.1.4 Garda Vetting – the process review meeting

Recommended procedures following receipt of information from the GCVU

Consideration of holding a process review meeting

The Garda provides the organisation with details of all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, and/or convictions.

If this form contains none of the above, no Process Review Meeting is necessary.

Consideration for a Process Review Meeting will occur when an application is returned from the GCVU with relevant information attached. The organisation should clarify any information received from the GCVU with the applicant.

If information is received which gives rise to concern, a Process Review Meeting is strongly recommended. Advice should be sought from the Cloyne Diocesan Garda Vetting Administrator in relation to holding a Process Review Meeting. (Chairpersons of Boards of Management of Primary Schools can also seek the advice of the Diocesan CPSMA office).

The Process Review Meeting

In the event that a Process Review Meeting is to be held please note the following:

It is the organisation who will arrange the meeting. They may be supported and accompanied by a Diocesan representative. Appropriate decision makers and support personnel if required should attend.

- The applicant is invited to attend and to bring someone along as a support if they so wish.
- The meeting has two purposes, firstly to clarify the applicant's identity and secondly to give the applicant an opportunity to discuss their application in the light of the information received from the Garda. The applicant must provide proof of his/her identity.
- A discussion then takes place following which a decision will be made. The discussion is for clarification purposes so that all information required to make a recruitment decision is accurate. A written record will be kept of the meeting.
- Applicants who assert that their garda vetting disclosure may be inaccurate must provide satisfactory evidence to support their assertion.

If the applicant provides satisfactory evidence to support their assertion that their garda vetting disclosure may be inaccurate, the diocesan garda vetting administrator/authorized signatory will contact the Garda Central Vetting Unit with the information, and any other information as deemed necessary. The Garda Central Vetting Unit will conduct further checks as necessary in respect of the applicant and write back to the diocesan garda vetting administrator/authorised signatory who will communicate the response to the organisation.

3.1.5 Garda vetting - risk assessment guidelines

A conviction, prosecution or case pending will not necessarily bar an applicant from being considered for employment/engagement.

The decision making process is fundamentally to assess the suitability of an applicant. Any information which arises from the Garda Vetting process may influence the decision of the organisation to offer employment/engagement.

The following criteria will be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- The nature of any convictions
- The number of any convictions
- The frequency of any convictions
- The post for which the person is seeking employment/engagement
- The self disclosure of the conviction/case pending by the applicant
- Time lapse since last conviction
- The steps the applicant has taken to prevent re-offending

Relevant legislation

Convictions relating to the following legislation in Ireland and elsewhere -legislation from other jurisdictions - will, in some cases, bar the applicant from the outset. In the interest of fairness, however, the organisation should consider whether the applicant should be asked to attend a Process Review Meeting before a final decision is made. Examples of the legislation that may affect employment/volunteer decisions is given hereunder:

- The Child Care Acts 1991 to 2007
- Adoption Acts 1952 to 1998
- Domestic Violence Act 1996 and 2002
- Non Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997 Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 as amended Education(Welfare) Act 200 as amended Children Acts 2001 to 2007 Sex offenders Act 2001 as amended Common Law Offences relating to murder, manslaughter, rape etc.
- Criminal Justice Act 2006
- Illegal Immigrant Trafficking Act 2000
- Offences against the Person Act, 1861, as amended Criminal Law (Rape) Acts, 1981 and 1990 Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Acts, 1885 to 1993 Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006 Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998 Punishment of Incest Act, 1908 Sexual Offences (Jurisdiction) Act, 1996 Offences against the State Acts 1939 to 1998 Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) Act 2005 Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977 to 2006 Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act, 1996 Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) Act, 2001, as amended Criminal Justice Act 1990 Criminal Justice Act 1964

This list is not exhaustive. Due care must be taken to keep informed about the meaning of legislation and any relevant changes to legislation. The following areas must also be considered with care:

- Number and frequency of convictions, particularly in the last ten years
- Non-child protection related offences that may still give cause for concern: for example, a prosecution and successful conviction under the Domestic Violence Act 1991
- Serious road traffic offences such as drunk driving, dangerous driving, hit and run, no insurance and car theft.

*(New Vetting guidance will be made available shortly by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.)

3.1.6 Recruitment and selection – visiting priests and temporary solemnisers

(i) Visiting priests

It is a diocesan regulation that before priests from outside the diocese can be allowed to minister in this diocese, it must be clearly established that they are in ‘good standing,’ and that there are no child protection concerns.

Before a parish makes any arrangement with a visiting priest, the priest must confirm his ‘good standing’, by showing his ‘celebrate.’ If there are any doubts, the parish is obliged to contact bishop’s office, Cloyne. The diocesan office will contact the priest’s own bishop or local superior/provincial directly to confirm the priest’s ‘good standing’ and to confirm that there aren’t any safeguarding children concerns.

Parishes are required to inform bishops/diocesan office if a non-incardinated priest takes up residence in the parish (excluding in a religious community).

(ii) Temporary solemnisers

Under legislation effective since November 2007, in order to officiate at a marriage that will be civilly registered, priests must be on the ‘List of Solemnisers’ submitted by their local bishop to the Registrar-General.

Priests from overseas can be added to this list as temporary solemnisers – this meets the legal requirements for the specific marriage(s) at which they are officiating here in Ireland.

The bishop of the diocese in which the marriage is taking place has the responsibility, once notified, of submitting the name, overseas address and date of birth of the visiting priest to the registrar-general so that they can be listed as a temporary solemniser. Before doing so, the Bishop’s office will contact the priest’s own bishop or local superior/provincial directly to confirm the priest’s ‘good standing’ and to confirm that there are no safeguarding children concerns.

3.2 Prevention and codes of behaviour

3.2.1 Code of behaviour for staff and volunteers -basics for working with children

In order to support the Diocesan Policy and Procedures, it is necessary that the following code of conduct be applied as a minimum standard for all those who work with children.

Avoid spending time alone with a child. Should circumstances arise where this is unavoidable, immediately inform another responsible adult -by telephone if necessary. Make a diary note that the meeting with the child took place, including the reasons it took place.

It is inappropriate to spend excessive amounts of time with children away from others or to take a child to your own home.

Observe best practice in relation to travel with children. Workers and volunteers should not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child. If, in certain circumstances, only one adult is available there should be a minimum of two children present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, make a record of this and inform the child's parents or guardians as soon as possible. Inform a colleague at the time if the parents/guardians are not available.

Avoid permitting children to work or remain in churches and parish property unless there are at least two adults present.

Care should be taken to ensure that leaders of mixed gender will work with mixed gender groups. Leaders should treat each other and children with courtesy, respect and dignity.

- Leaders will provide good example of the type of behaviour they wish others to follow.
- Never act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Treat all children and adults with equal courtesy, respect and dignity.
- Always engage with children in an open manner.
- Do not show favouritism.
- Be cognisant of the imbalance in power inherent in adult-child relationships.
- Do not engage in, or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying.
- Do not spend a disproportionate amount of time with any particular child or group of children.
- Challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour.
- Develop a culture where children can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly.
- Respect each child's boundaries and help children to develop a sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.

