



## Diocese of Cloyne

### *Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures for Parishes*

**This Concise Policy & Procedures Document is to inform and assist Parishes with the implementation of Standards 1 to 7 of the National ‘Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016’.**

*(The full version of the National Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 has been made available to all parishes in the Diocese and is also available along with the full version of the National Board’s Guidance Document on the National Board’s website at [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).)*

April 2017

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## **Concise Version of the National Safeguarding Children - Policy, Standards and Guidance**

*The ‘Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016’ and associated Guidance was developed and issued by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland to ensure up-to-date ‘best practice’ in all aspects of child safeguarding and that the same principles, procedures and practices for safeguarding children and for responding to allegations or suspicions of child abuse operate at every level and in every place throughout the Catholic Church in Ireland.*

*(The full version of the National Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 has been made available to all parishes in the Diocese and is also available along with the full version of the Guidance on the National Board’s website at [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).)*

## **Child Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Constituent Members of the Catholic Church in Ireland.**

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and wellbeing and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

### **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, legislation and National Policy 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 abuse is paramount.
  - Cherish and safeguard children.
  - Foster best practice.
  - Demonstrate accountability through establishing effective structures/procedures.
  - Support all Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) 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 by 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 by helping ensure they can play and learn in a safe environment.
- Report safeguarding concerns to the civil authorities without delay.

### **The Commitment of the Diocese of Cloyne**

The diocese has committed itself to working in partnership with the statutory authorities and will comply with and adhere to statutory requirements, to the Policy, Standards, Guidance and Instructions issued by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, (NBSCCCI) and Church teaching thereby ensuring that all aspects of safeguarding children are managed professionally, promptly and justly. In particular, all involved in working with children have a special duty of care towards them. All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) must comply with the safeguarding children policy, procedures and guidance.

In keeping with this commitment, the diocese will provide:

- Comprehensive, effective verifiable procedures, strategies and mechanisms for prevention of child abuse including safe recruitment, Garda vetting, running safe activities for children and complaints procedures and other guidance.
- Information, structures and mechanisms to facilitate recognition of, responding to and reporting of child abuse and procedures and guidelines to ensure appropriate responses to reports of alleged abuse.
- Access to advice and support for complainants and respondents.
- Training and education to equip Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) for their roles, with particular reference to the requirements of the national/diocesan safeguarding policies.
- Communication policies that commit the diocese to openness and transparency and that outline strategies to help make the diocesan safeguarding message widely known and understood while also giving due consideration to the needs of those with visual, aural or literacy limitations.
- Safeguarding structures, mechanisms and personnel to facilitate full implementation of the national/diocesan safeguarding policy and procedures and to regularly monitor and report on the extent and effectiveness of compliance.

### **Details of Personnel to contact if you are concerned about the Welfare and Safety of Children**

Designated Liaison Person (DLP) : 086-0368999

An Garda Siochana:-

*For allegations that relate to clerics/religious* : 01-6663430 or 01-6663435

*For allegations that **do not** relate to clerics/religious* : Appropriate Local Garda Station

Tusla

Cobh/Midleton/Macroom areas : 021-4927000

Mallow/Fermoy areas : 022-54100

### **Putting the Policy into Action**

The National Board's Safeguarding Children Policy, Standards and Guidance requires the Diocese to demonstrate that its practice complies with the seven child safeguarding standards, which must be fully realised.

A standard is the level of practice required to ensure good child safeguarding. It is the standard that provides the framework for action. Each standard is self-contained and is supported by indicators/actions which are targets to be achieved, they demonstrate how the objectives of each standard are reached. Audits of compliance will be undertaken against the seven standards and the relevant indicators/actions that apply to the Diocese.

### **The seven child safeguarding standards are as follows:-**

#### **Standard 1 Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments.**

The Diocese provides an environment for children that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. It provides access to good role models whom the children can trust, who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

#### **Standard 2 Procedures for Responding to Child Protection, Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations.**

The Diocese has clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. They also enable the Diocese to meet all national and international legal and practice requirements and guidance.

#### **Standard 3 Care and Support for the Complainant.**

Complainants who have suffered abuse as children receive a compassionate response when they disclose their abuse. They, and their families, are offered appropriate support, advice and pastoral care.

#### **Standard 4 Care and Management of the Respondent.**

The Bishop has in place a fair process for investigating and managing child safeguarding concerns. When the threshold for reporting has been reached, a system of support and monitoring for respondents (cleric or religious) is provided.

#### **Standard 5 Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe.**

Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills to safeguard and protect children.

#### **Standard 6 Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message.**


The Diocese appropriately communicates the Church's child safeguarding message.

**Standard 7 Quality Assuring Compliance with the Seven Standards.**

The Diocese develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This action plan is reviewed annually. The Diocese only has responsibility to monitor, evaluate and report on compliance with the indicators under each Standard that apply to it, depending on its ministry.

**Commitment by the Bishop.**

On behalf of the Diocese of Cloyne as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, I commit to safeguarding children by agreeing to follow the National Board’s Child Safeguarding Policy. I will abide by and uphold the seven standards and the applicable indicators in our entire ministry and contacts with children.

Signed: 

Most Rev. William Crean, D.D.,  
Bishop of Cloyne

Date : 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017

## **Standard 1 - Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments**

### **Roles of Safeguarding Personnel in Relation to this Standard**

#### **Church authority**

The Church authority is responsible for:

- Appointing a safeguarding committee, and local safeguarding representatives (LSRs);
- Ensuring, with parish priests/ administrators, that all those who are recruited as Church personnel are suitable and appropriate for their role;
- Ensuring compliance with civil law and policy in creating and maintaining safe environments.

#### **Safeguarding committee**

The safeguarding committee is responsible for:

- Producing a three-year plan and development of procedures and practice around creating and maintaining safe environments;
- Liaising with the local safeguarding representatives to identify areas where guidance and support on policy or practice is needed;
- Ensuring records relating to child safeguarding are produced and stored appropriately.

#### **Local safeguarding representative**

The LSR is responsible for:

- Checking and providing advice and support so that all Church activities are being carried out in line with the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Church body;
- Liaising with the diocesan/local child safeguarding committee/council for advice and support are required.

#### **Local safeguarding committees/councils**

Parish child safeguarding committees operate at a local level to provide child safeguarding advice and support to the parish priest or local superior. These councils usually comprise the LSRs, members of the parish or Pastoral council, and any other person whom the parish priest or administrator wishes to appoint.

The local safeguarding committee/council can be responsible for:

- Supporting the recruitment of new volunteers;
- Ensuring that issues relating to local practice are raised and resolved with the parish priest or administrator and the child safeguarding committee/council.



## 1.1A Safe Recruitment Procedures

Safe care starts with the appointment of suitably qualified, skilled and vetted personnel suitable for the role that they are being asked to undertake.

Safe recruitment means that the Church authority will ensure that:

- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the Church eliminates applicants who might pose a risk to children;
- Those engaged in the recruitment process are suitably trained and experienced to undertake this task;
- The Church's recruitment procedures are transparent, adhere to best practice and comply with the rules of natural justice, appropriate record-keeping and human resource management;
- The Church is committed to the policy of inclusion and equality.

### Recruitment procedures (paid staff)

The following procedures apply to the process of all appointments. It should be noted that these procedures do not affect the applicant's rights under the relevant employment legislation.

- Use a recruitment/selection checklist to ensure that effective practices are followed – Form 1.1A(1).
- Use an application form, including reference requests - Form 1.1A(2).
- Interview applicants to discuss their application form.
- Interview boards with experienced and qualified personnel.
- Operate a secure record storage policy that ensures confidentiality.
- The successful applicant will be offered a position subject to:
  - a) Signing a declaration form - Form 1.1A(3);
  - b) Suitable references - Form 1.1A(4);
  - c) Proof of qualifications, where applicable;
  - d) Relevant vetting/clearance procedures - see 1.1B;
  - e) Positive proof of identification;
- Any lay person who worked or volunteered in another country for more than one year, must provide a certificate of police clearance from that country where that is possible.

Once appointed, the following elements are critical:

- Probationary periods are served, where appropriate;
- The person is inducted as per the Church's child safeguarding policy.
- Professional support, supervision and appraisals are offered where appropriate - see 5.6A;
- Provide ongoing training in particular child safeguarding training detailed under Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe.

### **Recruitment procedures (volunteers)**

Reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all volunteers who work with children in the Church are assessed as 'safe'. This includes conducting the following procedures for all volunteers:

- Using Application Form (as appropriate), - Form 1.1A(2) – *Application forms have to be used for all volunteers who work with children;*
- Vetting through the Garda Vetting Bureau (as appropriate), see 1.1B;
- Requiring the volunteer to sign a declaration form stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children - Form 1.1A(3);
- Any lay person who is coming to work or volunteer in Ireland, who worked or volunteered in another country for more than one year, must provide a certificate of police clearance from that country where it is possible.
- Ensuring the volunteer is inducted in the Church's child safeguarding policy - see 5.1A;
- Ensuring that they agree to follow the policy and the procedures of their Church body by signing an Induction Agreement Form - Form 5.1A(1);
- Ensuring the volunteer agrees to work within the Church body's code of behaviour - see 1.2A;
- Ensuring the volunteer agrees to report all safeguarding concerns to the DLP of the Church body (Standard 2).

## **1.1B Vetting**

### **Introduction and Background**

The Diocese of Cloyne is committed to the highest standards of professional practice in its recruitment processes. It is committed to ensuring that all people who are employed or are volunteers within the Diocese act according to the highest standards in all aspects of their roles and responsibilities.

The Diocese of Cloyne as a Constituent part of the Catholic Church in Ireland is the one organisation for Schools and Parishes in the Diocese.

Parishes/Schools/Diocesan Agency must follow its own decision making process regarding the suitability of the applicant for employment or engagement by the Parish. Legal responsibility for employment and duty of care remains with the Parish/School/Diocesan Agency which enters into a contract of employment or engages an applicant.

The Diocese and the Vetting Bureau have no decision-making role in relation to the suitability of the vetting applicant for employment or engagement by the Parish.

The Diocese is not the body that makes the decisions of employment or engagement of a person for a School or Parish; this is the responsibility of the individual school and parish.

This section outlines the Diocesan Policy and Procedures in relation to Garda Vetting. Diocesan Policy is being reviewed to take account of the new legislation. *Safeguarding begins with safe recruitment.* For vetting for schools contact [schoolsvet@cloynediocese.ie](mailto:schoolsvet@cloynediocese.ie) and download forms from [www.cpsmacloyne.com](http://www.cpsmacloyne.com).

### **Legislative basis**

Vetting is carried out through the National Vetting Bureau under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Adults) Act 2012. From the date of commencement of the legislation on 29th April 2016, it is a **criminal offence** to allow anyone to engage in ministry with children or vulnerable adults, without having them vetted first.

In addition, Section 26 of the Sex Offenders Act 2001 means that it is a criminal offence for some people who are guilty of certain criminal offences to fail to notify their employers of this fact before taking a job or performing a service. It is a requirement under this legislation for a prospective employee or volunteer to inform the employer of offences committed in Ireland and abroad.

Section 26 of the Sex Offenders Act 2001 makes it an offence for a person to:

- a) Apply to be employed to do relevant work;
- b) Enter into a contract of employment to do relevant work;
- c) Apply to another person to do relevant work on that other person's behalf (either paid or voluntary);
- d) Enter into a contract of services to do relevant work without, during the course of the application or before entering into the contract, informing the other person or party that they have been convicted of a sexual offence.

The 2012 National Vetting Bureau Act (as amended in the Criminal Justice [Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures] Act 2016) sets out circumstances that require vetting, defined as:

*Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children (and/or vulnerable adults).*

***Good safeguarding practice means that, as far as possible, management and supervision arrangements are such that substantial, unsupervised access to children is limited.***

Under Schedule 1, Part 1, Paragraph 7, of the National Vetting Bureau Act (as amended by paragraph 27 of the Criminal Justice [Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures Act] 2016) also requires:

*Vetting in respect of any work or activity as a minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of religious beliefs, to children (and vulnerable adults) unless such work or activity is merely incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs to persons who are not children (or vulnerable adults).*

***In other words, anyone who is 18 or over and has any contact with children (and vulnerable adults) which is more than incidental as part of their ministry must be vetted.***

Those who are aged 16 and under 18 may be vetted, but this can only be carried out with the written consent of their parent/guardian and the young person themselves.

For Church bodies who are active in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, they must ensure that Church personnel who meet the legislative requirements in each jurisdiction and are active in both jurisdictions are vetted both in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

For other Church personnel who may come into contact but who do not work directly with children (or vulnerable adults) in the Church, vetting is not required.

*A child means everyone below the age of eighteen (18) years.*

### **Interpreting the Act for the Church Context**

A person must be vetted who is a:

- Priest
- Minister,
- or Other who engages in the advancement of religious beliefs to children and vulnerable adults.

or who has:

- necessary and regular contact with children or vulnerable adults through his/her ministry, work or activity in the diocese/parish/school/diocesan agency/etc.

or whose:

- ministry, work, activity, includes the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children or vulnerable adults. This applies regardless of whether this ministry, work, activity is occasional or regular and necessary.

The Act makes it a criminal offence for a Church authority to commence the employment of an employee or engagement of a volunteer (including priests and religious) without first obtaining a vetting disclosure from the Bureau in respect of that person, where that employee or volunteer is undertaking relevant work or activities with children or vulnerable person.

### Retrospective Vetting

Section 21 of the Act, which commenced on 29th April 2016, concerns retrospective vetting of employees, volunteers and others who have never previously been vetted and who are already (i.e. prior to 29 April 2016) employed, contracted, permitted or placed by the Church to undertake relevant work or activities with children or vulnerable persons. Church Authorities are required to ensure that applications for statutory vetting have been made in respect of all such persons before 31 December 2017

### **Vetting in the Cloyne Diocese**

All vetting in the Diocese will be conducted through the e-vetting online system. The vetting email that will be used for parishes is: [diocesanvet@cloynediocese.ie](mailto:diocesanvet@cloynediocese.ie). The Vetting Invitation Form (NVB1) will be available to download from [www.safeguardingchildrenclayne.ie](http://www.safeguardingchildrenclayne.ie).

