



DIOCESE OF KERRY

SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK

2019

Safe Environments

Child Protection Procedures

Management of Respondents

Care of Complainants

Communication

Training and Support

Quality Assurance



Content

Introduction	3
Concise version of the National Policy for Safeguarding Children	3
The Commitment of the Diocese of Kerry	3
Section 1: Recruitment	4
Voluntary roles that involve working with children	4
Employees in paid positions that involve working with children	4
Section 2: Vetting and Diocesan Safeguarding Training Programme	5
How to know when vetting is necessary	5
How to apply for vetting	5
Vetting of young people between 16 and 18 years of age	6
Appeals	7
Diocesan Safeguarding Training Programme	7
Section 3: Safeguarding checklists	8
Priests and Deacons in full-time ministry	8
Retired Priests of the Diocese of Kerry	8
Retired Priests from outside the Diocese	8
Visiting Priests	9
Parish Safeguarding Representatives	10
Altar Servers	11
Choir groups	12
Sacristans	12
Section 4: Parish groups working with children	13
Code of behaviour for adults working with children	13
Code of behaviour for children and young people	14
Supervision ratios	14
One-to-one contact with children and young people	15
Participation of children with specific needs	16
Trips away with young people	17
Dealing with accidents involving children	18
Preventing bullying	19
Hazard assessment of activities with children	19
Use of technology – internet, texting/email, photography, cctv/webcam	20
Section 5: Reporting procedures	25
Complaints procedure	25
Whistle-blowing procedure	26
Reporting allegations of abuse	27
Section 6: Use of Church property that involves children	28
External groups who use church property	28
Use of Church property and hire for private functions	29



Introduction

Concise version of the National Policy for Safeguarding Children

The Safeguarding Children Policy for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 was developed and issued by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI).

The aim of the policy and guidance documents are:

1. To develop up-to-date best practice in all aspects of child safeguarding.
2. To ensure the principles and practices of effective safeguarding procedures are in place.
3. Respond appropriately to allegations or suspicions of child abuse at every level throughout the Catholic Church in Ireland.

The full version of the National Safeguarding Children Policy and guidance is available on the National Board's website at www.safeguarding.ie

The Commitment of the Diocese of Kerry

The diocese has committed itself to working in partnership and complying with the statutory authorities. Bishop Ray Browne has adopted the policy issued by the NBSCCCI for the Diocese of Kerry, 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 (clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) must comply with the safeguarding children policy, procedures and guidance. A Child Safeguarding Policy Statement is displayed in all churches throughout the Diocese. In addition, a Child Safeguarding Statement in line with Children First Act 2015 is available from the diocesan website.

This Safeguarding Handbook is a practical tool to help parishes with the day-to-day aspects of safeguarding. Further information relating to safeguarding and all forms referenced in this handbook are available from the diocesan website <http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/>

For queries relating to safeguarding please contact Safeguarding Children Office, Diocesan Office, Cathedral Walk, Killarney, 064 6631168.



Section 1: Recruitment

The recruitment procedures are relevant for roles that involve working with children.

Voluntary roles that involve working with children

Individuals who wish to volunteer in activities that involve children are required to complete the *Volunteer Application Form*. If the applicant is unknown to the Priest of the Parish / Parish Safeguarding Representative, the names and contact details of two people who are not relatives of the volunteer should be provided for reference purposes.

In the circumstance where the applicant is known to the Priest of the Parish / Parish Safeguarding Representative, it is necessary for him/her to sign as a referee stating that they believe the person to be in good standing and appropriate for the role. In either case references must be complete.

All of this information is clearly laid out in the *Volunteer Application Form* - available from the diocesan website. Subsequent to the recruitment process the following is required before a person can take up their voluntary role:

- References checked.
- Proof of qualifications, where applicable.
- Garda vetted by the Diocese of Kerry.
- Receive copy of *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*.
- Read and complete the *Agreement for Adults working with Children Form*.

The above process does not apply to parents of altar servers who assist with their supervision in the sacristy. If a parent is supervising their own child in the sacristy vetting is not required. If a parent is supervising their own child, as well as other children in the sacristy, vetting is required.