- Appoint a clearly designated leader within each group with whom children and other leaders can raise concerns.
- Do not use inappropriate language or make sexually suggestive comments, either to each other or to children.
- Physical contact between leaders and children will be of an appropriate nature at all times.
- Do not engage in rough play with each other or with children.
- Leaders should not undertake any task of a personal nature with/for children except in cases of medical necessity or when the welfare of the child depends on it.
- Do not, under any circumstances, give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children.
- Do not use alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs when supervising or working with children.
- Use only age-appropriate language, media products and activities when working with children. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never appropriate.
- Personal details of children should be held only in accordance with diocesan and parish policy.
- Leaders should not give their own personal details to children unless absolutely necessary.
- Children should be contacted via their parents/guardians/carers, except in emergencies, where such contact may not be possible.

The diocese has a specific code of conduct for all away - trips, including pilgrimages, day trips and incentive events. See:

Prevention: Running Safe Activities for Children Section 3.

The Diocesan Code of Conduct, including an anti-bullying policy specific to children will apply (Section 3.7)

The diocese has a Diocesan Designated Officer, to whose immediate attention all concerns and/or complaints should be brought. The diocesan designated officer will respond promptly to all child protection concerns and liaise with the required civil and Church authorities in accordance with established guidelines. All concerns and/or complaints will be followed through in a timely and efficient manner in accordance with the guidelines.

3.2.2 Prevention: code for meetings with children.

If the pastoral care of a child necessitates the arrangement of a meeting alone with them, do not meet in isolated environments.

Schedule meetings at times and at designated locations that allow for transparency and accountability for example, rooms that have a clear glass panel or window, an open door, and in buildings where other people are present.

Scheduling meetings by text messaging should be done by texting parents/carers.

Limit both the length and number of meetings.

Inform parents or guardians that the meeting(s) is/are taking place, except in circumstances where doing so might place the child in danger. In that case, inform a colleague and fill in an incident form.

Do not encourage visits to, or conduct meetings in, private homes or personal living quarters. When the need for a visit to the home of a child arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.

3.2.3 Prevention: discipline

Corporal punishment of children is never permitted.

Discipline problems should be handled in partnership with parents and guardians and in a positive way. (See Dealing with Bullying and Complaints Procedure Section 3.)

3.2.4 Prevention: respect for physical integrity

Respect the physical integrity of children and young people at all times.

Do not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind, including rough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling, etc).

This should not prevent appropriate contact, with the permission of the child, in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child, but where the child expresses discomfort or resistance, then this contact should cease.

3.2.5 Prevention: respect for privacy

Respect the privacy of children and young people at all times.

Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when young people are in locations such as, changing areas, swimming pools, showers and toilets.

Never take photographs of children or young people while they are in changing areas (e.g. in a locker room or bathing facility).

Never do things of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) for children that they can do themselves.

3.2.6 Prevention - guidance re. personal/intimate care of children with disabilities

Don't be rushed into taking on intimate care tasks- never take responsibility without the permission of parent and child.

Treat every child with dignity and respect.

Ensure that the degree of privacy is appropriate.

Involve the child as far as possible in his/her own intimate care.

Make sure intimate care is as consistent as possible.

If you are concerned about anything during intimate care, report it.

Intimate care - definition

Intimate care is defined as any procedure involving touching, or carrying out what could be described as an invasive procedure. Apart from helping someone to eat and drink, the following list contains the major areas of intimate care:

- Dressing or undressing.

- Assisting a disabled child to use toilet facilities.
- Cleaning up after a child has soiled.
- Washing, bathing or showering.
- Invasive procedures, e.g. colostomy bags or administering medication via the rectum.

For all types of intimate care the main points to consider are:

Intimate care - staff issues

- only staff who have been vetted and trained are to be assigned
- the child should be involved in selecting the carer where possible
- in cases where a substitute carer needs to be brought in, only properly vetted and trained staff should be used
- the carer should be the same sex as the child to ensure the dignity of child is respected
- particularly for toileting, one person of the same sex will attend the child unless two persons are needed and then reasons must be clearly documented
- staff will be monitored and proper records kept

Intimate care - best practice

- prior permission should be gained after discussion with both parent and child and agreement reached on how the specific tasks will be conducted
- an intimate care plan needs to be drawn up explaining in detail how specific tasks will be conducted
- roles and expectations are clearly understood by all concerned (parents, child and carer)
- the child's reaction to a situation needs to be accepted as the guide to the child's wishes
- only appropriate terminology is acceptable to be used to name private parts
- where there are speech, language, hearing or cognitive difficulties, an agreed method of communication is arrived at beforehand and time taken to familiarise the child with the method
- built into the intimate care plan should be the aim of working towards independence for the child, as far as is possible

- the child's attempts to help with tasks should be encouraged and they should be allowed to do any task that they are capable of doing
- if drugs are to be administered by any method, a medical plan must be drawn up and directed by a physician and written consent given. Strict attention must be paid to doctors' directions and proper records kept

The points above are not exhaustive, however if adhered to and the paramountcy of the child principle is observed, then the intimate care needs of the child should be met appropriately.

Intimate care – appropriate and inappropriate touch

Touching should always be appropriate to the type of care being administered.

3.2.7 Prevention: photography, film and use of I.T. equipment

Always ensure that:

The content of the photo/ film is appropriate.

One-to-one photo sessions with children are supervised.

Parents and children consent to the use of an image and that this is recorded.

Photographs/images likely to be published in press or on the Internet are not accompanied by children's full names (first name and surname) and detailed addresses.

Parents and children are aware of the way the image will be used to represent the Church group, organisation or activity.

Church organisations also need to assess the possible ways that children communicate with Church personnel, volunteers and each other using digital and online systems such as via the internet, mobile phones, and email.

It is important to develop guidance to reduce the risk to children associated with online activity when they are involved in an activity, group or event to prevent them:

- being groomed online by paedophiles
- experiencing online bullying
- accessing or being exposed to inappropriate or harmful material
- personal contact details not being secure
- personal images being uploaded and used without consent.

3.3 Running safe activities for children

Parental consent

Signed consent must be obtained from parents or guardians of each child prior to their participation in events, activities and groups. The normal routine activities of the group, altar servers, choir, etc. should be specified in the application form, which should include a Parental Consent Section.

It should only be necessary to obtain separate Parental Consent for specific activities, outside of the routine activities e.g. a tour.

Establish from parents or guardians whether the child has any specific dietary requirements or medical or special needs.

3.3.1 Prevention: trips away from home

(All trips must be risk assessed in advance)

Trips away from home include but are not limited to pilgrimages, day trips, overnight stays and holidays.

All trips need careful advance planning including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities, and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place. Training must be provided for all leaders.

Written parental consent specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance. Contact details for the duration of the trip are necessary. Written permission for leaders to make decisions of an emergency nature should be obtained in case of accidents.

A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents or guardians.

There must be adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls.

Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of trips away. These rules and boundaries must be clearly outlined to all leaders during preparation/training for the event.

Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.

Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same sex as the group being supervised.

Under no circumstances should an adult leader share a bedroom with a young person.

If, in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be alone in a children's dormitory or bedroom without another adult they should (a) immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility and (b) make a diary note of the circumstances and fill in an incident report form.

Other ways to make sure individuals do not get the opportunity to harm children

- Try to use open plan venues/ spaces, where individuals cannot take children away on their own and adults are in sight of other adults.

- Maintain a culture of awareness amongst the adults and children present by ensuring everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities, and people are encouraged to challenge and report any inappropriate conduct with children.
- Inform children how to report concerns.
- Make sure there is good supervision of Church personnel and volunteers.
- Make sure you take feedback and debrief after the event.