While e-vetting has a quicker turn around, it still needs to be uploaded on to the diocesan system. If a person needs e-vetting done for a specific time, it needs to be applied for in time: (don't leave it to the last minute) as it cannot be guaranteed to be uploaded onto the system immediately.

### **How to apply for e-vetting**

The Applicant needs:

- to fill out the NBV1 form, section 1 and 2:
- to prove their identity by approved forms, e.g. passport, utility bill.
- to sign form in the presence of the authorised person.

The authorised person must:

- fill in Section 3, in legible writing:
- see the proofs of identity and make a copy of them and send them with NBV1 form:
- sign the form:
- return the form for Parish/Diocese to the Diocese of Cloyne, Cloyne Diocesan Vetting Coordinator, Safeguarding Children Office, Mallow Community Youth Centre, Mallow, Co Cork, Eircode P51 XEX9.

Authorised persons are:

- Bishop/Parish Priest/Administrator /Curate
- Parish Safeguarding Representative

Guidelines for how to fill in the form and the forms can be downloaded from

[www.safeguardingchildren.ie](http://www.safeguardingchildren.ie)

The applicant must provide a valid email address. Any forms that do not include a date of birth and email address will be returned to the applicant. If the applicant does not have an email address, the applicant should ask a family member, friend or authorised person for permission to cite their email address, or to help them set one up for the purposes for the vetting online.

The Parish/Diocesan Agency requesting the vetting must also provide an email to be notified of the completion of the vetting. This should not be a public email as it contains sensitive information. It is advisable to set up a vetting email address to be used for this purpose only.

The signed original vetting invitation form must be forwarded to the Diocese of Cloyne, Diocesan Vetting Coordinator, Safeguarding Children Office, Mallow Community Youth Centre, New Road, Mallow, Co. Cork, Eircode P51 XEX9, for processing.

Once the Diocesan Vetting coordinator has uploaded the NVB 1 form the applicant is then invited by email by the National Vetting Bureau to fill in their details online within a specific time frame.

Once their application is processed, the National Vetting Bureau will send the Disclosure Form onto the Diocesan Vetting Coordinator. A copy of the Disclosure will be forwarded to the Parish/School/Diocesan Agency who requested the vetting of the applicant while the original will be kept on Diocesan Database.

***The applicant cannot commence the role/position until this Disclosure is received by the Parish/Diocesan Agency that requests it.***

### **Vetting of Young People between 16 and 18 years of Age**

If vetting is required for young people between 16 and 18 years of age, their parents will have to consent to this and fill out NVB 3 form. The email address provided on the vetting invitation form (NVB 1 for young person) is the email address of the parent / guardian (not the young person). Proof of identity must also be obtained for the parent / guardian and the young person.

### **Persons who require to be vetted**

The following list of persons who require to be vetted is for guidance within parishes:

- All Priests in active ministry.
- Clergy, religious, seminarians and novices who engage in ministry with children or vulnerable adults.
- Sacristans/Acting Sacristans.
- Parish Safeguarding Representatives.
- Members of the Parish Safeguarding Children Committee.
- Leaders of Church activities/groups that involve children: e.g. youth choir leaders, prayer groups, etc.
- Adult members of groups comprised of adults and children; e.g. choirs/prayer groups, etc.
- All church personnel who work with children in youth programmes: e.g. ‘You Shall Be My Witness Programme’.
- Those who train children: e.g. trainers of altar servers, etc.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion/Readers who minister to children, the sick or to vulnerable adults at venues outside of the church.
- Church personnel (staff/volunteers) who lead prayer groups/minister to children, the sick or to vulnerable adults outside of the church.
- Church personnel (staff/volunteers) in parishes who work with/have direct access to children or vulnerable adults.

The full Guidance on Vetting is available on the National Safeguarding Children Guidance Document at section 1.1B ([www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie)).

*If you have any doubts or queries regarding the requirement for vetting you should seek advice from the Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Office (022-21009).*

It is recommended that applicants be re-vetted at least every five years.

### **Examples of Roles that typically WILL NOT require vetting:**

Vetting is not required for church personnel whose contact with children/vulnerable adults is ‘merely incidental’.

- Parish secretaries, Collectors, Car park attendants;
- Those present in the Sacristy who don’t have an official role with children or vulnerable adults. (Note: However, these adults should never be left unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults);
- Readers of the Word unless they have a dual role which directly involves contact with children or vulnerable adults;
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who only distribute the Eucharist within the main body of the church during public Mass or other liturgical celebrations;
- Other roles whose contact with children or vulnerable adults is merely incidental while they are carrying out their ministry, work, activities with those who are not children or vulnerable adults.

### **Storage and Retention of Records**

Application forms, references and any other records of vetting checks that have been carried out must be stored securely in a locked cabinet in the Parish/School /Diocesan Agency, in line with data protection legislation.

The NBV1 form and a copy of the proof of Identity will be kept by the Diocesan Vetting Coordinator. The Disclosure will be kept by the Diocesan Vetting Coordinator for a period of five years. The copies sent to Parish/Diocesan Agency must be destroyed once the applicant is engaged /employed by the Parish or Diocesan Agency or Diocese.

The Storage of Paper Documents for vetting for Parish or Diocesan Personnel will be stored in a secure cabinet in the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Office in Mallow.

The Storage of Paper Documents for Vetting for Schools will be stored in a secure cabinet in Diocesan Office, Cobh.

Storage on a Data Base will be password protected.

Only the Diocesan Vetting Coordinators have access to the database and records.

The full National Vetting Bureau record must be retained for a period of twenty years after the end of the period of employment in the Diocesan Agency.

### **Appeals**

It must be noted that any appeal can only be made in relation to the Church decision not to employ the candidate (paid or voluntary), on the grounds that they are not suitable to work with children. The Church has no role in reviewing the contents of the disclosure by the National Vetting Bureau. If there is a disagreement about the disclosure, the applicant must appeal directly to the National Vetting Bureau.

The employer will assess the information returned from the National Vetting Bureau and decide if there is any reason not to employ the applicant, from a criminal information or specified information perspective. The applicant will be informed that their application cannot proceed based on the information returned through the vetting process.

If the applicant wishes to appeal the Church decision, they should be informed in writing about the process of an appeal and advice/assistance should be sought from the Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Office (022-21009). An Appeals Panel will be appointed by the Diocese to process any appeals.

## **1.1C Visiting Clergy or Visiting Persons in Any Form of Consecrated Life seeking to Minister in the Catholic Church in Ireland**

All steps must be taken to ensure a safe and nurturing environment within the Church for children. All those who engage in public ministry require confirmation that they are fit for that sacred task. The safeguarding of children within the Irish Catholic Church is of critical importance.

Whilst lay faithful (including lay ministers) are subject to safe recruitment practice all clergy (secular or religious, bishop, priest or deacon) who seek to minister in the Catholic Church in Ireland must be incardinated. This means that he must belong to a diocese or Religious Congregation and must be in good standing and enjoy the faculties necessary to minister.

The Church authority has a responsibility to take measures to ensure the safety and welfare of children. It is therefore important that certain checks are carried out to ensure that all clergy are in good standing prior to faculties being granted.

### **Procedures for visiting clergy within Ireland**

All clergy incardinated into the diocese or religious order will have been Garda vetted.

Visiting clergy should follow best practice and contact the local parish priest before undertaking ministry. *The Diocesan Office should be contacted for advice.*

However, should the cleric be present for one event in a parish or diocese, such as a funeral, baptism or wedding, he should sign the register in the sacristy to declare his presence on a particular time and date. Furthermore, should the priest not be incardinated in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that he visits, he must provide his celebret for inspection by the parish priest or duly delegated person, and this should be noted beside the visitor's signature in the register.

### **Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister on a short-term basis**

When clergy from outside Ireland visit with the intention of being involved in short-term ministry, evidence should be provided that confirms they are priests in good standing and that they are fit for ministry.

Prior to visiting the Diocese, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all visiting priests must seek permission from the Bishop. *Upon receipt, at parish level, of a request from visiting clergy, the Diocesan Office should be notified.*

### **Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister at a one-off event**

Visiting clergy should follow best practice and contact the local parish priest before undertaking ministry. *The Diocesan Office should be contacted for advice.*

However, should the cleric be present for one event in a parish or diocese, such as a funeral, baptism or wedding, he should sign the register in the sacristy to declare his presence on a



particular time and date. Furthermore, should the priest not be incardinated in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that he visits, he must provide his celebret for inspection by the parish priest or duly delegated person, and this should be noted beside the visitor's signature in the register.

#### **Procedures for visiting persons in any form of consecrated life within and outside Ireland**

Prior to visiting the Diocese, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all visiting persons in any form of consecrated life within and outside Ireland must seek permission from the Bishop. *Upon receipt, at parish level, of such a request the Diocesan Office should be notified.*

#### **Procedures for seminarians and pastoral students undertaking pastoral placements as part of their formation**

- a) Prior to the placement visit, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all seminarians and students must commit to following the policy and standards of Catholic Church Safeguarding Children 2016 - see 5.1A.
- b) Where the ministry involves regular and necessary contact with children (and /or vulnerable adults) the student/seminarian must be vetted by the placement provider.
- c) Records must be retained which demonstrate that the required checks have taken place and the student/seminarian has agreed to follow the child safeguarding procedures of the Church and the placement provider.

### **1.1D Visiting Clerics or Visiting Persons in any Form of Consecrated Life Ministering at Shrines, National Shrines and International Shrines**

#### **Definitions**

A Shrine is a Catholic church or other sacred place which with the approval of the local ordinary is by reason of special devotion frequented by the faithful as pilgrims (Canon 1230). To be considered a National Shrine the approval of the National Episcopal Conference is necessary. For it to be described as International, the approval of the Holy See is necessary (Canon 1231).

For further information/advice/guidance on:- (a) Visiting Clerics or those in any form of consecrated life, ministering in Shrines and National Shrines in Ireland and (b) Visiting Clerics celebrating or concelebrating mass at Shrines outside Ireland see *National Board's Guidance Document* on [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie) or contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Office at 022-21009.

*A cleric who is out of ministry due to child safeguarding concerns must not attempt to celebrate any sacrament in public while abroad.*

## **1.2A Codes of Behaviour for Adults**

The recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced personnel is a vital aspect of the Church's child safeguarding policy. However, in order to maintain a high level of child protection awareness and safe care, codes of behaviour are equally important.

A code of behaviour is a clear and concise guide to what is and is not acceptable behaviour and practice when working with children. It is an essential part of the safeguarding procedures of any Church body that has ministry with children. Adults working with children have a duty of care to children. Church personnel who work with children should sign the Induction Agreement Form 5.1A(1) to indicate that they have been provided with the code of behaviour and agree to abide by it and by the requirements of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

It is very important that everyone in the Church authority is clear about what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working with children. It is also important to involve children and parents/guardians in the process of developing a code of behaviour. When considering what sorts of behaviour are appropriate in dealing with children, it is important to bear in mind that the intentions of adults are less important than the impact of their behaviours on children. For this reason, a key aspect of any code of behaviour is the creation of an environment where it is safe for children to ask questions and express their concerns, confident in the knowledge that what they say will be heard, taken seriously and acted upon.

Where it becomes necessary to depart from the code of behaviour, the reasons for doing so should be carefully recorded, and steps should be taken to avoid the recurrence of such a situation in the future.

*(See Procedures/Forms for Parishes –1.2A - Code of Behaviour for Adults)*

## **1.3A Codes of Behaviour for Children**

Where children are involved in drawing up a code of behaviour for themselves, it is important that an appropriate adult with relevant skills and competencies participates to support them in developing the code of behaviour.

The methods used in creating a code of behaviour should be age and ability appropriate, with children being encouraged to avoid merely drawing up a list of prohibitions. Instead, the code should be comprised of positive statements about respect, and should consider what consequences ensue if the code is broken.

*(See Procedures/Forms for Parishes - 1.3A – Code of Behaviour for Children)*

*(For example of workshop to create a code of behaviour with children – see National Board Guidance -1.3A Template 1)*

### **1.3B Dealing with Breaches of Codes of Behaviour for Children and Adults**

If a child/young person or an adult breaches the code of behaviour, efforts should be made to resolve the issue by:

Discussion with and support for the adult or the child/young person;

A child/young person or adult may be asked to apologise for their behaviour;

In the case of a child/young person, involving their parents/guardians;

- Agreeing on sanctions.
- Sanctions may include:
  - Time out of group activity;
  - For children/young people, a parent/guardian may be spoken to and/or asked to attend group activities with their child for a period of time;
  - Issuing an apology;
  - Loss of privilege;
  - Being asked to leave the activity for a time/for good;
  - For adults, retraining in leadership skills, code of behaviour, etc. may be required;
  - For children/young people, the code of behaviour should be revisited and agreed upon;
  - Monitoring behaviour and support on an ongoing basis.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion from the group should be considered;
- Formal reporting to statutory authorities

### **1.3C Anti-Bullying**

We recognise the devastating effects and long-term damage that bullying can have on children/young people and we hope to create safe ‘bullying-free’ environments for our children/young people.

#### **What is bullying?**

- Bullying is intentional, repeated and aggressive physical, verbal or psychological behaviour directed by an individual or group against others;
- Bullying can occur at any age, in any environment, and can be long or short term;
- Any child/young person can be a victim of bullying;
- Bullying can be perpetrated by adults towards children/young people, as well as children/young people towards their peer group;
- Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying;
- Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.
- Bullying can be:
  - Emotional/psychological: tormenting, excluding, extorting, intimidating, etc.
  - Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, intimidating, damaging/stealing property, or any use of violence, etc.;
  - Racist: racial taunts, i.e. insults about colour, nationality, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background, or use of graffiti or gestures;

- Sexual: unwanted physical harassment or contact, or sexually abusive comments. this may constitute actual sexual abuse, which should be reported;
- Homophobic: taunting a person of a different sexual orientation;
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, etc.;
- Cyber: misuse/abuse of email, mobile phones, internet chat rooms, social media, text messaging, or camera and video facilities;
- Subtle: such as an unwelcome expression or gesture that is repeated and focused on an individual;

Perpetrated by adults:- this can include adults who are not related to the child. When perpetrated by adults, rather than children, bullying behaviour could be regarded as physical or emotional abuse. However, other major forms of child abuse – such as neglect and sexual abuse – are not normally comprehended by the term ‘bullying’.