Employees in paid positions that involve working with children

All applicants interested in applying for a paid role in the parish that involves working with children must complete the *Employee Application Form* - available from the diocesan website. All applicants must provide two references as part of their application. The selection process must also include an interview for the position. The recruitment / selection checklist is available from the diocesan website to assist parishes with this process.

The successful applicant will be offered a position subject to:

- References checked.
- Proof of qualifications, where applicable.
- Garda vetted by the Diocese of Kerry.
- Receive copy of *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*.
- Read and complete the *Agreement for Adults working with Children Form*.



Section 2: Vetting and Diocesan Safeguarding Training Programme

Vetting: How to know when vetting is necessary

A person requires vetting when a necessary and regular part of their work consists of the person having access to, or contact with, children and/or adults who may be vulnerable.

Vetting is not necessary when contact with children and/or adults who may be vulnerable is merely incidental to your work or activity. The full guidance on vetting is available from the National Safeguarding Children Guidance Document (www.safeguarding.ie).

If you have any doubts or queries regarding the requirement for vetting you should seek advice from the Safeguarding Children Office, Diocesan Office, Killarney, 064 6631168.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Kerry to renew vetting every 5 years.

Who requires vetting?

- 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.
- 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.
- Eucharistic Ministers who provide communion to non-family members 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.

How to apply for Vetting

All vetting in the Diocese will be conducted through the e-vetting online system. The *Vetting Invitation Form (NVB1)* is available to download from the diocesan website.

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 the form in the presence of an authorised person.



Authorised persons are:

- Bishop/Parish Priest/Administrator/Curate.
- Parish Safeguarding Representative.
- Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

The authorised person must:

- Fill in Section 3, in legible writing:
- See the proofs of identity, make a copy of them.
- Return the *NVB1 Form* and copies of proofs of identity to Vetting Office, Diocesan Office, Cathedral Walk, Killarney, Co. Kerry.
- Keep copy of *NVB1 Form* in the parish office.

The applicant must provide a valid email address. Any forms that are not fully complete will be returned to the parish. If the applicant does not have an email address, the applicant should ask a family member, friend or parish for permission to cite their email address, or to help them set one up for the purposes of 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. Vetting outcomes will only be sent to the official parish email address and cannot be sent to personal email addresses.

The signed original vetting invitation form must be forwarded to the Vetting Office, Diocesan Office, Cathedral Walk, Killarney, Co. Kerry, for processing.

Once the Diocesan Vetting Co-ordinator has uploaded the *NVB1 Form* the applicant is then invited by email by the National Vetting Bureau to fill in their details online within one month.

Once their application is processed, the National Vetting Bureau will send the Disclosure Form onto the Diocesan Vetting Co-ordinator. Vetting disclosures will be stored on the Diocesan Database. Vetting approval certification will be sent to the applicant and the Parish/Diocesan Agency requesting vetting. The applicant cannot commence the role/position until this vetting approval is received by the Parish/Diocesan Agency that requests it.

When everyone co-operates, vetting approval can be achieved within 10 days of submitting the application.

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 *NVB3 Form* - available from the diocesan website. The email address provided on the vetting invitation form (*NVB1* 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.



Appeals

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.

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.

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 Diocese of Kerry Safeguarding Children Office (064 6631168). An Appeals Panel will be appointed by the Diocese to process any appeals.

Diocesan Safeguarding Training Programme

Diocesan Safeguarding Training is offered on an annual basis. Training dates are available from the diocesan website. It is a national requirement for participants to attend the full-day training in order to receive certification. It is also a requirement to renew training every 3 years.

Who should attend training?

- All Priests, including active retired Priests who assist with parish duties.
- Sacristans.
- Parish Safeguarding Representatives.
- Choir Leaders (if members of the choir are under 18 years of age).
- Leaders of any parish group with under 18s in attendance.

Who does not need to attend training?

- Retired Priests who only concelebrate at Masses where the Priest of the Parish is always present.
- Parents of altar servers who provide supervision in the sacristy.