Health and safety

Some questions to ask yourself when planning an activity or event:

- How does the venue measure up in terms of health and safety (e.g. fire)?
- Do you have adequate changing areas and toilet facilities?
- Do you have first aid supplies to deal with minor accidents?
- Are all trips away carefully planned, including adequate provision of safe transport?
- Do you have appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements for all overnight trips?
- Is there adequate insurance in place?

Also:

- Adequate and appropriate supervision must be provided in relation to all events and activities organised for children and young people (see below for recommended ratios).
- In places such as changing areas, toilets and showers, separate provision must be made for boys and girls.
- There must be adequate and gender-appropriate supervision of boys and girls in such areas.
- Ensure that buildings and/or facilities used for events and activities are suitable.
- Make sure that fire precautions are in place and that fire extinguishers are checked regularly.
- Make sure a first aid kit is readily available. This should be regularly checked and replenished. It is advisable that first aid training be provided for workers and volunteers.
- Be alert to the risk of injury involved in some contact sports, paying particular attention to the child's age and to any medical condition or disability.
- Access to a telephone at all times is essential in case of emergency.
- Adequate insurance must be obtained to cover all activities. In cases of uncertainty about the level of cover, check with the relevant insurance provider.
- Where transport is being provided by the parish or parish activity, make sure that drivers and vehicles meet legal requirements. Where transport is being hired, check with the service provider that drivers and vehicles conform to legal requirements. Always inform parents/guardians about transport being used.
- A clear policy should be agreed with parents and guardians regarding taking photographs and the making of video recordings of children involved in parish-related activities or events.
- There should be regular health and safety reviews of facilities, procedures and practices.

3.3.2 Prevention: Recommended Supervision Ratios

0-2 years 1 member of staff to 3 children

2-3 years 1 member of staff to 4 children

3-7 years 1 member of staff to 8 children

8 years and over: 2 members of staff (ideally 1 of each gender) for up to 20 children. There should be one additional staff member for every ten extra children. The ratio of staff and volunteers to children with disabilities is dependent on the individual needs.

3.4 Prevention: record keeping – activities

The group leader has overall responsibility for the record keeping of the group and activities.

Each Parish Group will be responsible for storing in a confidential way an accurate record for each activity involving children in accordance with parish policy and in compliance with the confidentiality and record keeping of the diocese. (See Section 2).

This record should include a copy of the signed parental/guardian consent form with contact details for parents/guardians and should include necessary medical information.

A written record of organisers and supervisors in attendance at events should also be kept.

Ensure that an Accident/Incident Report Form is completed in the event of any accident or incident relating to a child or young person. Complete an attendance register for each group where children are involved.

Make records available to the Parish Priest/Administrator, upon the winding up of the group or when requested.

3.5 Prevention: Complaints Procedure

Resolving conflict

The approach to resolving conflict should always be one of open dialogue in a safe space and in a friendly and informal atmosphere.

Parish Procedures

- Develop a clear and transparent complaints procedure and appeals process to be used by children, staff, workers, volunteers, or by parents who are dissatisfied with any aspect of activities or services provided.
- Make sure that a copy of the complaints procedure is available to children, their parents or guardians and to all staff and volunteers.
- All complaints should be recorded.

Making a complaint

What to do if you have a complaint about someone, working on behalf of the parish, at parish activities for children

Communicate immediately with the person in charge of the project /event.

- Once a communication is received, the leader will try to resolve the issue promptly and fairly.

- Should the matter not be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction the complainant may discuss the issue with the parish priest who will, similarly, try to resolve the issue promptly and fairly.
- If a satisfactory resolution cannot be arrived at, an external mediator will be invited by the parish priest/administrator to dialogue with all concerned. In this regard advice will be sought from the National Board for Safeguarding Children, should this be deemed necessary.
- The determination of the external mediator, proposed after discussions with all parties, will be final.

Should the issue relate to the parish's safeguarding children procedures, the leader, upon receiving the communication, must contact the Parish Priest to deal with the matter.

3.6 Code of behaviour for children and dealing with bullying

Code of behaviour for children

A code of conduct, specific to children, should be drawn up in direct consultation with children. While it is important that each group of children directly contributes to the formation of their code of conduct, the following basics should be included:

- Children will be aware that leaders also have a code of conduct.
- Children will understand that leaders will not work alone with children.
- Children will treat each other and their leaders with courtesy, respect and dignity, taking care to avoid discrimination involving race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.
- Children will not be permitted to engage in substance abuse, to consume alcohol or to smoke, in keeping with Civil Law.
- Inappropriate language or sexually suggestive comments will not be permitted by children.
- Physical contact between children will be of an appropriate nature at all times.
- Rough play will not be permitted at any time.

Children are to be consulted about drawing up an all-inclusive anti-bullying policy.

The following are some examples of bullying. However, this list is not exhaustive and the children will have many other points to list.

Name calling

Fighting/kicking/punching

Making suggestive comments

Intimidation

Threatening

Ignoring/excluding

Damaging property

Spreading rumours

Sending abusive text messages

Internet bullying

3.7 Dealing with bullying

Information regarding bullying is listed in the Diocesan Policy (Section 3.6). Alleged incidents of bullying, will be recorded on the accident/incident forms. With regard to alleged bullying involving children, group leaders will inform parents of perpetrators and victims orally regarding serious instances of bullying or, where a pattern emerges involving less serious incidents by one or more individuals.

With regard to alleged bullying involving adults bullying adults or adults bullying children, the following may be applied as appropriate:

- The Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Concerns in Section 2.
- Complaints Procedure in 3.5

Section 4

TRAINING

4.1 Training – responsibility

The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee, which has its administrative base in CDYS Youth Centre, Mallow, has responsibility for provision of training but this responsibility does not include training for those with additional responsibilities e.g. designated officers, those managing risk/dealing with complaints.

Everyone in the Church who comes into contact with children has a role to play in their protection. To carry out this role confidently and effectively, they need to be made aware of child protection issues and to have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe.

4.2 Diocesan and parish training

The Diocese of Cloyne requires that:

All Church personnel, lay people, religious and clergy, who work with children, will be inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection, when they begin working within the Church organisation.

The diocese should ensure that there are systemic ongoing formation programmes for safeguarding children in seminaries and houses of religion.

All Training and Education procedures for priests, religious, staff and volunteers will be reviewed on a regular basis.

4.2.1 Training identified Church personnel

Identified Church personnel e.g. priests, parish representatives, will be provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe and opportunities will be provided to update their skills.

Training programmes, which, are approved by the National Board for Safeguarding Children will be used.

Certificates will be issued to all who complete these courses.

4.2.2 Training those with additional responsibilities

Training/information will be provided for those with additional responsibilities – those managing complaints/disciplinary processes, designated officers etc.

This is the responsibility of the diocese and the National Board for Safeguarding Children

in the Catholic Church.

4.3 Provision of information and induction at parish level

The parish priest and parish representatives have responsibility for provision of information/induction at parish level and for keeping a record of relevant documentation including attendance records.

4.4 The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee will maintain:

- An up to date data base of the training, certification and garda vetting status of all Church personnel to whom these apply.
- Records of course attendance
- Induction documentation guidance
- A copy of training programmes including, application forms, references and other relevant documentation.

4.5 Trainers

The diocese, in conjunction with the Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee (CDSCC) and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, will ensure that a number of ‘trained trainers’ are available in order to deliver the approved training courses throughout the diocese.

4.6 Type of training programmes

In general and except in exceptional circumstances, training programmes approved by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland will be used. The diocesan authorities are responsible for this area.