### **Prevention**

To help prevent bullying, the following strategies are suggested:

- Engage children/young people in discussions about what bullying is and why it cannot be tolerated;
- Encourage children/young people to take responsibility and report any incidents of bullying to their leader/person in charge;
- Review this bullying guidance with children/young people and parents involved in parish/ agency activities;
- Seek to promote positive attitudes of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all personnel.
- Procedures to deal with bullying
- All incidents of bullying should be brought to the attention of the leader/person in charge;
- All incidents will be recorded on incident report forms and kept on file;
- Leaders should report to and seek guidance/support from the parish priest/priest in charge;
- Parents should be informed of any incidents of bullying, and should meet with the leader/ person in charge to discuss the problem. A record should also be kept;
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying quickly stopped;
- Both the victim and bully should be supported and helped throughout the process;
- If necessary and appropriate, the Gardaí should be consulted.

### **1.4A Safe Care for Children**

To build a safe and solid environment for children each church authority must strive to be child-centred in their practice and behaviour. In practical terms, this will include clear written procedures and applicable forms.

## **1.4B Dealing with Accidents**

It is essential that all Church personnel (clergy, religious or lay volunteers) are familiar with the procedures outlined below. If a child has an accident and injures himself/herself while attending a Church-run event, these procedures should be followed:

1. Assess the injury and reassure the child. If the injury is severe or the child has lost consciousness, please contact the emergency services immediately by phoning 999 or 112. You can phone 112 from a mobile that has no credit and even from a phone that has no SIM card. The 112 emergency number is a European emergency number and can be called from anywhere in Europe. If the emergency services are to be called, contact with the child's parents/guardians must be made urgently. Contact information should be found on the child's membership/consent form. If the parents/guardians are not available, it may be necessary for a leader to travel with the child to the hospital. If medical treatment is required, Church personnel may be asked about known allergies or existing medical conditions. Again, this information should be found on the child's membership/consent form;
2. If the injury is minor, local application of treatment should be available from the first aid box. There should be a fully stocked first aid box to hand at all Church-related events. Remember to make a note of what has been used from the first aid box so that it can be replaced at the earliest opportunity. Under no circumstances should any medication be given to a child;
3. As soon as possible after the accident, write up a report using the appropriate report form;
4. Always inform parents/guardians of any accident that has occurred involving their child, regardless of how minor you consider it to be. It is good practice to give a copy of the accident/incident report form to parents/guardians;
5. It is good practice to keep blank copies of the accident/incident form with the first aid box so that one can be easily filled out in the event of an emergency.

## **1.4C Maintaining Adequate Supervision Ratios**

In planning a trip or activity, it is critically important to consider how many adults are needed to supervise children in a safe manner. It is recommended that a certain number of adults be available to supervise a certain number of children; however, this is also dependent on whether the children have specific needs or requirements, and on the duration of the activity.

At a minimum, two (2) adults are required for each activity.

In addition, the minimum following ratios should be applied, depending on the number of children:

- 0 -1 year = 1 member of staff to 3 children
- 1- 2 years = 1 member of staff to 5 children
- 2- 3 years = 1 member of staff to 6 children
- 3- 6 years = 1 member of staff to 8 children
- 7- 12 years = 1 member of staff to 8 children
- 13-18 years = 1 member of staff to 10 children

If it is an overnight activity, additional staff should be considered. If the group is mixed, a gender balance should be maintained.

### **1.4D One-to-One Contact with Children and Young People**

In general, Church activities should not involve one-to-one contact, and should usually be supervised by at least two adults. However, there may be two circumstances where this may occur:

1. In a reactive situation, for example, when a young person requests a one-to-one meeting with you without warning, or where a young person has had to be removed from a group as part of a code of behaviour;
2. As part of a planned and structured piece of work (for example, one-to-one music tuition).

#### **Reactive situations**

- If you need to talk to a young person alone, try to do so in an open environment, in view of others.
- If this is not possible, try to meet in rooms with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room/area where other people are nearby. You should advise another adult that such a meeting is taking place and the reason for it. A record should be kept of these meetings – including names, dates, times, location, reason for the meeting and outcome – and stored appropriately and securely.
- Avoid meetings with individual children where they are on their own in a building.
- One-to-one meetings should take place at an appropriate time, e.g. not late at night, and in an appropriate venue.

#### **Planned and structured pieces of work**

- The particular activity should have a clear rationale and aims for involving one-to-one work.
- Parents/guardians must be fully informed as to the nature and purpose of this work, and must give written consent – Form 1.4A(3).
- A clear code of behaviour must be agreed and adhered to by both parties. This should include limits of confidentiality and safeguarding procedures.

### **1.4E Pope John Paul II Award**

The Pope John Paul II Award values and encourages the participation of young people in activities that allow them to live their faith in Jesus Christ in their parish and wider community.

The award is designed to facilitate involvement in school, parish, religious and community activities.

The majority of activities carried out as part of the award fall within the scope of the safeguarding policy of the Church or school, but there are other activities that do not. When the activities engaged in by the participant in the award fall outside the scope and remit of safeguarding children covered by the diocese or congregation, parish or school policies and

procedures the Cloyne Diocesan Children Safeguarding Committee (CDSCC) should be contacted for advice and assistance.

**Full guidance is also available on the National Board’s website [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).**

## **1.4F Participation of Children with Specific Needs**

Some children have specific needs that place additional responsibilities on those who care for and work with them. It is often the situational and environmental factors that disable the child, rather than the physical or intellectual difficulty the child experiences. Where possible, the environmental factors should be adapted to the child’s needs. Prohibitive attitudes need to be addressed through education and information.

Children who have a disability have the same rights as any other child, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Points to consider when including a child with specific needs in your group:**

- Work in partnership with the child, parents/guardians and any professionals involved to establish how the child can be included;
- Make sure inclusion is possible before bringing the child into the group;
- Make reasonable adjustments;
- Be interested in the child and build a rapport with them;
- If the child has a communication impairment, acquiring some key skills in their communication method will be useful;
- Some specific training may be useful or required, e.g. the autistic spectrum, epilepsy, etc.;
- Risk assessments may be necessary to ensure the safety of some children with specific needs;
- Higher staff ratios may be required if the child has additional needs or behavioural problems;
- Intimate care issues: when introducing a child with specific needs into an activity, it is important to establish if they have intimate care needs, and who should provide or assist with this if it is necessary. It is important to remember that not every child with a disability has intimate care needs. Intimate care is, to some extent, individually defined and varies according to personal experience, cultural expectations and gender. It may be described as help with anything of a personal or private nature that the individual is unable to do themselves;
- Children with specific needs may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and they may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries;
- It is particularly important that children with specific needs are carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty expressing their concerns, and so that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.

Generally, Church personnel are not expected to be involved in the provision of intimate care of children. This should be undertaken by suitably qualified people. Decisions regarding who provides intimate care for a child should be discussed and agreed by everyone concerned:

the child's views should be ascertained; parents/guardians should be consulted and their consent sought; a rota of carers of the same sex as the child should be agreed; and the age, stage of development and ethnicity of the child will need to be considered. Most importantly, it should be agreed in advance who will carry out intimate care and how it should be done. Guidelines to be borne in mind when providing intimate care include: the sensitive nature of such tasks; the need to treat every child with dignity and respect; the need to ensure an appropriate degree of privacy; the need to involve the child as much as possible in their own care; and trying to ensure consistency in who provides care.

If a child appears distressed or unhappy, this should be discussed with parents/guardians, if appropriate, and the activity leader. Any concerns or allegations should be reported following the procedures outlined in the safeguarding policy and procedures document of the Church body.

### **1.4G Trips Away With Young People**

Trips away that involve young people can be an extremely rewarding and fulfilling experience, however, to do this safely and in a way that safeguards all concerned requires careful planning and consideration. The following should be considered in planning a trip away:-

Have you:

- Identified the aim and outcomes of the programme?
- Followed your Church body's child safeguarding policy and procedures?
- Carried out a hazard assessment ?
- Recruited and selected staff/volunteers using safe practice procedures?
- Selected a key staff member who has overall responsibility for the trip?
- Selected staff for the trip who are appropriately trained, qualified and vetted (if appropriate)?
- Nominated a staff member who is responsible for first aid?
- Ensured that you have adequate and gender-based supervision?
- Appointed a contact person at home who has access to all information and contact details?
- Checked your own insurance and ensured that you have coverage for all activities?
- Checked that the transport has appropriate insurance, qualified drivers and seatbelts?
- Carried out an equipment safety check including the first aid kit?
- Ensured there is a contingency plan?
- Made provisions for returning home early?
- Allocated a budget and contingency fund?
- Checked out the locations and accommodation of the trip away to ensure they have:
  - Appropriate safeguarding policy, practices and procedures in place?
  - Insurance cover?
  - Appropriately trained and qualified staff?
  - Changing areas for boys and girls (if required)?
  - Disability access (if required)?

Have the young people/participants:



- Been involved as much as possible in the planning of the trip?
- Agreed a code of behaviour - see 1.3A?
- Agreed boundaries around unstructured time?
- Been given information on appropriate clothing, and contact details for leaders?
- Consented to the trip away - Form 1.4A (3)?

Have parents/carers:

- Met with leaders and been informed of the programme?
- Been given a copy of the Church body's child safeguarding policy and procedures?
- Consented in writing – Form 1.4A (3)?
- Given contact details and supplied medical details and dietary requirements of the child?
- Been given contact details of the leaders and centre?
- Been given details for pick up and drop off of young people/participants?

Have staff:

- Been trained on the Church body's code of behaviour and child safeguarding policy, on how to deal with a disclosure, and on dealing with challenging behaviour?
- Been assigned responsibilities and scheduled for breaks?
- Been made aware of how to handle an emergency, and who to contact in an emergency?
- Worked with young people to evaluate the success of the activity?

If staying overnight, have you checked:

- If there is 24/7 access to centre staff?
- If there are appropriate sleeping arrangements for young people, i.e. separate provision for boys and girls, and separate provision for leaders (within ear shot of young people)?
- The centre's supervision and security?

## **1.5A External Groups who Use Church Property**

It is a requirement that all groups working with children in the Church body and/or using facilities owned by the Church body are insured, and that they have a child safeguarding policy in place.

The general principle is that the obligation to comply with requirements relating to insurance and child safeguarding rests with the group using Church property, and not with the Church body.

1. It is the responsibility of any group using Church property to run activities involving children to ensure that they comply with all applicable child safeguarding and protection legislation and guidelines.
2. The group should have their own child safeguarding policy and procedures. The group is also responsible for liaising with Tusla, to ensure that the policy and procedures meet the statutory requirements.
3. The group should have appropriate insurance for the activity they are running.
4. The Church body should at no stage assist any outside group in developing a child safeguarding policy.

5. The Church body should have confirmation in writing (Form 1. 5A (1).) the group that they have a child safeguarding policy in place. It is not the role of the Church body to validate the adequacy of the policy; that is the responsibility of Tusla.
6. The Church body should have confirmation in writing (Form 1. 5 A (1).) from the group that they have appropriate insurance in place, which includes the following:
  - The name of their insurers;
  - The policy number;
  - The period of cover of the policy;
  - The limit of indemnity.

### **External organisations that offer advice and support regarding child safeguarding policies**

The following organisations may prove helpful in providing training and assisting external groups to create their own safeguarding policy.

- Tusla Information and Advice Officers <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/roles-and-responsibilities/organisations/children-first-training>
- Barnardos <http://www.barnardos.ie/what-we-do/training/training-and-consultancy.html>
- National Youth Council of Ireland <http://www.nycitraining.org>
- Dublin Rape Crisis Centre <http://www.drcc.ie/training-and-development/>

### **1.5B Use of Church Property and Hire for Private Functions**

Individual adults (parents/guardians/family members) approaching the parish priest/administrator to use Church property for a private function do not meet the requirement for vetting by the Church authority.

All parish/congregations are insured to cover one-off private events, and it is the sole responsibility of the parents/guardians to organise and supervise all children attending. As such, they are not required to confirm in writing that they have a safeguarding policy or appropriate insurance.

As a matter of good practice, each parish priest/administrator should ensure that key health and safety measures are covered prior to agreeing the property for use. It is good practice to enter into an agreement with a potential user (e.g. in the case of a child's private birthday party) and Form 1.5B(1) Protocol – Use/Hire of Church Property for Private Functions/Events should be used for this purpose, signed by both the organiser of the function/event and by the person granting permission for the use/hire of the Church property. The terms and conditions for the use of the Church property will include:

- That the Church body will ensure the property is safe to use, including how accidents resulting from the condition of the property should be reported;
- That the Church body is not responsible for the organisation, supervision or conduct of the children or adults involved in the event;

- That the safeguarding policy of the Church body does not apply to the private party, and, as such, all safeguards are the responsibility of the organiser of the event and not the Church body.

### **What is excluded as part of this guidance**

This guidance is specifically for events that involve children, and is not designed for non-child-related events. Additionally, this guidance does not cover the following situations:

Ministry with children that is organised by the Church body as part of sacramental celebrations (e.g. Communion/Confirmation celebration involving a number of children). In these situations, the responsibility for safeguarding rests with the Church body;

Use of Church property for other parish-related or community-related activities such as funeral receptions and other such activities, which fall outside the remit of safeguarding children;

Schools using Church property for sacramental celebrations - the school and the Church body should agree who is responsible for safeguarding as outlined at 2.1J.

## **1.6A Whistle-Blowing**

All Church personnel (staff and volunteers) must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of their supervisor/ superior/manager.

This could be the parish priest, religious superior, bishop, provincial and/or relevant agency managers. Although this can be difficult to do, it is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong, but you may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues, or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember, it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need an advocate to safeguard their welfare.

***Don't think, 'what if I'm wrong?' Think, 'what if I'm right!'***

### **Reasons for whistle-blowing**

Each individual has a responsibility to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour to:- (a) prevent the problem worsening or widening; (b) protect or reduce risks to others and (c) prevent yourself from becoming implicated.

