

Safeguarding Newsletter

Diocese of Kerry
Issue 8, April, 2024

Parish self-audit

Every year each parish completes a safeguarding self-audit. The audit allows parishes to review their practice in relation to youth-based ministries and ministries with vulnerable adults. The following are findings from the most recent audit, assessing activities from Sept 2022 – Sept 2023:

- ❖ Majority of parishes have copies of the correct safeguarding policies and procedural documents.
- ❖ 124 Parish Safeguarding Representative across the diocese. This number has remained consistent over the last number of years. Parish Reps assist Priests to ensure that all safeguarding requirements are adhered to.
- ❖ A number of Parish Reps training and vetting is due for renewal. If you would like to be contacted when the next training programme is running, please contact: jacklynmccarthy@dioceseofkerry.org If your vetting is due for renewal, please complete this form: <https://www.dioceseofkerry.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/NVB-1-Vetting-Invitation-Form.pdf>
- ❖ Numbers attending safeguarding children training has remained consistent. All training sessions offered were fully booked with a waiting list for 2024.
- ❖ Increase in the numbers of people who attended adults at-risk of abuse training. This training is relevant for all Priests and Eucharistic Ministers who visit nursing homes, or private homes of non-family members. A large number of Eucharistic Ministers attended in 2023.



- ❖ Since covid, the process of re-establishing youth based ministries has been slow across the diocese. This year saw a significant increase in the number of parishes that ran activities with under 18s compared to the previous year (40 activities in 2023 vs 6 in 2022).
- ❖ All parishes that have non-church groups using parish property have asked these groups to complete the correct paperwork. This form ensures that each group has their own insurance and safeguarding policy.

Summary of training and vetting for 2023

Training

- ❖ Safeguarding Children Training: 100 people attended.
- ❖ Adult at-risk of abuse training: 56 people attended.

Vetting

- ❖ In line with recommendations from the National Vetting Bureau, vetting must be renewed every 3 years. 182 vetting applications were processed.

NEW sacristy notice

This new notice was circulated to parishes in October 2023. The notice outlines that the Priest / Sacristan must write the expiry date that is on the visiting Priest's celebret card in the sacristy register. Visiting Priests must also sign the register. If a visiting Priest does not have a celebret card, they cannot celebrate/concelebrate Mass. This applies to visit Priests from outside the diocese. It is important for Sacristans to ensure that this new notice is displayed.

NEW child friendly safeguarding poster

Please ensure that this poster is displayed on the notice board in all Churches and parish property. Where possible, display it at a height that is accessible to children. A special thank you to Listowel Parish Youth Group who assisted with the design.



The poster features the Diocese of Kerry logo at the top left. The main title is 'Children & Young People Have a Right to Feel Safe'. Below the title are three emoji icons: a sad face, a thinking face, and a happy face. Each icon is followed by a text box containing a message. The first message says 'You might feel unsafe or uncomfortable with how someone is treating you, touching you or talking to you, your friends or your family. It is never your fault if someone is hurting you.' The second message says 'You have a right to be safe and protected from harm. You should feel safe at home, at school, in your community and when you are attending any groups run by the Parish or Diocese.' The third message says 'There is always someone who can help you.' Below these messages is a section titled 'What can I do if I don't feel safe?' which lists 'Tell an adult you trust, like a...' followed by a bulleted list: 'Family member', 'Teacher', and 'Group leader'. Below this is a section titled 'You can also...' which lists 'Tell a person in the diocese who can help. You can contact them on (087) 636 2780.' followed by '(or) Tell a Social Worker in Tusla. You can call them on (064) 663 6030 (Kerry) | (021) 237 3774 (Cork).' followed by '(or) In an emergency you can call the Gardaí on 999 or 112.'

Children & Young People Have a Right to Feel Safe

Diocese of Kerry

You might feel unsafe or uncomfortable with how someone is treating you, touching you or talking to you, your friends or your family. **It is never your fault** if someone is hurting you.

You have a right to be safe and protected from harm. **You should feel safe** at home, at school, in your community and when you are attending any groups run by the Parish or Diocese.

There is always someone who can help you.

What can I do if I don't feel safe?

Tell an adult you trust, like a...

- Family member
- Teacher
- Group leader

You can also...

Tell a person in the diocese who can help. You can contact them on (087) 636 2780.

(or)

Tell a Social Worker in Tusla. You can call them on (064) 663 6030 (Kerry) | (021) 237 3774 (Cork).

(or)

In an emergency you can call the Gardaí on 999 or 112.

Meeting 1 Feb Review safeguarding notices in the Church / Sacristy / Parish Buildings / check training and vetting records for renewals.

Meeting 2 May Meet with PP & group leaders to review risk assessments for parish activities with under 18s in attendance (altar servers/choir/children's liturgy).

Meeting 3 Oct Meet with PP to complete the annual parish self-audit. Invite member of Parish Pastoral Council to attend meeting.

An email reminder was sent to all Reps about the February meeting. In May, an email, including a completed risk assessment template for review will be sent to all Reps and Parishes.

Risk assessment templates for May meeting

It is a requirement of Tusla's Children First Policy that a risk assessment must be complete for every activity that involves children.

To help with this, completed risk assessments have been drafted. It is a requirement for Reps, along with the PP and Leaders of parish groups to review these completed risk assessments as a group, decide if the risk assessment covers all circumstances that are relevant in your parish, and add any that are outstanding. This assessment will be kept in the Parish Office with the safeguarding files and reviewed annually.

A completed risk assessment will be emailed to all Reps and Parishes in May for review.

Meeting in May for Parish Safeguarding Reps

As Parish Reps are aware, it has been recommended that Reps met with PP / Moderator 3 times a year. The following is a reminder of the timelines and agendas for meetings as suggested by Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.