Section 5

COMMUNICATING THE CHURCH'S SAFEGUARDING MESSAGE

5.1 Making procedures and contact details widely known

The Diocese of Cloyne is committed to making its safeguarding children procedures widely known and understood. The names and contact details of Cloyne diocesan safeguarding children personnel and counselling services are disseminated to Church personnel, parishioners and external agencies.

The latest edition of the policy document *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne* will be available on the diocesan website – www.cloynediocese.ie.

Copies of the policy will be distributed to each parish.

Parishes should provide a copy for inspection, on request to parishioners.

Our communications strategies involve use of diocesan and parish communications systems, to help spread the Church's safeguarding message. These communications channels will be available to the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee.

5.2 Parish communications

5.2.1 Display of information

(i) Every parish should display the following information, in a dedicated notice board, in the church porches, parish halls, and any other parish location where parish events with and/or for children are run:

The Safeguarding Children Policy Statement

The Diocesan Safeguarding Children Poster (when available)

Contact numbers for Diocesan Support, the HSE, An Garda Síochána, and the Diocesan Designated Officer.

(ii) Display in a dedicated notice board, in the church sacristy:

All of the items in (i) as well as the General Principles Guiding Best Practice and the Diocesan Code of Conduct

5.2.2 Giving information to Church personnel at parish level

All who work with children in or on behalf of the parish should:

- (i) Be provided with clear definitions of child abuse, with particular reference to its four main forms – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- (ii) Be provided with written advice outlining the signs and symptoms in its four main forms
- (iii) Be provided with the procedures for responding to, and reporting alleged incidents of abuse.
- (iv) Be made aware of contact numbers for Diocesan Support, the HSE, An Garda Síochána, and the Diocesan Designated Officer.

5.3 Making children aware of their right to be safe and giving them the confidence to speak out

At parish level, children should be made aware that:

- they have the right to be safe
- they can raise concerns with specific individuals within the parish church organisation
- they can contact Diocesan Support, the Diocesan Designated Officer, Gardaí, H.S.E. and that these contact details are on display
- there are contact details for other agencies that they can contact e.g. child safeguarding and children’s help-lines
- the codes of behaviour are on display

Consideration should be given to how disabled children can communicate their complaints especially if they have verbal communication difficulties.

Remember how vulnerable disabled children are to abuse.

5.4 Establishing links with statutory authorities

Diocesan child safeguarding bodies within the Church will establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.

5.5 Communications policy

Church Organisations at diocesan level will have an established, written communications policy which reflects a commitment to openness and transparency.

5.6 Dissemination of clear definitions of child abuse

Dissemination of clear definitions of child abuse, with particular reference to its four main forms- physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, will be provided and disseminated through:

- Training courses at diocesan level
- Training and induction sessions at parish level

- Parish policy documents
- The diocesan website
- Newsletters
- The diocesan communication structures

The diocesan policy document *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne*

Written advice outlining the signs and symptoms of child abuse in its four main forms will also be provided through these channels.

Section 6

ACCESS TO ADVICE AND SUPPORT

6.1 Access to advice and support - for those who have suffered child abuse

Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives. Anyone who has suffered child abuse should be assisted and supported in seeking help. Children need someone to turn to when they are being abused. Often they do not know where to go for help, so it is important to give them information about where and how to get help and advice if they have a concern.

Support person - for those who have been abused

Appointed by the Bishop, the Support Person is to be available to those who make an allegation or disclose abuse under these procedures. The person making the allegations (which can be a child or an adult), will be offered a choice between a male or female support person.

The role of the Support Person is to assist, where appropriate, with communication with the Diocesan Designated Officer, to facilitate access to information and to represent their needs and concerns during the inquiry process.

6.2 Access to advice and support – for individuals who have abused

Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.

6.2.1 An adviser - for individuals who have abused

Appointed by the Bishop, the Adviser is to be available to the person about whom a safeguarding children concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation has been made. The role of the Adviser is to represent their needs and assist, where appropriate, with communication with the Diocesan Designated Officer and the diocese.

6.2.2 Safeguarding Agreement Coordinator

A coordinator will be appointed to help ensure the implementation of the safeguarding arrangements agreed in respect of priests currently out of ministry. The work of this appointee, known as the Safeguarding Agreement Coordinator, will be focussed primarily on supervision and is designed as an additional mechanism for safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Agreement Coordinator and advisers will undergo training to ensure best practice in this area.

6.3 Access to advice and support - for Church personnel

Child abuse is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. The diocese recognises that it has a duty to ensure advice and support is available to help Church personnel and volunteers play their part in protecting children.

For further information and guidance see Section 2.

Remember all Church organisations and personnel can access specialist advice about safeguarding children issues from:

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.

The National Office for Safeguarding Children.

6.4 Contacts with relevant child protection agencies and help-lines

Contacts will be established, both informally and in a planned and structured way with relevant child protection agencies and help-lines and their contact details will be made available.

6.5 Guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused, whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members

This guidance is provided in Section 2 and Section 8.

6.6 Information on how to seek support is provided to those who have experienced abuse.

Information on how to seek support is provided to those who have experienced abuse: Contact details are displayed in every church porch, every sacristy, every building with which the Church has a property involvement, and in the diocesan website www.cloynediocese.ie

See also Section 2 and Section 8

Section 7

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING

7.1 Implementing and monitoring agreed policy

To keep children safe, agreed policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented. Checks are needed both at diocesan and parish level to ensure this is happening consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside of Church organisations can help to improve the effectiveness of any measures taken.

The diocesan authorities are responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures as set out in the latest edition of *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne* are implemented. (See Section 8: Structures and Description of Roles and Responsibilities)

The implementation role of the Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee is:

“focussed on creating, maintaining and monitoring a safe environment for children in all aspects of Church life and activity and for advising on the human resources required for implementing best safeguarding practice across services”

- p 55 of the *Standards and Guidance Document*.

7.2 Developing policy

The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee has developed the revised policy document -*Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne*, in accordance with the standards and criteria outlined in *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2008).

7.3 Implementation plan

The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee will ensure that all parishes have a written plan i.e. document containing, policy statement, guidelines and procedures e.g.

- steps will be taken to keep children safe
- clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- display of information including contact details

- information or induction for Church personnel
- use of sacristy registers and group attendance registers etc

7.4 Parish visitation/audits

The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee will use parish visitation type audits to:

- establish face to face contact with the parishes personnel and get feedback
- confirm that standards are in place in each parish
- assist with any difficulties, gaps or questions that parishes might have
- confirm that they are on the right track and meeting the standards required by the national guidelines

7.5 Feedback from parishes

Completed checklist documents will be analysed to identify areas which require further attention.

Issues raised at parish level will be discussed with a view to resolution.

7.6 Annual self audit

The Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee will carry out an annual self audit, and review of the diocesan policy (for information on self audit see Audit Process and Procedures, Section 7.9).

7.7 National audits

The Diocese of Cloyne will co-operate fully with the planned audits by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (for information see Audit Process and Procedures, Section 7.9)

7.8 Procedures for the secure storage and retention of documents

Procedures for the secure storage and retention of documents with particular reference to all incidents, allegations/suspicions of abuse are outlined *inter alia*, in Sections 2, 2.5.3, 2.8, 3, 3.1.3, 3.4 and 7.9).

7.9 Audit process and procedures

The audit procedures are a systematic method of monitoring the extent to which the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church* in Ireland is being implemented by and in Church organisations. This is an important

method of ensuring that a process of continuous improvement takes place, and of demonstrating accountability and transparency.