### **What stops people from whistle-blowing**

- Fear of starting a chain of events that spirals out of control.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong or of not being believed.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.

### **How to raise a concern**

Whistle-blowing can be about a range of concerns, not just safeguarding. It is important to:

- Voice any concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is expressed the sooner and easier action can be taken;
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning and why;
- Approach your immediate superior/supervisor/manager;
- If your concern is about your immediate superior/supervisor/manager, please contact your DLP, the statutory services or the NBSCCCI;
- Make sure a satisfactory response is secured – don't let matters rest;
- Ideally, concerns should be placed in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates, locations and any other relevant information;
- You are not expected to prove the truth of your complaint, but you need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for concern.

### **What happens next?**

- You should be given information on the nature/ progress of any enquiries resulting from your concern.
- Your supervisor/superior/manager has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations will be considered a disciplinary offence.
- Follow up if the person to whom you reported has not responded within a reasonable period of time, and if that follow up is not acted upon, report the matter to the statutory authorities.

### **Self-reporting**

There may be occasions when a member of staff or a volunteer has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line supervisor/superior/manager so that professional and personal support can be offered to the member concerned.

Whilst reporting will remain confidential, in most instances this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

## **1.7A Complaints Procedure for Safeguarding Concerns that are not Allegations of Abuse**

### **Introduction**

A complaint is a grievance and/or the raising of a concern about breaches of codes of behaviour. Allegations/suspicions of child abuse do not fall into this category of general complaints, and should always be referred to the DLP and be dealt with in accordance with procedures outlined

at 2.1H. This complaints procedure is not for use by Church personnel who would use the whistle-blowing procedure to raise their complaint - see 1.6A.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. Efforts will be made to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with the parties concerned.

Parents/guardians, young people/children, volunteers, members of staff and clergy will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure. A grievance, concern or complaint will be dealt with as follows:

### **First step**

All complaints of this nature should be resolved using an open dialogue with the Church personnel involved. If resolution is not possible, the following step should be taken.

### **Second step**

1. The Church authority should be contacted by completing a complaints form - Form 1.7A(1). The Church authority has eight weeks to consider the complaint.
2. A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint should be sent within seven calendar days, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure.
3. All complaints must be thoroughly investigated.
4. The Church authority may by meeting/telephone (if a meeting is not possible) discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. They will do this within fourteen calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to the complainant.
5. Within seven days of the meeting or discussion, the Church authority will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.
6. If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Church authority will issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out their suggestions for resolving the matter within twenty-one calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to them.
7. If the complainant is still not satisfied at this point, they should contact the Church authority again.

At the conclusion of this step, the Church authority may decide to take further action on the complaint. If, however, the Church authority decides not to take further action, the process is completed.

## **1.8A Hazard Assessment of Activities with Children**

### **Introduction**

Hazard assessment is an important part of working with children. It assists with managing both health and safety issues, and the welfare of children.

When working with children it is important to consider potential hazards that may lead to risk to children and to adults who work with them. Consideration of how to control or manage hazard is critical. It is important to identify acceptable levels of hazards, as all risk cannot be removed.

Whilst this guidance is concerned primarily with hazards associated with failure to follow effective safeguarding practice, it must be understood alongside the health and safety regulation and policy of the Church body. Whilst the focus on hazard assessment should be on groups of children with whom you are working, as opposed to the physical venue, if a problem with the venue is discovered during the course of assessing (e.g. broken glass, electrical cabling, etc.) this needs to be raised with the appropriate authority in charge of health and safety for the Church body.

### **What does the term ‘hazard’ mean?**

A hazard is a potential source of harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons. This may include areas such as:

- failure to comply with effective safeguarding practice, such as lack of supervision ratios or consent forms;
- medical hazards, such as failure to take medication, or inappropriate intimate care practice;
- physical hazards, such as dangerous electrical cabling, or proximity to water.

### **Assessing hazards**

1. Identify the hazards: look for hazards in the nature of the activity, and in the venue where the activity is taking place.
2. Identify who is at risk: decide who may be harmed and how. Everyone, or perhaps only certain people, may be at risk. Some groups may need special consideration as they may be more vulnerable to certain hazards.
3. Identify what the likelihood of harm may be.
4. Identify the consequences of injury or harm: the consequences could range from trivial to severe or even fatal. The most severe hazards need the most urgent attention.
5. Identify the controls that need to be put in place to limit the hazard.

These steps should be used to complete a hazard assessment form – Form 1.8A(1). If no hazard exists, you don’t need to note it on the form.

### **Reviews**

Risk should be periodically reviewed, especially in circumstances when a venue changes, a new activity takes place or the members of the group change.

## **1.9A Use of Technology**

Church authorities need to assess the benefits of technology and how this can be used safely and effectively, in line with rules that respect the dignity and rights of all users, particularly children.

The majority of occasions when people use mobile phones, computers or take photographs of children do not cause any concern. However, there are occasions when this is not the case.

At the outset it is important to identify the risks associated with the use of technology, and then to minimise the risks by putting in place measures outlined below.

## **Consent**

The consent of parents/guardians and children should always be sought prior to engaging in any activity that involves the use of IT equipment, such as those outlined above.

A Church body may seek overall consent from its members/group leaders - Form 1.4A(3), or it may ask for permission for set occasions - Form 1.9A(1).

When seeking consent for the use of images or videos for Church purposes, the following should be considered:

- The issue of consent for photography/videoing for Church purposes should be addressed with parents/guardians and children prior to the sacramental day, and the policy should be explained to all families who will be attending;
- In seeking consent for photography/videos, children/families should be reminded about the rights to privacy/data protection of other children, their families and the wider community;
- Those organising an event for Church purposes, and who are seeking consent for photography/video usage, should be sensitive to the fact that many parents/guardians are reluctant to allow the general viewing of their children, or of children in their care, on sites such as YouTube, Facebook, etc.

## **Purpose**

- Guidelines should be clear as to the reason and purpose of the use of the particular form of technology;
- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour and use of equipment;
- Provide guidance on acceptable language;
- Provide guidance on storage of information;
- Provide guidance on use of photography: if using an external photographer/videographer, seek confirmation about any publications that will be made by them after the event, and ensure that they have been vetted, have identification and do not have any unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events;
- Images of children should never be taken that capture them in what are commonly understood as ‘non-public’ activities. Children should be fully and appropriately dressed and related images should always be about the activity and not focused on any individual child;
- Images should not allow the identification of a child or their whereabouts. The full name of a child should not be used;
- Children in vulnerable circumstances (e.g. those in care or victims of any type of abuse) should not be photographed without the consent of those who hold parental responsibility;
- Provide guidance on the use of mobile phones, and mobile phone cameras, which can be easily used for offensive actions without the subject being aware of their use;
- Provide guidance on communicating this policy with parents/guardians and young people.

## **1.9B Use of the Internet**

It is recognised that the internet is valuable and widely used. Clear guidelines must be developed and inserted into the code of behaviour for each Church activity involving children - see 1.3A.

**The following are deemed unacceptable behaviours, and must be avoided in every situation:**

- Visiting internet sites that contain offensive, obscene, pornographic or illegal material;
- Using a computer to perpetrate any form of fraud or piracy;
- Using the internet or email systems to send offensive and harassing material to others;
- Using obscene or racist language in computer-assisted communications;
- Publishing defamatory or otherwise false material generated by oneself or by others through social networking;
- Introducing any form of malicious software into the used network;
- Intentionally damaging any information communication technology equipment;
- Using another user's password, or giving that password to a third party.

**It is important that the following are made clear to all who use the internet:**

- All Church personnel/volunteers/group leaders must be made aware of their responsibility, and sign up to appropriate use of the internet as part of a code of behaviour - see 1.3A;
- Responsibility is about safeguarding children, taking care of oneself, one's co-workers and group leaders;
- Anyone using a shared computer requires their own individual password;
- Training in appropriate and responsible internet and computer use is imperative in order to follow best practice in all activities that concern children, co-workers and volunteers.

## **1.9C Use of Texting and Email**

Texting and email are very quick and effective methods of communication for those involved in Church activities usually this does not include adult members of Church personnel contacting young people directly, as contact is usually made via their parents/guardians. However there are certain circumstances where contacting young people directly may be necessary (i.e. in an emergency or on a trip away), any member of Church personnel using this method of communicating with young people should ensure appropriate safeguards are in place as there are certain risks associated with the safe and appropriate use of texting and email, which must be managed.

**The risks of text and email messaging for children and young people are:**

- Inappropriate access to, use of, or sharing of personal details (names, numbers, email addresses);
- Unwanted contact with children/young people by adults with bad intent, text bullying by peers etc.;
- Being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate materials;



- Grooming for sexual abuse;
- Direct contact and actual abuse.

**The risks for adults include:**

- Misinterpretation of their communication with young people;
- Potential investigation (internal or by statutory agencies);
- Potential disciplinary action.

**Using bulk (or bundled) text and email messaging**

The following guidance is provided to minimise risk to all:

1. Consent must be obtained prior to sending young people text or email messages. For all young people, specific consent must be obtained from their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians of younger children should be offered the option to be copied on texts and emails that their child will be sent. Written consent must be obtained from the parents/guardians and young people themselves;
2. The young people's mobile phone numbers or email addresses should be stored in either a locked and secured cabinet, or on an electronic system that is password protected, with access only available to the staff member or volunteer identified to the young people and parents/guardians as a group leader. The numbers or details should not be shared with anyone else, and should only be used for the purposes of the text and email messaging system regarding the Church activity;
3. All text and email messages must be sent via a bundle to a group of young people, i.e. the same standard text message is sent to every member of the group. The text and email messaging system should never be used to send text or email messages on an individual basis (i.e. to just one person);
4. All text and email messages sent must make it clear to the young people receiving them who has sent the message;
5. Young people should not be given the opportunity to text or email back to the system. It should only be used as a one-way communication channel;
6. The text and email messages that are sent must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language;
7. When this guidance is being provided in relation to Church-related activities, all of the text or email messages sent must be directly related to Church activities. The text or email messaging system and mobile phone numbers must never be used for any other reason or in any other way;
8. All of the text and email messages sent should include a sentence at the bottom that provides young people with the opportunity to unsubscribe from receiving further text and email messages.

## **1.9D Use of Photography**

The use of photos on websites and in other online/hard copy publications can pose direct and indirect risks to children and young people. The Church authority wishing to use images of the children they work with, or are otherwise in contact with, should consider these guidelines.

The Church only has responsibility for safeguarding and the use of photography if it plans to use the photographs for Church purposes. Photographs taken at events organised by family and schools such as Communion, weddings or Confirmations do not fall under the responsibility of the Church, unless they are being taken for Church purposes.

### **Risks to children**

Even if the child's personal identity (full name, address) is kept confidential, other details accompanying the photo can make them identifiable and therefore vulnerable to individuals looking to groom children for abuse. There is also a risk that the photo itself will be used inappropriately by others. Photos can easily be copied and adapted, perhaps to create images of child abuse, which can then find their way on to other websites.

### **How to minimise risks**

- Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the activity and think carefully about any images showing children and young people on the Church website or publication;
- Never supply the full name(s) of the child or children along with the image(s);
- Only use images of children in suitable dress and focused on the activity, rather than one particular child;
- Obtain permission: the permission of parents/guardians and children should always be sought when using an image of a young person. Parents/guardians should be aware of the Church's policy on using children's images and of the way these represent the Church or activity. This must be recorded on a joint consent form for use of images of children. The child's permission to use their image must also be recorded if they are under eighteen years of age.

### **Using photographers**

The Church often employs photographers for certain sacramental or Church activities. When using a photographer, it is important to do the following:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour;
- Ascertain if the photographer requires vetting and, if they do, put them through the process;
- Provide the photographer with a form of identification that must be worn at all times;
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events;
- Do not allow photo sessions to take place away from the event, for instance, at a young person's home;
- Inform parents/guardians and children that a photographer will be in attendance, and ensure that they consent to both the taking and publication of photos or films;

- Seek confirmation on the extent of any publications that will be made by the photographer after the event.

If parents/guardians and parishioners are intending to photograph or video at an organised event, they should also be made aware of what is permitted and what is not.

### **Responding to concerns**

Children and parents/guardians should be informed that if they have any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography, these should be reported to the Church authority to ensure that any reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other child protection or child safeguarding issue.

## **1.9E Use of CCTV and Webcams**

The increasing use of CCTV and the internet has wide implications, and unless such systems are used with proper care and consideration they can give rise to concern that the individual's 'private space' is being unreasonably invaded or eroded. Each Church body must have an appropriate data protection policy in place that covers the use of webcam and CCTV images.

Section 2 (1) c (iii) of the Data Protection Act requires that data are 'adequate, relevant and not excessive' and fit for purpose for which they are collected. If a data controller is satisfied that it can justify the installation of a CCTV system, it must carefully consider what it will be used for and if these uses are deemed reasonable in the circumstances.

Security of premises or other property is probably the most common use of a CCTV system and, as such, will typically be intended to capture images of intruders, or of individuals damaging property or removing goods without permission. Using a CCTV to constantly monitor employees is highly intrusive and would need to be justified by reference to special circumstances. The retail sector is one example where there is evidence to suggest that money or goods could be removed without authorisation.

The location of CCTV is a key consideration, and its use within areas where individuals would have a reasonable expectation of privacy, e.g. toilets and changing rooms, would be difficult to justify. Cameras placed so as to record external areas should be positioned in such a way as to prevent or minimise recording of passers-by, or of another person's private property.

Having acknowledged the positive and sometimes negative aspect of CCTV, each Church body should draw up a policy and guidelines in order to maximise the benefit of such installations and minimise the possibility of a person's privacy being infringed.

The following should be considered:

- If CCTV cameras are in place, it is important to have very obvious signs informing Church personnel, parishioners, volunteers and the public that this is the case;

- All uses of CCTV must be appropriate and fit for a specific purpose. As CCTV infringes the privacy of persons captured in the images, there must be a genuine reason for installing such a system;
- If installing such a system, the purpose for doing so must be displayed in a prominent place and preferably behind a locked noticeboard where it will not be damaged or removed. In a church, an obvious place would be within the porch and at all entrances;
- Images captured should be retained for a maximum of twenty-eight days (see Section 2 [1] c [iv] of the Data Protection Act). An exception for a longer duration would be where images need to be retained specifically in the context of an investigation;
- Tapes should be stored in a secure environment, along with a log of access to tapes. Access should be restricted to authorised personnel. Similar measures should be in place when using disc storage, with the creation of automatic logs of access to the images.