Section 3: Safeguarding checklists

Safeguarding requirements for Priests ministering in the Diocese

Within the Diocese Priests work across a variety of settings therefore it is necessary to identify the requirements for Priests in various contexts.

Priests and Deacons in full-time ministry

- Valid celebret
- Vetting approval (renew every 5 years)
- Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)
- Read and sign *Agreement for Adults working with Children Form*

The following is required for 'active retired' Priests of the Diocese. A priest is considered as active retired if the Priest of the Parish can call upon the retired Priest to cover some Parish duties.

Retired Priests of Diocese of Kerry

Active retired Priests of the Diocese

- Valid celebret
- Vetting approval (renew every 5 years)
- Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)
- Read and sign *Agreement for Adults working with Children Form*

Fully retired Priests of the Diocese who occasionally concelebrate at Masses

- Valid celebret

Any Priest planning to retire to the Diocese should be put in contact with the Diocesan Office so that the Bishop can welcome him; and make contact with his own Diocese regarding letters of clearance.

Retired Priests from outside the Diocese

Active retired Priests from outside the Diocese

- His Bishop to complete the *Confirmation of Good Standing Form*
- Valid celebret
- Vetting approval (renew every 5 years). Option to share vetting via own Church Body
- Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)
- Read and sign *Agreement for Adults working with Children Form*

Fully retired Priests from outside the Diocese who occasionally concelebrate at Masses

- His Bishop to complete the *Confirmation of Good Standing Form*
- Valid celebret



Visiting Priests: (ministering short term; including concelebration)

Once off ministry: 1-3 days including weddings, funerals, baptisms

- Valid celebrant or current letter of good standing

Holiday or weekend cover of Masses (presuming overall cover is being provided by the Priests of the Pastoral Area)

- Valid celebrant
- On-going cover will require Garda Vetting

Missions or Novenas

- Valid celebrant
- Provide document from their Church Authority confirming a list of those taking part and identifying that they are in good standing and have been vetted.

Where a Parish Priest has the assistance of a Priest from outside the Diocese, for a number of weeks or months, in any context, and is uncertain about safeguarding requirements, please contact the Diocesan Office.



Parish Safeguarding Representatives

Parish Safeguarding Representatives support the Parish Priest / Administrator in maintaining safeguarding standards in the Parish area. It is recommended that each Parish has two Safeguarding Representatives.

✓ Checklist for Parish Safeguarding Representatives

- Complete Volunteer Application Form
- Vetting approval (renew every 5 years)
- Receive copy of *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*
- Read and sign *Agreement for Adults Working with Children Form*
- Attend full-day Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)

Role of the Parish Safeguarding Representatives

1. Check that all adults who supervise children are:
 - Vetted (renew every 5 years).
 - Attended Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years).
 - Have signed *Agreement for Adults Working with Children Form*.
2. Have access to where records of this information are stored.
3. Conduct an annual check of this information to ensure it is up-to-date.
4. Inform Parish Priest / Moderator / Secretary if person needs to renew vetting / training.
5. Parish Priest / Moderator / Secretary / Rep / can inform person about renewals.
6. Ensure that the current policy posters are displayed in the churches.
7. Be informed about safeguarding practice in the parish, for example, in sacristy with altar servers.
8. Meet and assist the Parish Priest / Moderator once a year (October) to complete the Parish Audit.



Altar Servers

When is it necessary for altar servers to be supervised?

If altar servers are required to get ready in a private setting, for example, the sacristy then supervision is required.

If altar servers get ready in public view of the congregation supervision is not required.

Options for the supervision of altar servers

As with other supervision ratios, two adults should be present, both of whom must be vetted.