Auditing will take place by two methods: the annual self-audit scheme and planned audits by the National Board itself.

Annual self-audit scheme

1. The primary method of ensuring compliance with the *Safeguarding Children Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* is by means of self-audit and the document has primarily been prepared with self-audit in mind. Each standard contains a list of criteria, which give details of the steps that a Church organisation needs to take to meet the standard and ways of providing evidence that the standard has been met.

2. Section 2 of the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* contains checklists for each of the Standards. These have been prepared on the basis that each Church organisation must complete the checklists and return them to the National Office by 31 December each year.

3. Where the completed checklists returned by a Church organisation give rise to any significant issues, the National Office will discuss this with the relevant Church authority in order to establish what additional help or support may be needed.

4. The results of self-audits will be collated by the National Board and will be contained in the annual report for the relevant year. However, no individual Church organisation will be named in the collated information.

Audits by the National Board

5. The National Board, through the National Office, will conduct a limited number of audits throughout the year. These will be carried out on a planned discretionary basis. It is anticipated that each Church organisation will be subject to an audit at least once every five years. Twenty-eight days notice will be given to the Church authority and Church organization of the proposed audit. The details of these procedures are set out below.

6. The National Board, in consultation with the National Office, may authorise appropriate people to be auditors for the purposes of these procedures.

7. The primary focus of an auditor is a preventative one, which is to raise the awareness among Church organisations and Church personnel of their responsibilities under the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*.

8. With this in mind, an auditor will look at the level of compliance of Church organisations with the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church* in Ireland and, in particular, the preparation and implementation of

the various policies required by the standards and the management of child protection procedures.

9. The aim of any audit is to:

a. confirm compliance with the Standards set out in the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*

b. identify any risks arising from a failure to comply with the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*

c. educate and guide the Church organisation and Church personnel to help bring about any improvements by identifying strengths and weaknesses and highlighting good and poor practice in matters relating to the safeguarding of children; and

d. to focus attention on the safeguarding of children in the Church organisation.

10. During an audit the auditor will meet the appropriate personnel, such as the priest or religious superior, and outline the nature of the audit. (The national office audits will be at Diocesan level and will rely on the safeguarding committee feeding information about parish activities).

11. An auditor shall, subject to paragraph 12, have the power to have access to and examine any documents which he or she believes would assist him or her in assessing the Church organisation's compliance with the standards set out in the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, including, but not limited to, the following:

a. the Church organisation's child protection policy

b. the Church organisation's child protection concerns/allegations files and documents

c. the Church organisation's safe recruitment and vetting policy

d. the Church organisation's codes of behaviour of adults towards children

e. the Church organisation's guidance on operating safe activities for children; and

f. details of the Church organisation's training programme in safeguarding children for those working with children.

12. Some information and documentation may be given, or access afforded, to the Auditor may be legally privileged material.¹⁰ This will be done to ensure that the auditors have all they need to properly, fully and effectively carry out their role. It will also ensure full transparency, openness and cooperation, and so foster confidence and

¹⁰ . Such material, which is exempt from disclosure in court, and other relevant proceedings, comprises the following types of written and/or oral communications:

- confidential communications between a client and his professional legal adviser, which communications are made in the course of a professional legal relationship between them for the purpose of either seeking or giving legal advice (not other advice, and not mere legal 'assistance'); and - confidential communications between a client and his professional legal adviser, or between the client and a third party, or between his professional legal adviser and a third party, the dominant purpose for which was preparation for pending, contemplated or reasonably apprehended litigation.

trust in the child protection process as a whole, and assist in facilitating the best possible handling of child protection concerns generally. Any such material will be disclosed on the following bases:

a. there being no intention whatsoever, in giving and/or affording access to the material to abandon or waive legal professional privilege over the material concerned

b. access being afforded for the specific and limited purposes of the audit, and in the context outlined above

c. access being afforded on the strict condition and understanding that the confidentiality of the material, which it is the intention of the Church organisation / Church authority to maintain into the future, be strictly observed by the auditor, and, without prejudice to the generality of this, the following strictures be abided by:

- In the case of documents, access to the material be given by means of inspection only (copies will not be made) in a confidential setting, at the premises of the Church organisation/Church authority where the relevant files are normally kept.
- Any notes made on foot of any audit or other disclosure of the contents of the material for the purposes of the auditor carrying out the audit, be kept secure and confidential, and be promptly destroyed once used for those purposes; and
- Disclosure of the material, or its contents, not being effected to any third party (including any other party to an inspection), without the prior, written, consent of the Church organisation/Church authority.

13. The audit will only relate to the implementation of the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and to concerns raised since the adoption of these procedures by the Church organisation. However, in considering the adequacy of compliance of any investigation with the managing a child protection procedure, the auditor may consider the existence of allegations made prior to the adoption of these procedures.

14. If, at any stage during the course of an audit, the auditor has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, he/she shall inform the HSE or An Garda Síochána of same, if this has not already occurred.

15. Following the conclusion of the audit, a meeting will then be held with the Church authority and such others as may be appropriate in order to give a verbal report of the audit.

16. The Auditor will then issue a written report to the Church authority on his audit, in relation to the Church organisation's compliance with the *Safeguarding Children –*

Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland and, if appropriate, giving recommendations as to how improvements could be achieved.

17. The Annual Report of the National Board shall contain a summary of the learning identified through such audits carried out during the previous year, with care being taken to ensure that the identity of all persons involved, including the Church authority, is not revealed.

18. Except as required by law, an auditor shall not disclose confidential information obtained by the person while performing or as a result of performing any functions as an auditor.

Section 8

STRUCTURES FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Safeguarding Structure at National Level

(i) The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC or National Board)

(ii) The National Office for Safeguarding Children (The National Office)

8.1.1 The national board for safeguarding children in the catholic church (NBSCCC or National Board)

The first National Board was established by the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union to provide independent advice and to monitor safeguarding practices in the Church.

The National Board is independent in order to allow it to undertake independent advisory, audit and inspection functions. The National Board will produce an annual report, which provides data and commentary on the practice of the Church organisations regarding the safeguarding of children. In particular, the annual report will contain summaries of the learning gained from reviews and audits carried out during the year to which the annual report relates.

8.1.2 The National Office for Safeguarding Children

The National Office for Safeguarding Children was established by the National Board. Its main purpose is to:

- implement the policies and decisions of the National Board
- undertake advisory and audit tasks
- act as a resource for Church organisations and be accessible to all such bodies for advice, or guidance and to support the diocesan/congregational Designated Officers
- monitor practice within the Church organisations regarding adherence to the standards set down within this guidance, both through the self-audit process and through its auditors.

8.2 Safeguarding Children Structure at Diocesan Level

The Structure for safeguarding children in the diocese consists of:

- (i) The Bishop or Administrator, who has overall responsibility for safeguarding children in the diocese.
- (ii) The Diocesan Designated Officer
- (iii) The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee, which *inter alia*, monitors the effectiveness of the structure
- (iv) The Advisory Panel.
- (v) The Support Person(s) who is available to assist the child or adult making an allegation of abuse.
- (vi) The Adviser who is available to help the respondent
- (vii) The Safeguarding Agreement Coordinator who helps ensure best practice in the supervision of priests who are out of ministry.

8.2.1 The Bishop or Administrator

The bishop or administrator, has overall responsibility for safeguarding children in the diocese

8.2.2 Diocesan / Congregational Designated Officer

The designated officer will be located at the level of a diocese or religious congregation and appointed by the bishop or religious superior.

