



Child Safeguarding Statement

Diocese of Kerry

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016.

Statement

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 well-being 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.

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

The Diocese of Kerry as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry with children, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016:

- Altar servers
- Youth choir
- Children's Liturgy
- Readers
- Youth Ministry
- First Holy Communion and Confirmation preparations

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland we are committed to the following principles:

- Mandatory reporting
- Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them
- Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations
- Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons
- Caring pastorally for respondents and other affected persons

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused: Physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect.



Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of Church personnel, but they can also relate to incidents in the child's family, or elsewhere in the community.

Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training, support, communications and quality assurance.

Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities.

will be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons

Those who have suffered child abuse by Church personnel will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support as they seek to rebuild their lives. An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order and to the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

Caring pastorally for respondents and other affected persons

This Church body in its response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child sexual abuse will respect the rights under civil law and canon law of an accused cleric or religious or other Church personnel. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered to the respondent.

The Church authority will take responsibility for ensuring that any cleric or religious who is considered to constitute a danger to children is managed according to a risk management plan agreed with the Civil Authorities.

All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child.



Respondents belong to families and diocesan or religious communities. The Church authority will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities in Diocese of Kerry and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse.

| RISK IDENTIFIED | PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO MANAGE RISK |
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| That appropriate structures are in place to ensure people appointed are passed fit for roles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment structures are in place. Templates for the following are available on the diocesan website: Recruitment and selection checklist; adult volunteer application; character and personal reference. http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/ Recruitment procedures are addressed at Safeguarding Training. Safeguarding Training is in line with the NBSCCCI and local trainers are registered with same. All personnel who work with children are required to attend training every 3 years. |
| Those that work with children may behave inappropriately | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All personnel who work with children are Garda vetted. Priests, staff and volunteers are required to complete documentation for adults who work with children: Declaration form; policy agreement form; and code of behaviour for adults working with children. http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/ Personnel who work with children are required to attend Safeguarding Training. |
| Children do not understand the roles and responsibilities in place to encourage positive behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual information evening for parents and children address codes of behaviour for children. Parents and children receive information pack which details all safeguards http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/ Parents and children complete joint consent form for all parish activities. |
| Effective safeguarding practice is not present in the environment where we work with children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook addresses practical aspects of safeguarding including vetting; procedures for parish groups working with children; and safeguarding checklists http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardinghandbook/ Effective safeguarding practice is detailed in Safeguarding Training. Practice specific safeguards are assessed at annual safeguarding parish audits. Adults and children complete attendance registers for all parish activities. Appropriate supervision ratios are maintained and detailed in Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook. http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardinghandbook/ |
| External groups who use Church property are not cleared to do so in a safe manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External group using church property are required to complete application form for use of Parish Property. This is to ensure that all external groups have their own insurance and safeguarding procedures. http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/ Procedures regarding use of church property outlined in Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook. http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardinghandbook/ |



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| <p>People may behave inappropriately towards children</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate behaviour towards children outlined in documentation for adults supervising children. All personnel working with children sign a code of behaviour for adults working with children. • http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/ • Safeguarding training details what to do if a person is acting inappropriately towards children. |
| <p>Those who wish to exploit children through the use of digital media in our ministries are able to do so</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and children complete joint consent form for all parish activities that includes section on media consent. • http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/ |
| <p>Church personnel are not aware of how to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising and reporting safeguarding allegations, suspicions, concerns or knowledge are comprehensively covered in Safeguarding Training. • Reporting procedures outlined in Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardinghandbook/ • Contact information for local DLP; Tusla; An Garda Síochana are accessible on safeguarding posters in all churches and also on the diocesan website. http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/reportasafeguardingconcern/ |
| <p>Church personnel do not understand their responsibilities to safeguard children</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility to safeguard children is covered during induction of new personnel and Safeguarding Training. • Documentation for adults who supervise children; Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook clearly lay out responsibility and practical aspects of safeguarding. http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/ http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardinghandbook/ |
| <p>Children and their parents do not understand the Church's policy, procedures and structure to safeguard children</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information pack for parents and children outlining safeguarding procedures is made available to all families who take part in parish activities. http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/ • Parent and child complete joint consent form for all parish activities. • Parish hold information sessions for new members for all parish groups. |
| <p>The procedures for safeguarding children not implemented appropriately</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for safeguarding children are outlined in Safeguarding Training and assessed annually at safeguarding parish audits. • Annual parish visits provide opportunity to examine local practice. • Safeguarding Co-ordinator assists all parishes in Diocese with their safeguarding procedures. |
| <p>Church authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons</p> | <p>Diocese has appointed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacklyn McCarthy, Safeguarding Co-ordinator, 0646631168, jacklynmccarthy@dioceseofkerry.org • Jim Sheehy, Designated Liaison Person, 087 6362780, jimsheehy@dioceseofkerry.org • List of mandated persons identified and communicated with relevant persons. |



Procedures

All procedures outlined in the procedures in place to manage risk above are available on diocesan website <http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguarding-children/> The procedures listed above include the following:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/ volunteers of a child availing of our service. Information available on page 11 of Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook.
<http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardinghandbook/>
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children. Information available on diocesan website, recruitment of new personnel.
<http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingforms/>
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm. Safeguarding training schedule available on <http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/safeguardingtraining/>
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla. Reporting a concern, information available on <http://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/safeguarding/reportasafeguardingconcern/>
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons. This information is available from Jacklyn McCarthy, Safeguarding Co-ordinator, jacklynmccarthy@dioceseofkerry.org, 0646631168.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person information available from Diocesan Office, Bishop's House, Killarney, Co. Kerry, 0646631168.

Implementation

The Kerry Diocese is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice supports our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

+ Ray Brane

Bishop of Kerry
09/03/2018

For any queries relating to this statement please contact Jacklyn McCarthy, Safeguarding Co-ordinator, jacklynmccarthy@dioceseofkerry.org, 0646631168.