- Parents of altar servers who have been vetted by the Diocese
- Any adult who has been vetted by the Diocese
- Members of other church groups who have been vetted
- Parish Safeguarding Representatives

✓ Checklist for persons supervising altar servers, e.g. parents

- Vetting approval (renew every 5 years)
- Receive copy of *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*
- Read and sign *Agreement for Adults Working with Children Form*

✓ Checklist for leader responsible for the co-ordination of altar servers e.g. Parish Safeguarding Representative

- Complete *Volunteer Application Form*
- Vetting approval (renew every 5 years)
- Receive copy of *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*
- Read and sign *Agreement for Adults Working with Children Form*
- Attend full-day Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)

✓ Checklist for parents/guardians of altar serving children

- Receive *Child and Guardian Information Pack*
- Complete *Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form* (detachable form at back of information pack)
- Young people aware of appropriate code of behaviour
- Attend annual information session for parents/guardians and children



Choir Groups

- One leader is required for choir groups when members are adults and under 18s.
- Two leaders are required for choir groups when all members are under 18.

Who requires vetting for choir groups?

The leader of the choir group requires vetting.

✓ Checklist for Choir Leaders

- Complete *Volunteer Application Form / Employee Application Form*
- Vetting approval (renew every 5 years)
- Receive copy of *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*
- Read and sign *Agreement for Adults Working with Children Form*
- Attend full-day Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)

✓ Checklist for parents / guardians whose children are in the Choir

- Receive *Child and Guardian Information Pack*
- Complete *Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form* (detachable form at back of information pack)
- Young people aware of appropriate code of behaviour
- Attend annual information session for parents/guardians and children

Sacristans

✓ Checklist for Sacristans

- Complete *Volunteer Application Form / Employee Application Form*
- Vetting approval (renew every 5 years)
- Receive copy of *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*
- Read and sign *Agreement for Adults Working with Children Form*
- Attend full-day Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)



Section 4: Parish groups working with children

Codes of behaviour are essential for effective safeguarding practice. It is important to carefully read these guidelines and follow them at all times. Codes of behaviour should be reviewed annually by each group. Below are guidelines, each group should develop their own codes of behaviour based on these.

Code of behaviour for adults

It is important for all personnel to:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Treat all children equally.
- Model positive and appropriate behaviour to all children we come into contact with.
- Be aware of the Church's child protection and child safeguarding policy.
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour.
- Develop a culture of openness, honesty and safety.
- Develop a culture where children have permission to tell and to talk about any concerns or worries that they may have.
- Respect each child's boundaries and support them to develop their own understanding and sense of their rights.
- Be aware of their responsibility for the safety of all children in their care.
- Work in open environments.
- Help children to know what they can do if they have a problem.

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.
- 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.

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.
- However, there may be two circumstances where this may occur: (see page 15 for more details)
 - 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.
 - As part of a planned structured piece of work (for example one-to-one music tuition).



Code of behaviour for children and young people

Children should be involved in drawing up a code of behaviour for themselves; however, it is important that in working with children, 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.

In developing the code, consideration should be given to the following:

- Treating everyone with respect.
- Treating property with respect.
- Not consuming alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs.
- Agreeing not to bring any physical item into the Church activity that may cause offence or harm to others.
- Acting as a good role model.
- Attending activities on time.
- Signing in and out.
- Turning off your mobile phone.
- Telling someone you trust if you feel uncomfortable with any situation or individual.
- Not using bad language when communicating by phone or email.
- Never bullying anyone or sending threatening messages.

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 adults are always required for each activity.**

Within each group the ratio of adults to children is determined by the age of the children involved

- 0-1 year: one member of staff to three children.
- 1-2 years: one member of staff to five children.
- 2-3 years: one member of staff to six children.
- 3-6 years: one member of staff to eight children.
- 7-12 years: one member of staff to eight children.
- 13-18 years: one member of staff to ten children.

In addition, for overnight activities additional staff should be considered. If the group is mixed, a gender balance should be maintained.



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. *Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form* - available from the diocesan website.

A clear code of behaviour must be agreed and adhered to by both parties. This should include limits of confidentiality and safeguarding procedures.



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. 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. for 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. 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. Generally, Church personnel are not expected to be involved in the provision of intimate care for children. This should be undertaken by suitably qualified people.
- 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.
- 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 *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*.



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 Diocesan 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?
- Agreed boundaries around unstructured time?
- Been given information on appropriate clothing, and contact details for leaders?
- Consented to the trip away?