The role of the diocesan designated officer

- to hear any concerns relating to safeguarding, including any disclosures or allegations of abuse, and take responsibility for managing the response to that concern or disclosure, from start to finish. This would include the preliminary internal inquiry and referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána, and any subsequent internal investigations
- to ensure that the person raising a concern, disclosing abuse, or making an allegation and anyone who is implicated by that are regularly informed about the progress of the inquiry process

- to liaise with the National Office and have an overview of all matters dealt with under these procedures within their diocese / congregation
- to carefully record all steps undertaken as part of these procedures.

Each diocese / religious congregation must also appoint a deputy designated officer, who can act in the event that the designated officer is not able to deal with a concern/allegation, where there may be a conflict of interest, or where the designated officer is unavailable due to absence or incapacity. (See also pp 55, 84, 85, 86 *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*).

Procedure to be followed by the designated officer

1. Receive information about a concern or allegation.
2. Ensure that the procedures for responding to concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers in Section 2.5 have been followed, and to ensure a referral has been made to the statutory authority where appropriate if this has not already happened¹¹.
3. Create a child protection case file for every referral that includes a log of actions, events and information received using the dedicated form for this purpose. Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event but before the end of the day. They must be timed, dated and signed by the author.
4. Take possession of any written records made by any person in connection with the case and place them on the Child Protection Case File.
5. Explain the procedures for addressing the concern, allegation or disclosure to the person who has raised the concern and ensure that they (including the child's parent or guardian where appropriate) sign the data protection declaration of consent. This consent relates to this child protection concerns process only – consent is **not** required for the making of a referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána.
6. To contact emergency or appropriate services where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk of harm. An immediate referral in accordance with **appendix 3**(Resource 16 of The Standards and Guidance Document), should be made to the Health and Social Services. Where appropriate, if Health and Social Services staff are not available, An Garda Síochána should be contacted to ensure that **under no circumstances is a child left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention**. Consideration should, in all cases, also be given to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve, and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of potential evidence or forensic evidence.
7. Inform the Church authority that a complaint has been made and make a recommendation to the Church authority about any immediate action(s) that may need to be taken in order to ensure the safety of children.
8. Make enquiries to identify the present and previous appointments of the respondent in order to establish whether there are any previous concerns about his/her practice, or any

¹¹ Note: where an allegation or suspicion is made against the designated officer, the information must be passed to the deputy designated officer and the process as outlined should be carried out by the deputy designated officer

current grounds for concern in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children. (Again, in cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate or possible risk, an immediate referral (in accordance with **Section 2.5 Procedures for responding to concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers** should be made to the Health and Social Services. Where appropriate, if Health and Social Services staff are not available, An Garda Síochána should be contacted so as to ensure that **under no circumstances is a child left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention.**

9. Alert the adviser to be on standby, without identifying the respondent.

10. Conduct an initial interview with the respondent as soon as possible, unless (where an earlier referral has been made) the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána have requested that such an interview be deferred. The respondent shall be given information about his or her entitlement to seek legal advice (both civil and, where appropriate, canonical) and about the child protection process. The respondent should be informed that he/she is not obliged, in law, to respond or to furnish evidence, but that any statement provided will be taken into account in the investigation. The designated officer and the Church authority should then inform the respondent of the nature and detail of the allegation/concern and the name of the person raising it. The purpose of the interview is to inform the respondent of the existence of the allegation and of the process being followed. The respondent needs to be given enough detail about the disclosure/allegation/concern, and the person raising it, to be able to offer a response. The respondent shall be offered the services of an Adviser. A written record of the interview must be prepared, agreed with the respondent, signed and dated.

11. Implement the referral policy as outlined in **Section 2.5 Procedure – How to respond to concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers**

12. In cases where a Designated Officer has a concern about a child but is not sure whether to make a referral, he or she should seek appropriate advice. He or she may consult the National Office, the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána on the appropriate steps to be taken. The Designated Officer must keep a written record of the outcome of the consultation with the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána on the Child Protection Case File. Decisions not to refer a matter must always be in consultation with the National Office.

13. Ensure the availability of the Advisory Panel, if required, and convene the Advisory Panel at an appropriate time.

14. Follow the advice given by HSE / An Garda Síochána where a child protection concern has been referred to them. Allow the HSE/Garda Síochána to conduct their enquiries unimpeded. Do not visit the family or contact family members without prior discussion with investigators.

15. Maintain a dialogue with the Investigating Officer or Social Worker to monitor the progress of the case and act on any advice given. Details of contacts made should be recorded chronologically on the Child Protection Case File.

16. Ask for an update from the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána about the outcome of their investigations; this request should be made in writing.

17. Conduct an internal investigation at the conclusion any external investigation or where no such investigation takes place. Any internal investigation will be initiated in

cases where child protection concerns remain or where disciplinary action needs to be considered.

Such an investigation will gather and assess available information from all sources and witnesses. Every effort should be made, in consultation with the HSE/ An Garda Síochána to avoid the necessity to interview child witnesses for the purposes of disciplinary inquiries. This investigation (which takes place after the statutory enquiries have been completed) should be conducted expeditiously, taking no longer than three months, wherever possible. In cases where there is a delay, and particularly where a Priest or religious has been temporarily removed from active ministry or a lay person suspended from duties, it is important to keep everyone informed of the progress of the investigation and to maintain records of such communications.

There can be no excuse for a respondent to be left uninformed and ‘in limbo’ indefinitely. Where an investigation concerns Clergy or religious, the requirements of Canon Law will be observed.

8.2.3 The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee

The role of the Safeguarding Committee is supportive and developmental. Its role is not related in any way to the management of individual cases of suspected or alleged abuse. The committee is responsible for provision of training, safe recruitment of volunteers and staff within their service area. This committee is to be primarily focused on creating, maintaining and monitoring a safe environment for children in all aspects of Church life and activity and for advising on the human resources required for implementing best safeguarding practice across services. (See also pp 55, *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*).

8.2.4 Advisory Panel

These consultative Advisory Panels are normally appointed by the Bishop of a diocese or by the leader of a religious congregation in order to advise and assist him or her at all stages of the investigative process into alleged abuse.

The Panel will provide a consistent and accessible source of guidance, through a process of risk assessment, for Bishops and leaders of congregations who are charged with specific responsibilities for decision-making in response to alleged or actual child abuse, involving a priest or religious.

The Panel will consist of not less than five members, who collectively provide expertise, experience and impartiality necessary in this field of safeguarding.

The Advisory Panel may provide advice whether specialist risk assessment should be sought in regard to a Safeguarding Children concern. No member of an Advisory Panel shall act in a professional capacity to either the person making the allegation or the respondent. (See also pp 55, *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*).

8.2.5 Support Person

The Bishop or Religious Superior should appoint Support People to be available to those who make an allegation/disclose abuse under these procedures. The person (which can be a child or adult) making the allegation will be offered a choice between a male or female Support Person.

The role of the Support Person is to assist, where appropriate, with communication between the child or adult making an allegation/disclosure and the Designated Officer, to facilitate the child or adult in gaining access to information and help, and to represent their concerns during the inquiry process.

Under no circumstances should the same Support Person be provided for the child or adult making the allegation / disclosure of abuse and for the respondent. (See also pp 56 and 57 *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland.*)

8.2.6 Adviser

The Bishop or Religious Superior should appoint an Adviser to be available to the respondent.

