

Safeguarding Newsletter

Diocese of Kerry
Issue 6, March, 2022



Review of Safeguarding Practice in the Diocese

During the summer of 2021 an audit of safeguarding practice in the diocese was carried out by the National Board for Safeguarding Children. The purpose of this audit was to assess safeguarding procedures across all standards as outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Reviewers conducted checks of our files and met with Diocesan Staff, Parish Safeguarding Representatives, Volunteers, Parish Priests, Pilgrimage Directors and Young People from Parish Youth Groups.

The report acknowledges the successful work across the diocese and highlights areas for further development. It was very evident that there is a strong safeguarding culture in our parishes and the high level of commitment by all involved was recognised.

Following a meeting with Parish Safeguarding Representatives the Reviewers found the group to be very clear about the roles they play within their parishes in helping to maintain safe environments for children engaged with the Church. They clearly saw themselves as part of a parish-based safeguarding team led by the parish Priest.

Reviewers were satisfied that all procedures to ensure the safety of altar servers were observed during a church visit.

The Reviewers praised the online Youth Ministry groups they met who confirmed that they had developed their own code of behaviour, and that they were responsible, with the leaders' support, for the running of their online meetings. This demonstrated a very positive model of young people's participation in action. The Reviewers commended the leaders for facilitating this process.

Safe care for children was also directly observed by the Reviewers in how the online Youth Ministry meetings were planned and run. The young people confirmed to the Reviewers that they were very clear on what to do and who they would talk to if they felt unsafe.

The Safeguarding Committee would like to acknowledge and thank all who took part. Your contribution was a valued and vital part of the process and afforded the Reviewer the opportunity to thoroughly assess our practices. The full report is available on the diocesan website

The Reviewers recommend the following to enhance our safeguarding practice

- ❖ Two adult leaders for each parish ministry group need to attend safeguarding training every 3 years.
- ❖ Parish Safeguarding Representatives should meet the Parish Priest / Moderator 3 times a year. Leaders from youth-based parish groups should be invited to attend one of these meetings annually. More details on the agenda for these meetings will be shared with reps and parishes.
- ❖ A member of the Parish Pastoral Council should be invited to attend the meeting for the completion of the parish self-audit each year. The PPC member should provide a summary of the audit findings at their next PPC meeting, followed by a general discussion on safeguarding in the parish.
- ❖ Leaders must seek the views of young people when drafting a code of behaviour with them across all youth ministries.

Change in vetting renewal policy

The diocese has implemented a 3-year vetting renewal policy. This change is due to guidance issued by the National Vetting Bureau who have advised that all organisations move to a 3-year vetting rule.

Any person who was vetted in 2019, or before, must renew their garda vetting. Vetting applications forms are available on the diocesan website.



Sacristy Register

The attendance register in the Sacristy contains personal information i.e. the names of those present in the Sacristy at different dates and times. The diocese has been informed that this information falls under GDPR regulations. The following message must be visible for people signing the register.

'The information in this register will be held indefinitely by the parish in connection with safeguarding requirements and as part of the parish archives.'

This message can be placed on a sign near the Sacristy Register or as a laminated bookmark in the page currently in use.



Eucharistic Ministers and garda vetting

The diocese has published a new Adult Safeguarding Policy – Safeguarding Adults At Risk of Abuse. This policy is available on the diocese website.

In line with this policy, Eucharistic Ministers who visit nursing homes must be vetted. Eucharistic Ministers who take communion to private homes must also be vetted. However, Ministers who take communion to direct family members do not need to be vetted.

Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding Refresher Training Sessions are taking place on zoom.

Dates available:

- ❖ Thursday, April 7th, 2-4pm
- ❖ Tuesday, April 26th, 7-9pm

Who should attend training?

- ❖ All Priests, including active retired Priests who assist with parish duties.
- ❖ Safeguarding Parish Representatives.
- ❖ Choir Leaders (if members of the choir are under 18 years of age).
- ❖ Leaders of any parish group with under 18s in attendance.
- ❖ Child Safeguarding Committee Members.
- ❖ Those who are designated mandated persons under Children First Legislation.

To book your place contact Jacklyn McCarthy jacklynmccarthy@dioceseofkerry.org