### **Web broadcasting**

There are a number of data protection issues that must be met in relation to broadcasting on the internet. The policy should be reflective of these:

Recording people via a web camera, and the subsequent displaying of such images over the internet, is regarded as the processing of personal data. It is imperative that it must be done with the consent of the individual; Camera shots (images) of the congregation should be wide shots, minimising the possibility of easily identifying individuals with close-up images;

Signs should be placed at all entrances to the church and in other prominent locations, informing those attending ceremonies or visiting the church that web cameras are in operation;

Parish workers, volunteers and clergy should give written consent to their image being used for web broadcasting during the course of their regular duties. Copies of this written consent should be kept in a safe and locked place;

Altar servers, ministers of the word, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and others taking part in liturgies (e.g. choirs and musicians) should give their consent. In the case of children, written consent is required from parents/guardians;

Service providers should be able to give regular and accurate information regarding the number of people who actually log in online to view. This information is important for future planning and assessing the value of web broadcasting;

If connecting to the parish broadband, ensure that the broadband package has unlimited usage for uploading, or else there is a risk of incurring significant costs from the provider;

It is imperative that live broadcasts can be terminated to stop transmission. This should be done by accessing the control panel of the system. If this is not accessible by the priest from the altar, someone should be delegated to break transmission if required.

## **Standard 2 - Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations.**

### **Roles of Safeguarding Personnel in Relation to this Standard**

#### **Church authority**

The Bishop is responsible for:

- Ensuring that appropriate personnel and procedures are in place to recognise and respond to allegations of abuse;
- Ensuring that practice and policy on reporting allegations is compliant with statutory and canonical law. This includes liaising with the Congregations of the Holy See, as appropriate.

#### **Designated liaison person (DLP)**

The role of the DLP is:

- Hearing safeguarding concerns;
- Passing on safeguarding concerns to the statutory authorities where there are reasonable grounds for concern;
- Managing the case file and all associated documents;
- Liaising with the support person, advisor and the Church authority;
- Informing the National Board for Safeguarding Children (NBSCCCI) of an allegation/concern;
- Conducting internal inquiries.

#### **Support person**

The role of the support person is:

- Attending the initial meeting of the complainant with the DLP (if agreed in advance with the complainant) in order to support the complainant, keeping them informed of the progress of their case, and helping them to identify and access support;
- Recording the dates of any meetings or contact they have with the complainant, and reporting to the DLP as appropriate. They will pass on written records to the DLP, as appropriate, during regular meetings with the DLP.

#### **Advisor**

The role of the advisor is:

- Meeting the respondent with the DLP and the Church authority in order to support the respondent, keeping them informed of the progress of their case, and helping them to identify and access support;
- Recording any meetings or contact they have with the respondent and reporting to the DLP, as appropriate. The advisor will not be responsible for managing the file, and will pass on written records to the DLP, as appropriate, during regular meetings with the DLP.

#### **An Garda Síochána**

It is the responsibility of the Gardaí to investigate and establish if a crime has been committed. They will liaise directly with the DLP, as appropriate.

#### **Tusla (the Child and Family Agency)**

It is the responsibility of Tusla to promote the welfare of children in the Republic of Ireland who are not receiving adequate care and protection. They will liaise with the DLP, as appropriate.

**NBSCCCI**

The NBSCCCI will be advised of safeguarding allegations, suspicions or concerns by the DLP relating to clerics or religious; monitor and report on these allegations; and retain records of this information safely and securely; and offer advice and support.

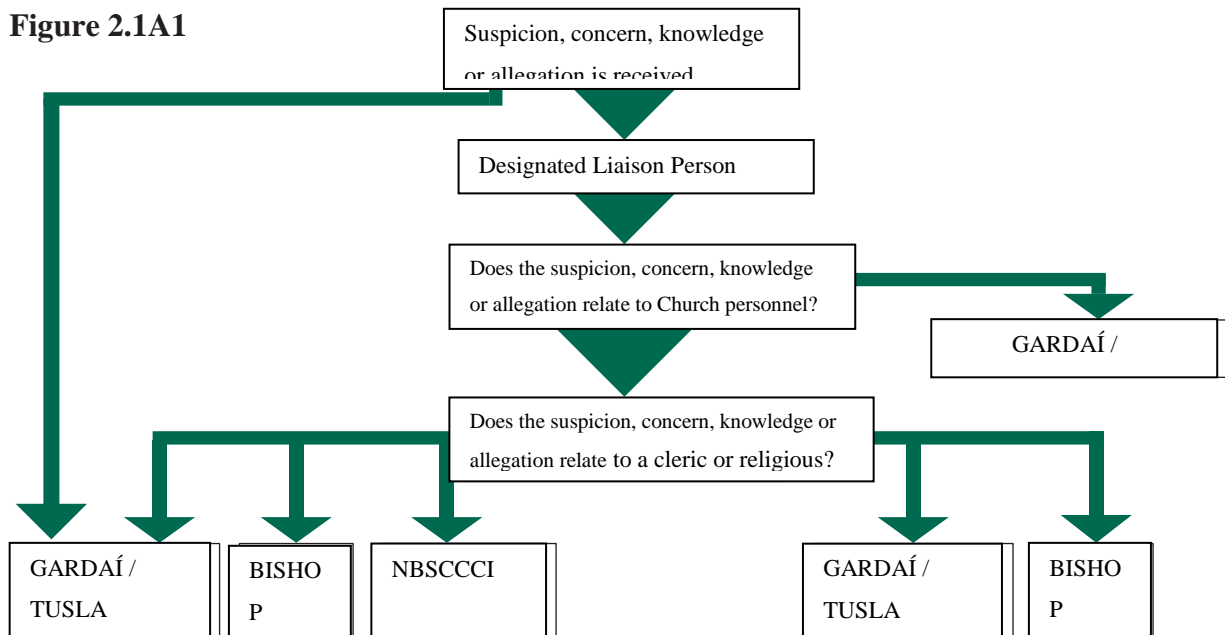
**2.1A Reporting Allegations of Abuse**

Children occupy a central place in the heart of the Christian community. They have a right to be listened to and heard. The paramount consideration in all matters relating to children is their safety and protection from all forms of abuse. To create and maintain a safe environment, Church organisations must respond effectively and ensure all allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported, both within the Church and to statutory authorities. This responsibility to report is mandatory, and the only exception to this rule is the receipt of any information by a cleric under what is termed as the sacramental Seal of Confession.

Reporting a concern can be a challenging responsibility. The procedure ensures that everyone is clear what steps to take to ensure that the safety of children is the paramount consideration.

The reporting flow chart below refers to any child protection concern, *including* where the concern is about a situation or person involved in the Church. It is the responsibility of everyone in the Church to ensure that children who may need help and protection are not left at risk of abuse.

**Figure 2.1A1**



**Following receipt of an allegation, suspicion or concern, the following steps should be taken.**

Act immediately on receipt of a suspicion, concern, disclosure or allegation of abuse, and refer the matter to the DLP without delay.

If the allegation does not relate to Church personnel, the DLP will refer the allegation to:

- Tusla
- An Garda Síochána

If the allegation relates to Church personnel who are not clerics or religious, the DLP will refer the allegation to:

- Tusla
- An Garda Síochána
- The Bishop

If the allegation relates to Church personnel who are clerics or religious, the DLP will refer the allegation to all of the above and The NBSCCCI

If there is any uncertainty about whether the allegation/concern meets the threshold for reporting, a consultation should take place by the DLP with the statutory authorities, who will advise on the requirements for notification.

***Remember – it is not your role to investigate.***

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 take notes at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter, etc. This initial recorded information will be transferred to a child protection referral form - Form 2.1A (1) and will become the first entry in a file of information about the case that will be retained by the DLP. Please always sign and date the record.

The record would also normally include:

- Accurate identifying information of the complainant, as far as it is known. This should include the name, address and age of the complainant when the alleged abuse occurred;
- Where the person who has raised a concern/allegation is a child, details of parents/ guardians should also be given;
- Name of the individual against whom the concern/allegation is being raised, and any other identifying information;
- Dates when the concern arose, or when the incident occurred;
- The person's own words they used to describe the event or incident. Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of the words used;
- Details of any action already taken about the incident/concern/allegation;
- Do not be selective. Include details that to you may seem irrelevant. This may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation. All original records, including rough notes, should be passed immediately to the relevant DLP. Any copies of retained records should be kept secure and confidential.
- In cases of emergency (and/or outside normal business hours), where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, an urgent report must be made to Tusla, as well as to the DLP. Where the appropriate Tusla staff are not available, An Garda Síochána must be contacted to ensure that under no circumstances a child is left in a dangerous situation pending Tusla/Health and Social Services intervention (see direct option in Figure 2.1A1).

- In all cases, consideration should also be given as to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of forensic or other potential evidence (see direct option arrow in Figure 2.1A1).
- Explain to the person raising the concern what will happen next. You should inform the person making the suspicion, concern or allegation that their identity and the identity of the respondent and complainant will be shared with the statutory authorities. Leave contact details of the DLP if the referrer needs to ask questions later. The incident/concern should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know, apart from the statutory authorities and appropriate Church authorities detailed in these procedures.
- Written confirmation should be given to the person making the referral to the DLP that the information has been passed on to the statutory authorities. If this has not happened, an explanation should be recorded (this will not be possible when dealing with anonymous allegations).
- The appropriateness of the response given to a complainant is vital to ensure that they feel heard and taken seriously.

## **2.1B Responding to an Adult Making an Allegation of Abuse**

The role of the DLP is to receive all safeguarding concerns and to pass on to the statutory authorities those that reach the threshold of reasonable grounds for concern. It is often very difficult for people to talk about abuse, so it is important to make sure that a safe environment of listening carefully and actively is created, in which a complainant feels able to disclose as much as they can remember. This will help those people whose responsibility it is to investigate the incident do so as thoroughly as possible.

People may tell you about:

- Abuse that happened to them when they were a child;
- Something they've been told by someone else and that they strongly believe is true (disclosure);
- Seeing signs of abuse, such as physical injuries on a child;
- Something they have witnessed that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Where information is given in person:

- Adopt a listening style that 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;
- 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 their own pace;
- Check with the person to ensure that you have understood what they actually said. Use their words.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept, particularly in relation to confidentiality, but listen carefully to what is being sought in this regard;
- Explain the referral procedures to the person;
- Offer the services of a support person, if the support person is not present;
- Do not make any comments about the respondent; do not make assumptions or speculate;
- Be aware that a person's ability to recount their concern or allegation will depend on their age, culture, nationality or any disability that may affect speech or language;
- Avoid statements about your reaction to the information given;
- Do not question beyond checking what has been said. It is the responsibility of Tusla and An Garda Síochána to investigate. Do not probe for detail beyond that which has been freely given;
- Do not offer wording or language to the person making the allegation.



## 2.1C Responding to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse

In the event that a child tells you directly about abuse happening to them, the following general guidelines should be adhered to:

- Remain calm;
- Listen carefully and in a manner that conveys that they are being heard and taken seriously;
- Give the child the opportunity to tell their story in their own time;
- Ask questions only for clarification;
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you;
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep;
- Explain to the child what you are going to do, i.e. pass the information on to the statutory authorities, explain to them about the limits of confidentiality, etc.;
- The DLP will consult with Tusla about informing the child's parents/guardians. It is best practice to inform parents/guardians unless doing so would place the child at further risk;
- If the allegation/disclosure is about Church personnel, explain to the child (and their parents/guardians) that the matter will be reported to the statutory authorities and Church authorities.

*It is good practice in this situation to have another adult with you.*

## 2.1D Responding to an Anonymous Allegation of Abuse

Anonymous complaints/allegations are to be carefully considered, they cannot be disregarded. Anonymity might restrict the ability of professionals to access information or to intervene to protect a child therefore the complainant can be given time and encouragement to reconsider their stance on maintaining anonymity.

If you receive any information that relates to an allegation of abuse (current or past), you must pass this information onto the **DLP** who will consult with the appropriate statutory authorities.

## 2.1E Responding to someone who admits to 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 that happened a long time ago, **you must refer** the matter to the DLP as soon as possible. (*The DLP will follow the procedures for referral to Tusla, and An Garda Síochána*).

## 2.1F Responding to Someone who makes an Allegation that does not relate to Church Personnel

Whether or not a child protection concern involves a person in the Church, it is still the responsibility of everyone in the Church body to report it to the DLP, who will pass it on to the statutory authorities to ensure that children who may need help and protection are not left at risk of abuse. It is vital to remember that the safety and well-being of any child should be the paramount consideration in any investigation, and **children must never be put at further risk of harm by delay or inaction**. If a concern is raised in this way, the standard reporting procedure applies, although no further Church inquiry procedure or formal notification to the NBSCCI is required.

## **2.1G Child Safeguarding and the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

### *The Sacramental Seal*

All suspicions, concerns and allegations of child abuse must be reported to the statutory authorities. There is one **exception** to this rule, which is if abuse is disclosed during the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The maintenance of trust in the Sacrament of Reconciliation requires the guarantee of absolute confidentiality, allowing for no exceptions. This is known as the Seal of Confession and guarantees to the penitent that anything revealed to the confessor will not be divulged to anyone else. This is outlined in Canon 983, as shown below:

*(The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason).*

## **2.1H Responding to a Complainant who is Dissatisfied with how their Allegation has been Handled by the Church Authority**

The following process will be put in place, however this process is not a reinvestigation of the allegation, but a method of attempting to resolve complaints relating to how the allegation was handled by the Church authority.

**Stage 1:** Complaint is resolved through informal open dialogue with the Church authority.

All complaints of this nature should be resolved, if possible, through an open dialogue between the Church personnel involved and the complainant. Church personnel should use their best endeavours to resolve the complaint at this stage. However, if resolution is not achieved or the complainant is not happy with the outcome of discussions, then the Church personnel involved should advise the complainant that it is open to them to pursue the complaint, explaining Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. A written communication for and on behalf of the personnel involved, confirming the availability of Stage 2 of the procedure, should be sent to the complainant.