Advisers shall represent the needs of the respondent to the Church Authority and assist, where appropriate, with the care of the respondent and with communication between the respondent, the Designated Officer and the Church authority / Church organisation. The respondent's adviser shall not be the respondent's therapist or spiritual adviser.

Under no circumstances should the same Support Person or Adviser be provided for the child or adult making the allegation/ disclosure of abuse and for the respondent. (See also pp 58-59 *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland.*)

8.2.7 Safeguarding Agreement Coordinator

A coordinator will be appointed to help ensure the implementation of the safeguarding arrangements agreed in respect of priests currently out of ministry. The work of this appointee, known as the Safeguarding Agreement Coordinator, will be focussed primarily on supervision and is designed as an additional mechanism for safeguarding children. The Safeguarding Agreement Coordinator and advisers will undergo training to ensure best practice in this area.

8.2.8 The Diocesan Garda Vetting Administrator

The Diocesan Garda Vetting Administrator handles garda vetting applications on behalf of the Diocese of Cloyne.

8.3 Safeguarding Structure at Parish Level

- (i) The Parish Priest/Administrator has overall responsibility at parish level
- (ii) The Parish Safeguarding Representatives also known as Local Safeguarding Representatives (See also pp 54, *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*)

(iii) All Church personnel including employees, volunteers, group leaders are obliged to abide by the prescribed safeguarding rules, procedures, guidelines

8.3.1 Responsibilities of the Parish Priest/Administrator

At parish level, the overall responsibility for safeguarding children in any Church organisation remains with the relevant Church authority, such as the Parish Priest or Administrator.

All parishes are required to issue and display a **Parish Safeguarding Children Statement** that confirms the parish will adhere to the diocesan policy and procedures as set out in the latest edition of ‘*Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne*’.

8.3.2 Responsibilities of the Parish / Local Safeguarding Representative

It is expected that one or two people within each Church organisation will be identified to act as Local Safeguarding Representatives to work alongside the relevant Church authority.

The position is voluntary, but Local Safeguarding Representatives will be provided with induction, support and regular training. Their role will be to promote the safeguarding of children within that Church organisation by:

- raising awareness of what safeguarding is
- disseminating information on *Safeguarding Children – the Standards and Guidelines Document for the Catholic Church*, and circulating information widely to the public especially among Church counseling agencies and parishes
- ensuring that any activities run within that Church organisation are provided in a manner which ensures the safety and well-being of the children involved (e.g. appropriate level of supervision is in place for the activity, or that insurance has been provided, and so on)
- ensuring that the contact details of the relevant designated officer are widely publicised.

The Role of the Parish/Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR)

1. Inform the Designated Officer, upon receipt or notification of an allegation, suspicion or concern about abuse of a child, current or historical, from any person and to follow the guidelines (See Section 2 Responding and Reporting)
2. Co-operate, contribute to, and assist any investigation being undertaken by the HSE / An Garda Síochána and/or Designated Officer with any practical matters.
3. The LSR in a religious congregation will refer child protection concerns to the Designated Officer appointed to act for that congregation.
4. The LSR in a diocese will refer child protection concerns to the diocesan Designated Officer.
5. The LSR must not take on the role of Support Person to the person raising a concern/making an allegation or disclosure, nor should they take on the role of Adviser to the respondent.

Any safeguarding concerns raised with a Local Safeguarding Representative should be dealt with in accordance with the Initial Contact procedures (See Section 2 Responding and Responding.)

8.3.3 Responsibilities of the parish safeguarding committee (if applicable)

There is no obligation on a parish to have a Safeguarding Committee, but it could be helpful and could alleviate the safeguarding burden of the Parish Priest. A safeguarding committee would be comprised of the parish priest and the parish safety representatives. This core group could nominate other members.

If there is a safeguarding committee in the parish it will assist the Parish Priest with his safeguarding children workload, in accordance with parish policy.

8.3.4 Responsibilities of Church personnel, group leaders and parish groups working with children

Ensuring adherence to the diocesan and parish guidelines and to the codes of conduct.

Keeping the parish representatives informed regarding their activities.

Ensuring that adequate insurance is in place for their activities.

Attending at information sessions when requested, by the parish and/or diocese.

Comply with the requirements of the diocesan policy and parish policy.

8.3.5 Responsibilities of children

Adhere to codes of behaviour, guidelines and procedures etc of the diocesan policy and of the parish policy.

8.3.6 Responsibilities of specific individuals

Specific individuals should be allocated responsibilities for specific tasks e.g. replenishing First Aid Boxes, managing the parish facilities that are being loaned to groups, or rented etc.

8.3.7 Responsibility of all Church personnel

All Church personnel including, employees, volunteers, group leaders are obliged to abide by the prescribed safeguarding rules, procedures and guidelines.

Appendix 1

POLICY SUMMARY

Section 1 - The policy document

The diocesan policy document *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne* contains guidelines and procedures which will enable the goals of the Cloyne diocesan policy statement/guiding principles to be realised:

- Procedures and guidelines on how to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions.
- Prevention strategies including safe recruitment and selection and codes of behaviour
- Training and education strategies
- Strategies for communication and information sharing regarding the Church's safeguarding mechanisms and message.
- Access to advice and support.
- Implementing and monitoring safeguarding standards and mechanisms.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Section 2 - Procedures and guidelines on how to respond to safeguarding children allegations and suspicions.

Responding and reporting: definitions and step by step procedures and guidelines are outlined:

- Definitions, signs, symptoms, response to and reporting of child abuse - to ensure a prompt response to concerns about a child's safety or welfare and to enable the church to meet its national and international obligations in this regard. (Sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)
- Reporting procedures. (Sections 2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5)
- A fair complaints procedure for those who are unhappy with the manner in which their concerns were handled. (Sections 2.7.1, 2.7.2,)
- A fair review process for those who are the subject of an investigation either civil or canonical relating to child abuse. (Sections 2.7)
- Adherence to best practice regarding confidentiality, using images/photographs of children, keeping and storage of information, documents/official forms sharing information. (Sections 2.8, 2.9, 3.1.3)

Section 3 - Prevention strategies including safe recruitment and selection, garda vetting and codes of behaviour

The policy outlines prevention strategies which include:

- Preventing harm to children – responsibilities and codes. (Section 3)
- Procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children. (Section 3, 3.1)
- Prevention and codes of behaviour. (Section 3.2)
- Guidance on standards of behaviour of adults (staff and volunteers) towards children, including basics for working with children. (Section 3, 3.2.1 to 3.2.7)
- Guidance on standards- code of behaviour for children towards each other. (Section 3, 3.6, 3.7)
- Complaints procedure and appeals process to be used by children, staff, workers, volunteers, or by parents who are dissatisfied with any aspect of activities or services provided. (Section 3.5)
- Good practice processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour. (Section 3, 2.3, 3.7)
- Guidance regarding discrimination involving race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views. (Section 3, 3.7)
- Guidance regarding personal/intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch. (Section 3, 3.2.6)
- Guidance on assessing risks, especially on trips/activities away from home. (Section 3, 3.3, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)
- Guidelines on appropriate supervision ratios. (Section 3, 3.3.2)
- Guidelines for appropriate use of information technology, mobile phones, digital cameras, websites and internet facilities. (Section 3, 3.2.7)

Section 4 -Training

- Everyone in the Church who comes in contact with children has a role to play in their protection. Training will be provided with the aim of maintaining necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge for all church personnel, which will facilitate keeping children safe.
- All Church personnel who work with children will be inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working within Church organisations. (Section 4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.2.1)
- Identified Church personnel will be provided with training in a recognised Safeguarding Children Training Programme and opportunities provided to update skills and knowledge. (Section 4, 4.2.1)
- Training/information will be provided for those with additional responsibilities e.g. those managing complaints/disciplinary processes, those giving support or acting as designated officers. (Section 4, 4.2.2)
- The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee has responsibility for training. (Section 4, 4.4)
- Training programmes. (Section 4, 4.6).

