

Safeguarding Newsletter

Diocese of Kerry
Issue 5, Nov, 2020



The impact of covid-19 on ministry with children

Covid has had a significant impact on our parishes ability to interact with children. All face to face ministry with children is currently suspended across the diocese.

We had hoped to begin reintroducing children's ministry, starting with altar servers. The Diocesan Covid Committee had included guidelines for the reinstatement of altar servers in a recent update that was sent to parishes. Unfortunately, due to further covid restrictions it has not been possible to move forward with this.

At this time of great uncertainty it is important that we follow the government guidelines so that we do not contribute to an increase in the virus.

We would like to acknowledge the Leaders across all children's ministry groups throughout the diocese. Once it is safe to do so, we hope that with your help, and the assistance of our Parish Safeguarding Representatives, that all activities can be fully restored.

Online Training Programme

Some parishes have been facilitating online sessions for young people and others have expressed an interest in developing work in this area.

The National Board for Safeguarding Children run an online course on how to engage safely with children online. If Group Leaders are interested in this and would like to avail of the training course please contact Jacklyn McCarthy at the Diocesan Office: 0646631168 / jacklynmccarthy@dioceseofkerry.org

2020 Parish Self-Audit

It is that time of year again! Our annual self-audits were sent to parishes at the end of September. **The deadline for returning the audit has now passed.**

With current level 5 restrictions it will not be possible for all Parish Safeguarding Representatives to meet in person with the Parish Priest/Administrator to complete the audit.

An email was sent to parishes suggesting the following as options for completing the audit this year:

- Parish Safeguarding Reps and PP / Administrator can meet virtually via Zoom or Microsoft Teams to complete the audit.
- One rep can take responsibility for the audit and complete it on behalf of the parish.
- This year there is no obligation for all reps to provide signatures on page 6 of the audit.

If you have not yet completed your parish audit please do so and return it to the Diocesan Office.

National Audit

The National Board for Safeguarding Children was due to audit the diocese in May. We attempted to reschedule the audit for this month. Unfortunately, with the introduction of level 5 restrictions this date also had to be postponed.

It is the role of the National Board to monitor compliance with legislation, policy and best practice; and to report on these activities in the form of a national audit.

The format of the audit is for reviewers to visit the Diocesan Office to examine our safeguarding files and practices. They will visit churches, sacristies and parish property to ensure all are compliant with safeguarding guidelines.

The reviewers will also link in with parishes to check safeguarding files and speak to the Parish Priest, Parish Safeguarding Reps, Group Leaders and young people.

As part of our continued commitment to best practice and transparency the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee welcomes this review. We will plan a new date with the National Board once it is safe to do so.

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. When the time comes to order a new Sacristy Register it would be useful to include this message as a foot note on all pages.

Parish vetting and school vetting

The NVB1 vetting form which is available on the diocesan website is for parish vetting only. This form is not to be used for vetting school personnel. School personnel need to complete a different form that they must obtain directly from the school.

The diocesan office has received a number of parish vetting forms that have been completed by school personnel and signed by the local Parish Priest.

Parish Priests cannot sign off on vetting applications for schools and these forms cannot be processed by the diocesan office.

Can Parish Priests please review all vetting forms before signing them. If the role being vetted for relates to schools, please direct the vetting applicant to the school Principal, so they can access the correct form and have it signed by the school Principal.

Pope Frances – Prayer for Protection from Coronavirus

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Safeguarding Sunday will fall on 22nd November this year. Further details have been sent to parishes.