**Stage 2:** Formal internal complaints procedure is initiated:

- a) The complainant should write to the Church authority, setting out what their complaint is and how they would like it to be addressed.
- b) A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint to be issued to the complainant within seven days, enclosing a copy of the Church authority's complaints procedure.
- c) All complaints will be thoroughly investigated by a complaints officer.
- d) This complaints officer may organise a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. The complainant may invite a person to accompany them to any arranged meeting. This communication with the complainant may also take place by telephone if the complainant does not wish to meet. This should take place, if possible, within fourteen days of the letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint.
- e) Within seven days of the meeting or discussion with the complainant, the complaints officer will send written minutes to the complainant of what was discussed, and of any actions that were agreed upon.
- f) If the complainant is not agreeable to a meeting or discussion, or for some reason cannot participate in either, the complaints officer will issue a detailed written response to the complainant within twenty-one days of acknowledging receipt of the letter of complaint, setting out suggestions for resolving the matter.
- g) Whatever process is used, the Church authority should ensure that no more than eight weeks is taken to consider the complaint and to propose a resolution to the complainant.

- h) If there is no resolution at Stage 2, and if the complainant wishes to proceed further, a written request for a review can be sent to the NBSCCCI. This option of progressing to Stage 3 should be confirmed in writing to the complainant.

**Stage 3:** Handling of the complaint by the Church authority is reviewed by an independent Panel:

- a) The complainant should set out in writing to the chair of the NBSCCCI the nature of the original complaint about how their allegation was dealt with, their of experienced Stage 1 and Stage 2 of this complaints procedure, and how they would now like their complaint addressed.
- b) The request to the NBSCCCI for a review should be made within three months of the conclusion of the Church authority's internal complaints procedure (Stage 1 and Stage 2).
- c) The chair of the NBSCCCI will advise the Church authority that the request has been made and permission sought to refer the complaint onto an independent complaints panel.
- d) Any review will be an independent evaluation of whether the proper child protection procedures have been followed, and whether the appropriate standards and best practice guidance have been adhered to.
- e) The chair of the NBSCCCI will refer the complaint to the chair of the independent panel, who will appoint an appropriate person or persons to conduct this review.
- f) To assist this review process, the Church authority should make available to the complaints panel all written information about how the complainant's original allegation of abuse was investigated, as well as the written records of how Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the complaints procedure was conducted, and of the proposals made for a resolution of the complaint.
- g) To assist this review process, the relevant Church authority should make available for interview all Church personnel involved in the handling of the original allegation.
- h) Having examined all written information concerning the complaint, the reviewer can use discretion about the form and extent of any review or to discontinue the process, giving the reason.
- i) If, during the review, there are concerns about the abuse of a child, the reviewer will revert to the Church authority for their required action under Standard 2.
- j) The reviewers will keep notation of all meetings and will ask all those interviewed to sign a declaration that these are an accurate record of their discussion. These notes may be shared with all involved parties, at the discretion of the reviewer.
- k) The reviewer will compile a written report on their findings and recommendations. This report will then be shared with the NBSCCCI prior to submission to all parties.
- l) With the approval of the NBSCCCI, the chair of the complaints panel will submit the written report to all involved parties, with recommendations of actions to be taken within specified time frames. The sending out of this report marks the completion of Stage 3 of the complaints procedure.
- m) There will be no further recourse under this guidance if the complainant remains dissatisfied at the end of Stage 3.

## 2.1I Responding to Allegations against Church Authorities

The following are notified when an allegation relates to a Bishop and the threshold for reporting has been reached:

- The statutory authorities;
- The NBSCCCI;
- The archbishop presiding over the ecclesiastical provincial.

If the allegation relates to a bishop/archbishop/cardinal who is living in, but does not preside over, a diocese /ecclesiastical area in Ireland, and the threshold for reporting has been reached, the Bishop of the Diocese is notified.

If the allegation is about a provincial/community leader and the threshold for reporting has been reached, the above is followed with further notification to be adhered to by the religious community, i.e. to the superior general/current provincial, the above is followed with further notification to be adhered to by the religious community.

### **Responding**

The DLP is responsible for informing the respondent that the allegation has been received. The Bishop/Archbishop/ Cardinal who is responsible for dealing with the case will consult with National Case Management Committee.

## **Standard 3 - Care and Support for the Complainant**

### **Roles for Safeguarding Personnel in Relation to this Standard**

#### **Church authority**

The Church authority is responsible for ensuring that:

- A support person is appointed, or that procedures are in place to share the services of a support person if required;
- Practice and policy on the care of the complainant is compliant with statutory and canonical law;
- Complainants are met and facilitated to disclose abuse in an environment that meets their individual needs;
- Complainants are heard in a spirit of acceptance and trust;
- Appropriate assistance is offered to complainants and, as required, to their families;
- Counselling, support and information is given to children and adults who wish to make a complaint of abuse;
- Pastoral care is given to those who have been abused by Church personnel, where this is deemed helpful by the complainant.

#### **Designated liaison person (DLP)**

The DLP is responsible for:

- Attending the initial meeting with the complainant, if the complainant is agreeable to the meeting ;
- Ensuring that all appropriate internal and external inquiries are instigated;
- Ensuring that relevant information regarding contact with the complainant is recorded and stored appropriately in the case file;
- Keeping the Church authority updated regarding the health and well-being of the complainant;
- Liaising with the support person to ensure that support, advice and pastoral care is offered to the complainant. If relevant safeguarding concerns are raised with the support person by the complainant, the DLP must ensure that these are passed on to the civil authorities and to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI).

#### **Support person**

The support person is responsible for:

- Attending the initial meeting of the complainant with the DLP (if agreed in advance with the complainant) in order to support the complainant; keeping them informed of the progress of their case; and helping them to identify and access support;
- Ensuring that support is provided to complainants and their families, as requested and mutually agreed upon;
- Ensuring the complainant is offered pastoral care that meets their individual needs;
- Offering to arrange a pastoral meeting with the Church authority at an appropriate time during the process, if the complainant wishes;
- Recording any dates of meetings and/or contact they have with the complainant, and passing on relevant information to the DLP, as appropriate. They will not be responsible for managing the file but will pass on written records to the DLP, as appropriate, during regular meetings with them.

### **Advisory panel**

The advisory panel is responsible for:

- Providing advice to the Church authority, if required, with regard to the credibility of the complaint and the appropriateness of providing support to a complainant or their family;
- Creating a written record of its recommendation, and noting the matters upon which it has been asked to advise and the documents it has considered. These records should be passed to the DLP who will store them in the third-party information section of the case file.

### **NBSCCCI**

The NBSCCCI will:

- Be advised of safeguarding suspicions, concerns or allegations by the DLP, and retain records of this information;
- Offer advice and support to the people in the roles listed above and on the previous page, in relation to care and support for the complainant.

### **3.1A Pastoral Response to Complainants**

#### **Awareness of the impact of abuse on a complainant**

People who have been abused want to be heard and to have their very real pain acknowledged. Disclosing abuse takes enormous courage and calls for a high level of trust. Child abuse by its very nature can damage trust; it is therefore imperative that when a complainant is ready to tell their story, the listener responds with great sensitivity and compassion.

There will be a complex mix of feelings and emotions where abuse has been at the hands of someone the complainant has trusted, and even more so if the respondent holds a position of spiritual or moral responsibility. This may then include the challenging process of re-establishing relations with a faith community and with God.

#### **Initial contact**

Once an allegation has been received by the DLP, he/she will:

- Make contact with the complainant to arrange a meeting (unless this is against the wishes of the complainant):
- Offer a support person and, with the knowledge and agreement of the complainant, allow the support person to attend the initial meeting or to meet with the complainant immediately thereafter
- Offer the details of the Towards Healing counselling service.
- Inform the complainant that the allegation would be referred to Statutory authorities for advice / or referral.
- Keep the complainant updated on all aspects of the process
- Appropriate assistance is offered to complainants and, as required, to their families
- Counselling, support and information is given to children and adults who wish to make a complaint of abuse

None of the above actions should interfere with any criminal investigation.

#### **Meeting with the Church authority**

Once a process of pastoral care and support is in place, the DLP will offer to set up a meeting with the Church authority, if it is the wish of the complainant.

#### **Mediation**

The services of a mediator/facilitator may be used by common agreement between the complainant and the Church authority.

#### **Financial compensation**

Some complainants may wish to claim financial compensation for the harm they have suffered. All complainants should be advised of their right to seek legal advice if they wish to pursue a civil case against their alleged abuser and/or the Church authority. Complainants need to be informed of the adversarial nature of litigation and the inevitable process of disclosure involved.

### 3.2A Appropriate Personnel

Those who have alleged child abuse should receive a compassionate response from Church personnel and be offered access to appropriate care, advice and support. Each Church authority should have access to a support person who is available to those who make an allegation/disclosure of abuse, if the complainant so wishes.

### 3.3A Contacts for relevant National Organisations and Agencies

Disclosing abuse can be a significant milestone on the road to possible recovery. There are a number of organisations that specialise in working with complainants. Many of these are listed below.

#### All-Ireland Church bodies

- ***Towards Healing*** is an organisation that has expertise in providing a compassionate response to those who have experienced abuse. This service is funded by the Church, and offers direct services to survivors through a range of counselling, helpline and restorative justice approaches. More information can be found at [www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)
- ***Towards Peace*** offers spiritual support and guidance to survivors of abuse by Church personnel. For further information, visit [www.towardspeace.ie](http://www.towardspeace.ie)
- The Child and Family Agency – Tusla: [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)
- An Garda Síochána: [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)
- ISPCC: [www.ispcc.ie](http://www.ispcc.ie)
- Barnardos: [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)
- HSE National Counselling Service: [www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental\\_Health\\_Services/National\\_Counselling\\_Service/](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/National_Counselling_Service/)
- Rape Crisis Network of Ireland: [www.rcni.ie](http://www.rcni.ie)
- Children at Risk in Ireland (CARI): [www.cari.ie](http://www.cari.ie)
- One in Four: [www.oneinfour.ie](http://www.oneinfour.ie)
- Childline: 1800 666666
- CARI: 1890 924567
- Connect: [www.connectcounselling.ie](http://www.connectcounselling.ie)



## **Standard 4 - Care and Management of the Respondent**

### **Roles of Safeguarding Personnel in Relation to this Standard**

#### **Church authority**

The Church authority is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a DLP is appointed to manage the case, and that an advisor is appointed following consultation with the respondent to support them;
- Ensuring that practice and policy on care of the respondent is compliant with statutory and canonical law. This includes ensuring that (a) appropriate assistance is provided to those who have been accused of child abuse and, as required, to their families and (b) that counselling, support and information is offered to an adult who has disclosed that they have abused a child.

#### **Designated liaison person (DLP)**

The DLP is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all child safeguarding concerns are notified to the statutory authorities and to the National Board for Safeguarding Children (NBSCCCI);
- Ensuring that all appropriate internal and external inquiries are instigated;
- Ensuring that relevant information regarding contact with the respondent is recorded and stored appropriately in the case file;
- Keeping the Bishop updated regarding the respondent, and ensuring that support, advice and pastoral care is offered to the respondent;
- Attending the initial meeting with the respondent;
- Monitoring respondents.

#### **Advisor**

The advisor is, with the agreement of the respondent, responsible for:

- Attending the initial meeting with the respondent, the DLP and the Church authority in order to support them;
- Keeping them informed of the progress of their case;
- Directing them to counselling and support as necessary;
- Helping the respondent access both civil and canon law advice;
- Considering the respondent's wishes in regard to a pastoral response by the Church to their family;
- Identifying with the respondent any therapeutic or other needs they have, and suggesting how these may be best met;
- Recording any meetings or contact they have with the respondent and passing on relevant information to the DLP, as appropriate.

### **Advisory panel**

The advisory panel is responsible for providing advice to the Church authority with regard to:

- The credibility of the complaint;
- The appropriateness of providing help to a respondent or their family;
- The appropriateness of the respondent continuing in their present pastoral assignment, bearing in mind the paramount need to protect children;
- The respondent's right to due process and their right to the presumption of innocence until a determination is made about the veracity of the allegation;
- Whether a specialist risk assessment for the respondent should be sought;
- The needs of a parish or other community in which a respondent has served.

### **NBSCCCI**

The NBSCCCI will:

- Be advised of safeguarding, allegations, suspicions or concerns by the DLP, and retain records of this information;
- Offer advice and support to the people in the roles listed on the previous pages, in relation to care and management of the respondent.

### **Canon Lawyer**

A canon lawyer's role is to advise people about their rights and responsibilities under canon law. The interests and responsibilities of the Church authority are different from those of the respondent. It is therefore essential that they each have their own civil and canon lawyer. The respondent needs to be assisted to engage a civil lawyer and a canon lawyer to defend themselves and their rights.