Have parents/guardians:

- Met with leaders and been informed of the programme?
- Been given *Child and Guardian Information Pack*?
- Completed *Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form*?
- 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 Garda Vetted by the Diocese?
- Completed *Agreement for Adults working with Children Form*?
- Attended Diocesan Safeguarding Training?
- Received a copy of *Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook*?
- Been made aware of the Diocesan procedure for report allegations / concerns regarding abuse?
- 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?

Dealing with accidents involving children

If a child has an accident and injures himself/herself while attending a Church-run event, these procedures should be followed:

- Assess the injury and reassure the child. If the injury is severe or the child has lost consciousness, please contact the emergency services.
- If the emergency services are called, contact with the child's parents/guardians must be made urgently. Contact information can be found on the *Child and Guardian Joint 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 can be found on the *Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form*.
- 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, unless under parental or medical supervision.
- As soon as possible after the accident, write up a report using an *Accident/Incident Form* - available from the diocesan website. Once completed, this form should be stored in a safe place, in line with data protection, and treated as a confidential document.
- 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 Form* to parents/guardians.
- 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.



Preventing bullying

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/Accident 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 incident 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.

Hazard assessment of activities with children

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.

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 pose as risks 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 Diocese. 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 person in charge of health and safety for the Parish.



Assessing hazards

- Identify the hazards: look for hazards in the nature of the activity, and in the venue where the activity is taking place.
- 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.
- Identify what is the likelihood of harm occurring.
- 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.
- 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* - available from the diocesan website. If no hazard exists, you do not 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.

Use of Technology

The consent of parents/guardians and children should always be sought prior to engaging in any Parish activity that involves the use of IT equipment. *The Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form* includes media permission and should be completed for all Church related activities. There is also a separate *Media Permission Form* for once off occasions. Both are available from the diocesan website. For sacramental preparation such as communion and confirmation, which are managed by the school, the school safeguarding policy applies.

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

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content, 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.

Use of the Internet

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.
- 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.



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.

Using bulk (or bundled) text and email messaging

Where possible it is recommended to use bulk text messages. This is where the same text or email message is sent to several young people involved with a particular activity or group. The advantage of this approach is that it presents fewer opportunities for misuse and abuse than personal, one-to-one texting or emailing arrangements between staff or volunteers and children/young people. Therefore, one-to-one texting or emailing should be strongly discouraged and should only occur in exceptional circumstances. The same applies to emailing young people.

What does the term 'hazard' mean?

- Consent must be obtained prior to sending young people text or email messages. Parents/guardians of younger children should be offered the option to be copied on texts and emails that their child will be sent.
- 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 messaging system should never be used to send text or email messages on an individual basis (i.e. to just one person).
- 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).
- All text and email messages sent must make it clear to the young people receiving them who has sent the message.
- 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.
- The text and email messages that are sent must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language.
- 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.
- 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.



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. Parishes 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 communions, weddings or confirmations (including when the photographer is employed by the school or family for these occasions) do not fall under the responsibility of the Church, unless they are being taken for Church purposes.

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 the *Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form* which includes media permission. There is also a separate *Media Permission Form* for one off events, both are available from the diocesan website.

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.
- Clarify in writing who owns the images taken by the photographer and how they will be edited, used, stored and destroyed.

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 Parish Priest to ensure that any reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other child protection or child safeguarding issue.

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 Parish must have an appropriate data protection policy in place that covers the use of webcam and CCTV images.

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 where it cannot be damaged or removed.
- Images captured should be retained for a maximum of twenty-eight days. 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.

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.

If the Church activity being recorded involves children (for example as altar servers, ministers of the word, choirs etc) then the *Child and Guardian Joint Consent Form* must be completed.



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.

Section 5: Reporting Procedures

Complaints procedure

A complaint is defined as a grievance and/or the raising of a concern about breaches of codes of behaviour. Allegations or suspicions of child abuse do not fall into this category of general complaints.

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 parents/guardians, children/young people, volunteers/members of staff and clergy, as appropriate.