Section 5 - Communicating and information sharing of the Church's safeguarding message

Information relating to contact details for reporting child safety concerns will be made available and procedures will be in place to disseminate and display the safeguarding message of the church, to children, all church personnel, parishioners and external agencies, with the aim of creating a safe environment for children.

- The safeguarding children policy will be openly displayed and available to everyone. (Section 5, 5.1)
- Children will be made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns. (Section 5, 5.3)
- The name and contact details of the Diocesan Designated Officer will be made available to everyone in the Church organisation. (Section 5, 5.1, 5.2)
- Church personnel will be aware of contact details of local safeguarding children services. (Section 5, 5.2.2)
- Church organisations will establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships. (Section 5, 5.4)
- A communications policy will be established at diocesan and religious order level which will reflect a commitment to transparency and openness. (Section 5, 5.5)
- Clear Definitions of child abuse will be provided and disseminated, with particular reference to its four main forms - physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. (Section 5, 5.6)
- Information will be provided outlining the signs and symptoms of child abuse in its four main forms, so as to better equip those in contact with children to recognise child abuse. (Section 5, 5.6)
- Comprehensive information, procedures, guidance etc, relating to safeguarding children, will be provided by circulating *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne* to all parishes and by having it available on the diocesan website. www.cloynediocese.ie (Section 5, 5.1)

Section 6 - Access to advice and support

Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.

Those who harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.

- Assistance to victims will be provided by the Support Person who is available to assist the child or adult making an allegation of abuse. (Section 6, 6.1)
- Assistance to respondents will be provided by the Advisor who is available to help the respondent. (Section 6, 6.2)
- Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe will have access to specialist advice, support and information. (Section 6, 6.3)
- Contacts will be established, insofar as is practicable, with relevant child protection agencies and help-lines. (Section 6, 6.4)

- Guidance on how to respond and support a child who is suspected to have been abused, whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members. (Section 6, 6.1, Section 2, Section 8)
- Information on how to seek support is provided to those who have experienced abuse. (Section 6, 6.6)
- Appropriate support is provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety. (Section 6, 6.2, Section 8)

Section 7 - Implementation and monitoring

To keep children safe, the diocese has a plan of action which includes:

- Structures/machinery for implementation of its safeguarding policy. (Section 7, 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.9)
- The roles and responsibilities of the individuals who constitute the implementation structure/machinery. (Section 7, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.9 and Section 8)
- Arrangements for monitoring the implementation and ensuring that the machinery for implementation is operating effectively. (Section 7, 7.4, 7.6, 7.7, 7.9)
- Processes to ask parishioners (children/parents/carers) about their views on policies and practices to keep children safe. (Section 7, 7.4)
- Procedures for the secure storage and retention of documents with particular reference to all incidents, allegations/suspicions of abuse. (Sections 2, 2.5.1, 2.5.3, 2.8, 2.9, 3, 3.1.3, 3.4, 7.9)

Section 8 - Structures and description of roles and responsibilities -

- The structure at national level. (Section 8, 8.1, 8.1.1, 8.1.2)
- The structure for safeguarding children in the diocese. (Section 8.2)
- The Bishop or Administrator, who has overall responsibility for safeguarding children in the diocese. (Section 8, 8.2.1)
- The Diocesan Designated Officer (Section 8, 8.2.2)
- The Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee, which *inter alia*, monitors the effectiveness of the structure. (Section 8, 8.2.3)
- The Advisory Panel. (Section 8, 8.2.4)
- The Support Person who is available to assist the child or adult making an allegation of abuse. (Section 8, 8.2.5)
- The Adviser who is available to help the respondent. (Section 8, 8.2.6)
- The Safeguarding Agreement Coordinator to ensure best practice in supervision of priests currently out of ministry (Section 8, 8.2.7)
- The Diocesan Garda Vetting Administrator. (Section 8, 8.2.8)
- The Parish Structure: Priest/Administrator who has overall responsibility at parish level. (Section 8, 8.3, 8.3.1)
- The Parish Safeguarding Representatives also known as Local safeguarding Representatives. (Section 8, 8.3, 8.3.2)

- The Parish Safeguarding Committee. (Section 8, 8.3, 8.3.3)
- Church personnel, group leaders who work with young people. (Section 8, 8.3, 8.3.4)
- Responsibilities of children. (Section 8, 8.3, 8.3.5)
- Responsibilities of specific individuals. (Section 8, 8.3, 8.3.6)
- All Church personnel including employees, volunteers, group leaders irrespective of whether they do or do not work with children. (Section 8, 8.3, 8.3.7)

Appendix 2

Diocese of Cloyne

Garda Vetting Administrator:

Sr. Claire Fox,
Presentation Convent
Midleton,
Co. Cork.

Finbarr Motherway,
Park,
Youghal,
Co. Cork.

Appendix 3

Child protection recording form (template)

Child Protection Recording Form

1. About the disclosure/concern

Date of disclosure/concern _____

Time of disclosure/concern _____

How was information received? (attach any written information to this form)

Telephone _____ Letter _____ Email _____ In person _____

2. Details of person making disclosure/raising concern

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

Relationship to child or alleged victim _____

3. Details of child or alleged victim

Name _____

DOB _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Mobile _____

Ethnic origin _____

Language (is interpreter/ signer needed) _____

Disability _____

Special needs _____

Parish / Order (*if applicable*) _____

4. Parent / Carer details *(where appropriate)*

Name _____

Address (if different from above) _____

Tel _____

Mobile _____

Are they aware of the allegation, suspicion or complaint?

Yes _____ No _____

5. Details of alleged perpetrator

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Mobile _____

Relationship to child/ victim *(parent/priest/teacher etc)*

Position in Church/ Order

Address at time of incident(s)

Current contact with children if known *(sits Board of Management of school, runs youth activities etc)*

Any additional information

6. Details of concern, allegation or complaint*(Include dates / times and location the incident(s) occurred, witnesses, if known. Does the child /alleged victim know this referral is being made?)*

7. Action taken

Has the matter been referred to civil authorities?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes

Date _____

Time _____

If no explain why

To whom was it referred?

Name _____

Designation _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Email _____

Has the matter been referred to a member of the Church?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes

Date _____

Time _____

If no explain why

To whom was it referred?

Name _____

Designation _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Email _____

8. Next Steps

What actions were agreed and by whom when the matter was referred onto civil / Church authority?

Are there any immediate child protection concerns? If so please record what they are and state what actions have been taken by whom to address them:

9. Designated Officer details:

Name _____

Tel _____

Mobile _____

Date form sent _____

10. Details of person completing the form

Name: _____

Tel _____

Mobile _____

Email _____

Position in Church _____

Parish/Order _____

Form completed

Date _____

Time _____

Signed _____

(A copy must be retained by the recipient and filed in a secure location, and a copy must be sent to the designated officer and civil / statutory authorities)¹²

¹² This child protection recording form is adapted from the template in the Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland.