### **National Case Management Committee (NCMC)**

The NCMC will offer advice and support to Church authorities who are members on any issue relating to the care of the respondent;

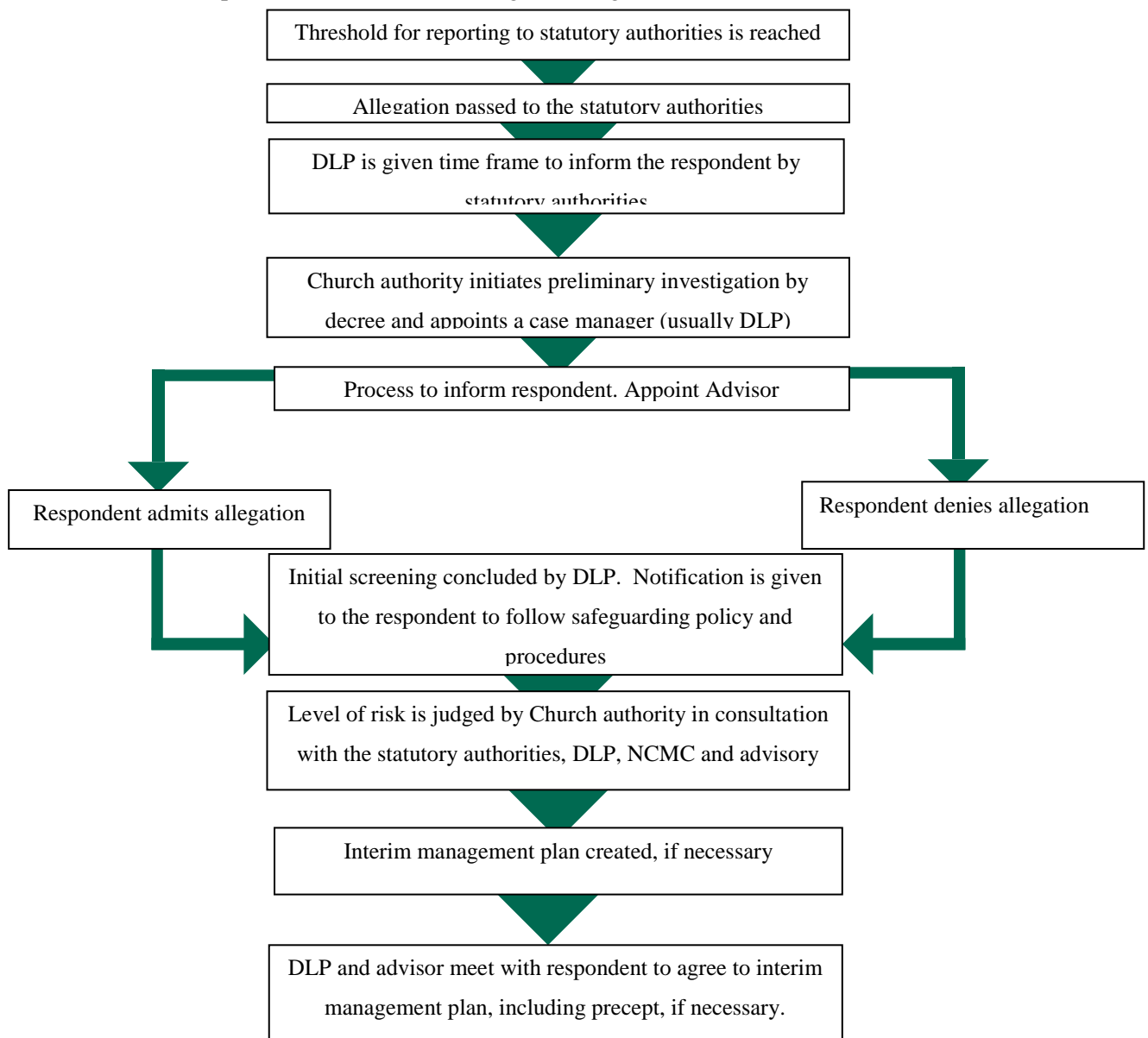
### 4.1A Appropriate Personnel

Those who have allegations of child abuse made against them should be offered access to appropriate advice and support. Each Church authority should have access to an advisor who is available to those about whom a suspicion, concern or allegation of child abuse has been made.

### 4.2A Informing the Respondent (Cleric and Religious) that an Allegation has been Received, and Consideration of an Interim Management Plan

A proper balance should be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights of respondents. Where there is conflict, the child’s welfare must come first.

The rights of respondents are important and are given due weight, once the safety and protection of children has been assured. The flow chart below shows the process for informing the respondent who is a cleric and should be read alongside the process outlined in Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations as outlined at 2.1A.



On receiving a complaint, if the threshold for reporting has been reached, the DLP will inform the statutory authorities, whose role it is to investigate the allegation and assess the risk to children. If there is any uncertainty about whether the suspicion, concern or allegation meets the threshold for reporting, the DLP should consult with the statutory authorities, who will advise on the requirements for notification.

If the threshold for reporting has been reached, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated by the Church authority. This canonical inquiry will be paused to allow any statutory investigation to take place.

The statutory authorities inform the DLP about when they can tell the respondent that a child abuse matter has arisen.

Following the approval of the statutory authorities, the Church authority arranges a meeting with the respondent. In arranging this meeting:

- The Church authority will inform the respondent that they will be accompanied by the DLP;
- The respondent should be offered the services of an advisor and the role description outlined to them;
- The respondent should be informed that they can be accompanied by another person at this meeting for their own support.

At the meeting:

- The respondent must be informed of their rights to both canonical and civil legal advice;
- The respondent must immediately be advised of their right to remain silent – they may admit, deny or decide not to respond at this stage;
- The respondent needs to be given enough detail about the suspicion, concern or allegation and about the person making it in order to be able to offer a response, if they choose to do so. However, if a written statement has been given by the complainant, this cannot be given to the respondent, but a summary of its content can be shared, *(once Statutory authorities have given permission to do so)*.

After the meeting:

- A dated, written record of the meeting is forwarded to the respondent for signing. This record should detail what they have been informed of, and their response.
- The respondent is given written information about the Church procedure, so that they are clear about the process that will be followed.

The Church authority will judge the level of risk in consultation with the statutory authorities, DLP, NCMC, advisory panel. A decision will be made at this stage as to whether an interim management plan is required which may include restrictions to sacred ministry.

The Diocese will:

- engage with the Respondent and support them while an investigation is undertaken.
- review its support and management where there is a finding of abuse.
- offer support to the Respondents family, where the respondent gives permission for this.
- offer support to parishes.

***Further guidance is given to the clergy of the Diocese on the process that is enacted with this standard.***

## **Standard 5 - Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe**

### **Roles of Safeguarding Personnel in Relation to this Standard**

#### **Church authority**

The Church authority is responsible for ensuring that:

- Those personnel who are in place have appropriate levels of training;
- A structure for appropriate support is available to all involved with the Church;
- Practice and policy on training is compliant with civil and canonical law.

The minimum requirement for the Church authority in terms of training is set out in the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland's (NBSCCCI) Training Strategy. This can be found on [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).

#### **Safeguarding committee**

The safeguarding committee is responsible for:

- Producing a three-year safeguarding plan. Part of this plan will include evidence of training that will be delivered to personnel across the Church body. To do this, an annual training needs analysis process needs to be completed;
- Coordinating trainers and local safeguarding representatives to deliver the training identified through the training needs analysis. This coordination includes correlation of training records and ensuring that training returns forms are sent to the NBSCCCI.

#### **Local safeguarding representative**

The LSR is responsible for:

- Delivering information sessions (if appropriate) to personnel who have been identified by the safeguarding committee. To deliver this training, the LSRs must be trained by a trainer who is registered with the NBSCCCI;
- Contributing to the training needs analysis carried out by the safeguarding committee.

## **5.1A Induction Process for All Involved in the Church**

As soon as possible after their appointment, all Church personnel should undertake an induction process. A core component of this must include child safeguarding.

A representative of the Church authority meets with the newly appointed member of Church personnel and makes her/him aware of the child safeguarding policy and procedures.

During this meeting:

- The newly appointed member of Church personnel is made aware that they will be required to attend a basic child safeguarding awareness training event, appropriate to their role.
- The newly appointed member of Church personnel is made aware of how to access support regarding their role - see 5.6A.

Following the meeting:

- Having been made aware of the child safeguarding policy and procedures, and having any questions about it answered by the appropriate representative of the Church authority, the newly appointed member of Church personnel is then asked to sign, date and return the Induction Agreement Form - Form 5.1A (1).

## **5.2B Training Needs Analysis**

Carrying out a training needs analysis is a critical step towards creating a Training Plan for the year ahead.

## **5.3A Delivery of Basic Safeguarding Awareness**

Current basic child safeguarding awareness is offered in two programmes:

1. Full-day training: this training lasts one day (or six hours) and covers the following four areas:
  - a. The seven safeguarding standards;
  - b. What is safeguarding?
  - c. Recognising, responding and reporting;
  - d. How to safeguard, and roles involved in safeguarding.
2. Information sessions: these sessions are shorter in length, and cover topics including the reporting procedures required under Standard 2.

**Who delivers the training:**

The child safeguarding committee of each Church body should coordinate training and its delivery. The local child safeguarding audits should be examined by the child safeguarding committee, who will make decisions regarding what level of training is required for the personnel. This process is completed using the training needs analysis, which forms part of the strategic three-year plan for the child safeguarding committee.

Full-day training will be delivered by trainers who have been registered with the NBSCCCI.

*(Information sessions are primarily delivered by trainers/members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Children committee, but these can also be delivered by local safeguarding representatives who have been trained by the registered trainers).*

**Who is the training delivered to:**

Using the information gathered from the local audit, the child safeguarding committee must make a decision as to the level of training required for each person, depending on their level of involvement with children. To do this, the following guidance should be used as a minimum requirement:

- For each Church activity that involves children, at least one leader/coordinator must attend the full-day training programme;
- All clergy/religious who are in active ministry with children must attend the full-day training programme;
- Any personnel with a key position of responsibility for child safeguarding must attend a full-day training programme (e.g. DLP, advisor, support person, child safeguarding committee member, advisory panel member, local safeguarding representative);
- All other Church personnel must be given the opportunity to attend an information session.

*Regardless of the level of training required, all Church personnel are required to abide by good child safeguarding practice.*

## **5.4A Role-Specific Training for Church Personnel**

The training needs analysis outlined at 5.2B will identify and training requirements/programmes that are considered necessary and appropriate for all Church personnel.

## **5.5A Raising Awareness of Child Safeguarding with Children and their Parents/Guardians in the Church**

The participation of children and guardians in child safeguarding awareness initiatives is an important component in safeguarding children. Children and guardians should be actively engaged in Church child safeguarding initiatives, where possible and appropriate.

Child and guardian participation helps to empower children and guardians, to promote awareness of child safeguarding, and to create safe environments where children have ‘permission to tell’.

Children’s perspectives and experiences help to support efforts to consolidate effective child protection systems and uphold a culture of respect for children’s rights in society.

### **Designing workshops with young people**

When designing workshops for children involved in Church activities, consider the following:

- It is important to remember that the discussion of safeguarding with young people must be appropriate to the age level and ability of the children in each group and it is vital that parents/guardians are made aware of this and encouraged to participate where possible;
- Safeguarding awareness workshops happen routinely in schools and during youth activities, but young people do not always make the link between what happens in school and its applicability in a Church setting, therefore it is important to reinforce these messages in an age-appropriate way;
- Workshops should be focused on the importance of young people telling someone if they are being hurt; they should not reinforce messages that frighten or upset them;
- Workshops should highlight a number of people whom children can go to report abuse, such as their parents/guardians, teachers, Church group leaders, the DLP, Childline, etc.;
- Attendance records of these workshops, and the plan for the workshop itself, should be retained and stored appropriately.

### **Skills**

Not everyone has the required skills to work with children/young people, and any work undertaken with them around safeguarding should only be carried out by people who have the necessary skills. Church authorities are encouraged to identify volunteers or professionals within their Church body with these skill sets, should they decide to undertake awareness-raising workshops with young people.

### **Resources**

When developing any work with children, it is important that links are established with relevant people and organisations in the locality. This is done so that their advice and support can be sought, and that any work carried out should be in line with the guidance provided in Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments.

## **5.6A Support and Supervision**

Everyone who becomes involved in dealing with child abuse, requires support. This is most obvious for the person who has been abused, but those whose task it is to assist complainants and their families, or to assist respondents and their families, or to act as parish safeguarding representatives or trainers, or in any other child safeguarding capacity, need to be supported. Some of these people also need to be supervised.

### **What does support mean**

The term ‘support’ includes a number of different activities, which allow a person:

- To give encouragement to someone or something because you want them or it to succeed;
- To help someone emotionally or in a practical way.

It can be provided in face-to-face meetings, or by phone calls, emails, etc. It is supportive to let someone know that they are being thought about positively, and that they can seek assistance if they need to.



### **Who needs support**

A structure of appropriate support should be made available to all of those affected by child safeguarding in the Church, including:

- The complainant and their family;
- The respondent and their family;
- Lay faithful who have been affected by an allegation of abuse;
- Priests/religious who are not the respondent, but who have been affected by an allegation of abuse against a colleague;
- Safeguarding personnel;
- The Church authority.

The nature of the support provided will depend on the need expressed and/or identified. It may vary from outreach, where the initiative is taken to contact and stay in touch, to the provision of information, making counselling available or providing and facilitating a support group.

*In the event of there being a requirement for support/supervision full Guidance is available on the National Board's website - [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie). Advice and support is also available from the Cloyne Diocesan Children Safeguarding Office (022-21009).*

## **Standard 6 - Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message**

### **Roles of Safeguarding Personnel in Relation to this Standard**

#### **Church authority**

The Church authority is responsible for:

- Ensuring that practice and policy with regard to communication is compliant with civil and canon law.

#### **Safeguarding committee**

The safeguarding committee is responsible for:

- Producing a three-year child safeguarding plan. Part of this plan will include evidence that a communications plan is developed and implemented across the Church body. To do this, an annual child safeguarding communications plan needs to be developed;
- Coordinating local safeguarding representatives in the development of a communications plan. This coordination involves consultation with key stakeholders, including children and guardians, regarding the plan.

#### **Local safeguarding representative (LSR)**

The LSR is responsible for:

- Working with the safeguarding committee to consult with key members of the community, including children, guardians and other personnel who have been identified by the safeguarding committee in the compilation of a communications plan;
- Checking that methods of communication are effective and in place. This information should be communicated to the safeguarding committee as part of the consultation and evaluation phases of developing and reviewing a communications plan.

## **6.1A Communication Plan**

As part of the Diocesan ‘Safeguarding Children, 3 Year Strategic Plan’, an annual communications plan has been developed and published. Actions relating to parishes are included in the ‘Parish Checklist’ forming part of this document, and at 6.2A, below.