If a parent/guardian, young person or child is not satisfied with any aspect of the running of a particular activity, or the behaviour of any individual involved in that activity they should make a complaint. Initially, all complaints of this nature should be resolved using an open dialogue with the person responsible for the group or the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest can also consult with the Diocesan Secretary and the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator for guidance on how to proceed. If resolution is not possible, the following steps should be taken.

Steps to take:

- Complete *Complaint Form* and submit to the Parish Priest.
- A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be sent, all complaints must be thoroughly investigated.
- The Parish Priest may organise a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint.
- Following the meeting or discussion, the Parish Priest will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.
- If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Parish Priest will issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out their suggestions for resolving the matter.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied at this point, they should contact the Parish Priest again. At the conclusion of this step, the Bishop may decide to take further action on the complaint.



Whistle-blowing procedure

A whistle-blower is a person working within an organisation who reports that organisation's misconduct.

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

Reasons for reporting:

- Each individual has a responsibility to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent yourself from becoming implicated.

It is important to undertake the following steps:

- 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 of concern and why.
- Approach your immediate superior/supervisor/manager.
- If your concern is about your immediate superior/supervisor/manager, please contact your Parish Priest/Bishop/DLP/Statutory Services/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.



Reporting allegations of abuse

The Diocese of Kerry provides guidance and training on recognition of abuse, and clear procedures on what to do when a child protection concern arises, so that everyone knows how to respond appropriately.

If you want to report a suspicion, concern or allegation of abuse please contact our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the Diocese of Kerry on 087 6362780.

The DLP will discuss the process of reporting with you.

If you are unsure about whether the concern meets the threshold for reporting it is important to talk it through with the DLP. The DLP will be able to inform you if the concern reaches the threshold for reporting.

Details of personnel to contact if you are concerned about the welfare and safety of children

DIOCESE OF KERRY DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON	Jim Sheehy	087 6362780
TUSLA: THE CHILD & FAMILY AGENCY HSE: VULNERABLE ADULTS	Cork	021 4927190
	Kerry	066 7184501
AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA	Listowel	068 50820
	Tralee	066 7102300
	Killarney	064 6671160
	Caherciveen	066 9473600
	Bantry	027 20860
	Kanturk	029 20680



Section 6: Use of Church Property that involves Children

External Groups who Use Church Property

It is a requirement that all non-parish groups working with children and/or using facilities owned by the Diocese 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 Diocese.

1. It is the responsibility of any group using Church property that run activities involving children to ensure that they comply with all applicable child safeguarding 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 Diocese/Parish should at no stage assist any outside group in developing a child safeguarding policy.
5. The Parish should have confirmation in writing from the group that they have a child safeguarding policy in place. It is not the role of the Parish to validate the adequacy of the policy; that is the responsibility of Tusla.
6. The group must complete the *Use of Church Property Form* which includes the following:
 - a. The name of their insurers
 - b. The policy number
 - c. The period of cover of the policy
 - d. The limit of indemnity



Use of Church Property and Hire for Private Functions

Parishes are insured to cover one-off private events where individual adults (parents/guardians/family members) approach the Parish Priest/Admin to use church property for a private function.

It is the sole responsibility of the parents/guardians to organise and supervise all children attending. They are not required to confirm in writing that they have a safeguarding policy or appropriate insurance; and do not meet the requirement for vetting by the Diocese of Kerry.

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 the *Use/Hire of Church Property for Private Functions/Events Form* 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 Parish will ensure the property is safe to use, including how accidents resulting from the condition of the property should be reported.
- That the Parish is not responsible for the organisation, supervision or conduct of the children or adults involved in the event.
- That the safeguarding policy of the Diocese does not apply to the private party and therefore all safeguards are the responsibility of the organiser of the event and not the Parish.

This policy covers activities organised by the Parish/Diocese that involve children/under 18s. For schools using Church property for sacramental celebrations or other purposes their own school safeguarding policy applies.



Safe Environments

Child Protection Procedures

Management of Respondents

Care of Complainants

Communication

Training and Support

Quality Assurance

www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding
for more information & to view the policy