

Safeguarding Children Procedures & Forms for Volunteers, Group Leaders, Parents and Children

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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.)

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.

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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

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Designated Liaison Person (DLP)	:	086-0368999
An Garda Siochana:-		
<i>For allegations that relate to clerics/religious</i>	:	01-6663430 or 01-6663435
<i>For allegations that do not relate to clerics/religious</i>	:	Appropriate Local Garda Station
Tusla		
Cobh/Midleton/Macroon 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.

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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 : 15th February 2017

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1.2A Code of Behaviour for Adults

The following code of behaviour should be applied as a minimum standard for all Church personnel who work with children. Church personnel should be clear about what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working 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.

It is important for all personnel to:

- Treat all children and adults with equal respect and dignity;
- Treat all children equally;
- Respect the privacy of children at all times;
- Model positive, appropriate behaviour to all children they come into contact with;
- Be aware of the Church's child protection and child safeguarding policy;
- Develop a culture of openness, honesty and safety;
- Help children to know what they can do if they have a problem;
- Be aware of their responsibility for the safety of all children in their care;
- Work in open environments;
- Be cognisant of the imbalance in power inherent in adult-child relationships;
- Never engage in, or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying;
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour;
- Never spend a disproportionate amount of time with any particular child or group of children or show favouritism;
- Develop a culture where it is safe for children to ask questions and to tell/talk about their concerns and their contacts with staff and others openly, confident in the knowledge that what they say will be heard, taken seriously and acted upon;
- Respect each child's boundaries and help children to develop a sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem;
- Appoint a clearly designated leader within each group with whom children and other leaders can raise concerns;

Adults must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children;
- Develop sexual relationships with children;
- Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in any way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse;
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- Do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do themselves;
- Condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Act in any way that is intended to intimidate, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade;

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- Engage in discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation or political views;
- Consume alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs while having responsibility for or in the presence of children/young people;
- Give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children;
- Give their own personal details to children unless absolutely necessary;

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Take children away or to your own home, especially where they will be alone with you;
- Involve children in one-to-one contact; activities should usually be supervised by at least two adults (1.4C). However, there may be two circumstances where this may occur:
 - I. 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 (1.3A);
 - II. As part of a planned structured piece of work (for example one-to-one music tuition).
- Undertake any car/minibus journey alone with a child. If, in certain circumstances, only one adult is available there should be a minimum of two children present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, make a record of this and inform the child's parents or guardians as soon as possible. Inform a colleague at the time if the parents/guardians are not available.

General:

Personal details of children should be held only in accordance with diocesan and parish policy;

Children should be contacted via their parents/guardians/carers, except in emergencies, where such contact may not be possible;

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.

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

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1.6A Whistle-Blowing – *See revised National Board’s Guidance/Record Form on homepage of website*

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.

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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.

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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.

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FORM 1.7A(1) - Complaints Form

All complaints arising during a Church-related activity (with the exception of complaints about child abuse) should attempt to be resolved by discussion between the parties involved. If this is not possible, this form should be completed and sent to the Church authority.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone number: _____

Details of complaint (continue on separate sheet if necessary).

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____