## **6.2A Ensuring that Information Regarding the Church’s Child**

### **Safeguarding Message is Accessible**

A key part of child safeguarding is ensuring that the methods used to communicate information on the Church’s child safeguarding message are accessible and appropriate and may include:

- Public poster for adults, with information about what to do if there is a child safeguarding concern, including contact details for appropriate child safeguarding personnel. *This poster, signed by the Bishop, and forwarded to each parish should be displayed in areas with public access, including residences of priests and religious to which children have access.* There is no requirement to put up this child safeguarding poster in private homes connected with the Church body if no public ministry with children takes place there;
- Child safeguarding leaflets for parents/guardians/adults about how the Church responds to child safeguarding concerns, the management of allegations and access to counselling and support;
- Posters/Leaflets for children about what to do if they have a child safeguarding concern, including contact details for appropriate child safeguarding personnel;
- The child safeguarding policy in concise/reader-friendly accessible formats;
- Relevant events such as ‘Designated Safeguarding Sundays’ (Q.1 each year).
- The regular dissemination of safeguarding awareness in local church bulletins (Q.2 & Q.4 each year)
- The dissemination of the Diocesan newsletter that detail child safeguarding practices (Q. 3 each year)

## **6.3A Communicating Appropriately to those whose First Language is not English, and to those who have Specific Needs**

The Church authority needs to be aware of the particular requirements of those whose first language is not English. It is important that informative material is translated into the appropriate language so that all children and their parents/guardians are made aware of the child safeguarding practices in their parish or religious congregation. Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Office 022-21009, will assist in this regard. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) provides additional child safeguarding resources in a range of formats. Their website is [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk).

Children who have specific needs because of disability or other vulnerabilities require extra care and attention. They may find it more difficult to access support and advice services because they may not have the communication skills needed to disclose what is happening to them. They may rely on adults to provide for their most intimate care, and so find it challenging to speak about any concerns they may have about such an adult.

A number of services are available in formats that are appropriate to young people with specific needs.

**Childline text support:** Childline run a free text service for children and young people. Children often find it easier to text rather than talk on the phone if they have a worry or concern. Information on a range of issues is available through text. Text ‘Talk’ to 50101;

It is important when communicating with young people with specific needs that the information on the services above is made accessible by being posted alongside appropriate codes of behaviour about the care of children with specific needs, and that it is also made known to parents and guardians.

Where written information is not appropriate, visual images should be developed to indicate to children how they can raise a concern.

## **6.4A Counselling and Support Service**

### **Counselling and support services**

There are a number of counselling and support services that can offer support and advice to Church personnel, parents/guardians and children in relation to child safeguarding matters, including:

- [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)
- [www.ispcc.ie](http://www.ispcc.ie)
- [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)
- [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie)
- [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)
- [www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie)
- [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

## **Standard 7 - Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards**

### **Roles of Safeguarding Personnel in Relation to this Standard**

#### **Church Authority**

The Church authority is responsible for:

- Appointing a safeguarding committee and designated liaison person (DLP) and ensuring that they carry out their function in relation to monitoring effectively;
- Carrying out systematic assessments of the standards through visits to local areas of responsibility.

#### **Safeguarding Committee**

The safeguarding committee is responsible for:

- Liaising with the local safeguarding representatives (LSRs) to ensure the compilation of a local safeguarding audit, and to identify areas where guidance and support on policy or practice is needed;
- Ensuring that an annual safeguarding report on Standards 1, 5 and 6 is made to the Church authority;
- Ensuring that records in relation to safeguarding matters are produced and stored securely.

#### **Local safeguarding representatives**

The LSR is responsible for:

- Working with the safeguarding committee to ensure the completion of the local safeguarding audit.

#### **Local safeguarding committee/council**

The local safeguarding committee/council can be involved in ensuring that diocesan or congregational child safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and implemented. This includes carrying out the annual local safeguarding audit and feeding back to the safeguarding committee.

#### **Designated liaison person (DLP)**

The DLP is responsible for:

- Completing a report to the Church Authority on an annual basis, outlining compliance with Standards 2, 3 and 4.

### **7.1A Ensuring Compliance with the Seven Standards at Local Level**

Quality assurance procedures are a systematic method of assessing the extent to which the seven child safeguarding standards are implemented at all levels within the Diocese. This is an important method of ensuring that a process of continuous improvement takes place, and of demonstrating accountability and transparency.

Quality assurance is done by applying the following methods:

1. Members of the Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee will visit parishes to assess compliance and to ensure that there is an awareness of child safeguarding, and that effective practice is being implemented.

The items to be examined during these visits may include, for example:

- a. Recruitment/Vetting arrangements
- b. Attendance registers
- c. Use of Parish Facilities.
- d. Notice Boards - Display of Safeguarding posters
- e. Parish Bulletins/Notices on Safeguarding
- f. Minutes/agendas of Safeguarding Meetings
- g. Codes of conduct for groups of children
- h. Previous year's annual child safeguarding audit from the parish.

The visit will, as far as possible, involve the local safeguarding representatives, the local safeguarding committee and the priests of the parish and may coincide with a Parish Information Session.

2. The Annual Parish 'self-audit', coordinated by the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will be carried out in Quarter 4 of each year. ***(It is important that the completed audit is returned by the specified date as confirmation of the completion of the audit has to be forwarded to the National Board.)***
3. The Church Authority may engage an independent person/organisation to review the quality of compliance at any time.

## Appendix A - Parish Checklist

The following checklist will assist in the implementation of the Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures and ensure that important elements are not overlooked.

The Diocesan Policy, Procedures and Forms are available at [www.safeguardingchildrencloyne.ie](http://www.safeguardingchildrencloyne.ie).

*Copies may be supplied as appropriate.*

The full National Board Policy & Guidance is available at [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie) and advice/support is available from the Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children's Office (022-21009):-

### General Requirements:

- a) Display the **Safeguarding Poster** signed by the Bishop, in all appropriate places
- b) **Confidentiality Declaration Form** - Form 1.1A (5) should be signed by all persons who have access to the personal data of others, i.e. priests, sacristans, acting sacristans, parish office staff, local safeguarding representatives, parish safeguarding committee members, etc. - *forms should be securely stored locally.*
- c) **Visiting Clergy** – 1.1C & 1.1D
- d) Ensure that the **Attendance Register for Sacristy** is in place - Sacristy Register Form - Form 1.4A(2), *completed records should be securely stored locally.*
- e) **Use of parish facilities by external groups** involving children - 1.5A [Application Form - Form 1.5A(1)], *completed forms should be securely stored locally.*
- f) **Use of parish facilities for one off private events** involving children - 1.5B [Protocol Form 1.5B(1)], *completed forms should be securely stored locally.*
- g) **Reporting allegations/suspensions/concerns of abuse** - Referral Form - Form 2.1A(1)
- h) **Agreement by all Church personnel** – Induction Agreement Form - Form 5.1A(1), *should be signed by all Church personnel and securely stored locally.*
- i) **Support & Supervision** - 5.6A, as appropriate - **records of support/supervision meetings should be securely stored locally.**
- j) Maintain an up to date **register/listings of groups and organisations** associated with the Church, i.e. choir, ministers of Holy Communion, readers, etc.
- k) Maintain an up to date **register with the name of the person in charge** of all groups and organisations associated with the Church
- l) Participate in the **Diocesan Designated Safeguarding Sunday** during Q1, each year
- m) Include **Safeguarding information/awareness in Parish Bulletins** during Q.2 & Q.4, each year - *copies of the bulletins in question should be stored locally, for audit purposes.*
- n) Disseminate the **Diocesan Safeguarding Newsletter** during Q.3, each year
- o) Complete and return the **Parish Audit** during the timeframe specified in Q.4, each year.

**Recruitment Requirements;**

- a) **Paid Staff** - 1.1A - *original forms should be securely stored, locally.*
- b) Provide clear job description - *where post involves working with children*
- c) Complete **Application Form** - Form 1.1A (2), as appropriate- *where post involves working with children and securely store, locally*
- d) Complete **Declaration Form** -Form 1.1A (3) **and securely store, locally**
- e) Ensure **References** are sought & checked - Form 1.1A(4) *and securely stored, locally*
- f) Ensure **Vetting** is completed - 1.1B - **where post involves working with children complete Form - NVB1** (available on line) - a list of those vetted should be maintained and *vetting return forms should be securely stored, locally*

**Volunteers NOT working with children, should be familiarised with;**

- a) **Diocesan Safeguarding Policy**
- b) **Code of behaviour for adults** - 1.2A
- c) Dealing with **breaches of the code of behaviour** -1.3B
- d) **Whistleblowing policy** -1.6A
- e) **Complaints procedure (not involving allegations of abuse)** - 1.7A [Complaints Form - Form 1.7A(1)], *completed forms should be securely stored locally*

**Children and parents/guardians should be familiarised with;**

- a) Child friendly version of the safeguarding policy (*poster*)
- b) **Code of behaviour for children** - 1.3A
- c) Dealing with **breaches of the code of behaviour** - 1.3B
- d) Procedures on **anti-bullying** - 1.3C
- e) **Joint Consent Form** - Form 1.4A(3), *signed forms should be securely stored, locally.*
- f) Procedures - **children with special needs** - 1.4F, as appropriate
- g) **Complaints procedure (not involving allegations of abuse)** - 1.7A [Complaints Form - Form 1.7A(1)], *completed forms should be securely stored locally*
- h) Procedures on the use of (a) **Technology** - 1.9A [Media Permission Form - Form 1.9A(1)]; (b) **Internet** - 1.9B; (c) **Texting & Email** - 1.9C; (d) **Photography** -1.9D and (e) **CCTV & Webcams** -1.9E, as necessary



**Volunteers/Groups working with children should be familiarised with;**

- a) **Diocesan Safeguarding Policy**
- b) **Code of behaviour for adults** - 1.2A
- c) **Code of behaviour for children** - 1.3A
- d) Dealing with **breaches of the codes of behaviour** -1.3B
- e) Procedures on **anti-bullying** - 1.3C
- f) **Attendance Register** which should be completed by the group leader for every meeting of the group - 1.4A [Attendance Form - Form 1.4A(1)], *completed forms should be securely stored locally.*
- g) Procedures on **dealing with accidents/incidents** - 1.4B [Accident/Incident Form - Form 1.4B (1)], *completed forms should be securely stored, locally.*
- h) **Supervision ratios** - 1.4C
- i) Procedures on **one – one contact** - 1.4D
- j) Procedures on **Pope John Paul 11 Awards** - 1.4E, as applicable.
- k) Participation of **children with special needs** - 1.4F, as appropriate
- l) **Trips away** - 1.4G, where applicable
- m) **Whistleblowing policy** -1.6A
- n) **Complaints procedure (not involving allegations of abuse)** -1.7A [Complaints Form - Form 1.7A(1)], *completed forms should be securely stored, locally*
- o) **Hazard assessment** - 1.8A [Form 1.8A - Template 1]
- p) Procedures on the use of:- (a) **Technology** - 1.9A [Media Permission Form - Form 1.9A(1)]; (b) **Internet** - 1.9B; (c) **Texting & Email** - 1.9C; (d) **Photography** -1.9D and (e) **CCTV & Webcams** -1.9E, as necessary

## Appendix B - Definitions of Abuse and Child Pornography

### Republic of Ireland (Children First)

#### Abuse

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, that is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

#### Physical abuse can involve:

- severe physical punishment;
- beating, slapping, hitting, kicking, pushing, shaking or throwing; pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
- terrorising with threats;
- observing violence;
- use of excessive force in handling;
- deliberate poisoning;
- suffocation;
- fabricated/induced illness
- allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

**Emotional abuse** is usually found in the relationship between a parent/guardian and a child, rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples may include:

- the imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- conditional parenting, in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on their behaviours or actions;
- emotional unavailability of the child's parent/guardian;
- unresponsiveness of the parent/guardian and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave or control themselves in a certain way;
- under-protection or over-protection of the child;
- failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- use of unreasonable or overly harsh disciplinary measures;
- exposure to domestic violence;
- exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through technology.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour. The threshold of significant harm is

reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/guardian.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when a child is used by another person for their own gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include:

- exposure of the sexual organs, or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;
- intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child, whether by a person or object, for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- masturbation in the presence of the child, or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation;
- sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal;
- sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or a sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the ‘grooming’ process by perpetrators of abuse;
- consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In relation to child sexual abuse, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is seventeen years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case.

**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/or medical care.

Harm can be defined as the ill treatment or impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child’s health and development, as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of a similar age.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time, rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having their needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.

The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that their well-being and/or development are severely affected.

### **Child pornography**

The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998, which is amended by Section 6 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Act 2007, makes it an offence to possess, produce, distribute, print or publish child pornography. The Catholic Church in its canon law includes the possession of, or downloading from the internet of, paedophilic pornography as a grave delict.

## Appendix C - Contact Details for Child Safeguarding and Counselling Services

**Designated Liaison Person (DLP) - Cloyne Diocese** : 086-0368999

**An Garda Siochana:** [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

*For allegations that relate to clerics/religious* : 01-6663430 or 01-6663435

*For allegations that **do not** relate to clerics/religious* : Appropriate Local Garda Station

**The Child and Family Agency (Tusla):** [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

Cobh/Midleton/Macroom areas : 021-4927000

Mallow/Fermoy areas : 022-54100

**Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Office** - 022-21009: [www.safeguardingchildrencloyne.ie](http://www.safeguardingchildrencloyne.ie)

**National Board for Safeguarding Children** - 01-5053124: [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie)

**ISPCC:** [www.ispcc.ie](http://www.ispcc.ie)

**Barnardos:** [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

**HSE National Counselling Service:** [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

**Rape Crisis Network of Ireland:** [www.rcni.ie](http://www.rcni.ie)

**Children at Risk in Ireland (CARI):** [www.cari.ie](http://www.cari.ie)

**One in Four:** [www.oneinfour.ie](http://www.oneinfour.ie)

**Childline:** 1800 666666 - [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie): **Childline text support** - Text 'Talk' to 50101;

**CARI:** 1890 924567

**Connect:** [www.connectcounselling.ie](http://www.connectcounselling.ie)

**Towards Healing** is an organisation that has expertise in providing a compassionate response to those who have experienced abuse - [www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)

**Towards Peace** offers spiritual support and guidance to survivors of abuse: [www.towardspeace.ie](http://www.towardspeace.ie)

In addition to the above the following counselling and support services can also be availed of by Church personnel, parents/guardians and children in relation to child safeguarding matters:

- [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)
- [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie)
- [www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie)
- [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)