



Child Safeguarding  
& Protection Service

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# Child Safeguarding IN THE Archdiocese of Dublin

POLICIES, PROCEDURES  
& GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

*Foreword by Archbishop Farrell*

Archdiocese of Dublin



## Child Safeguarding & Protection Service

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# FOREWORD

Children occupy a central role in the teachings of Jesus, who pointed to the child as the ultimate symbol of the Kingdom of God. ‘Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it’ (Lk 18:17). This places a sacred duty on everyone in our Diocese, called to bear witness to the presence of the kingdom of God in the world, to ensure that children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church. The fact that Jesus reserved some of his severest warnings to those who would knowingly undermine the faith of one of these ‘little ones’ is a solemn reminder of the collective obligation of the Diocese to ensure the care and protection of children and young people. Although a great deal has already been accomplished in the area of safeguarding children, we must continue to learn from the tragic lessons of the past, looking with hope towards the future.

I attach the utmost importance to the protection and welfare of children in our Diocese. In consequence, I commit all those who, in various ways, work for and on behalf of the Archdiocese of Dublin, or are called to serve the People of God, to the implementation of the policies, procedures and good practice guidelines contained in this document.

+Dermot Farrell  
Archbishop of Dublin  
September 2023

# INTRODUCTION

## 1. WHAT THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS

This is the revised and updated child safeguarding policy of the Archdiocese of Dublin. It was first produced in 2011 and it was revised in 2018. This version contains much of the same content as the earlier documents but with amendments to take account of changes to law and national and Church guidelines. It has been written to comply with the requirements of Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 and Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016.

## 2. WHO THIS DOCUMENT IS FOR

This document is intended to assist those who are involved in child safeguarding and protection in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Chapter 1	describes the safeguarding structure of the Archdiocese of Dublin. It sets out who is responsible for what when it comes to protecting children from harm in the Diocese, its parishes and agencies.
Chapter 2	sets out good safeguarding practice and is intended to assist those who work in parishes and diocesan agencies.
Chapter 3	describes what needs to be done when we have information that a child has been or may have been harmed. In particular, it outlines the requirements for reporting child protection concerns, both within the Diocese and to the civil authorities (Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and An Garda Síochána).
Appendices	provide additional information on data protection, dealing with complaints and whistleblowing.

## 3. TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

**A child** is a person under the age of 18 years.

**Safeguarding** refers to those measures taken to create and maintain safe environments for children.

**Child protection** consists of the work of recognising, responding to and reporting concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

**Harm** refers to assault, ill-treatment, sexual abuse or neglect of a child.

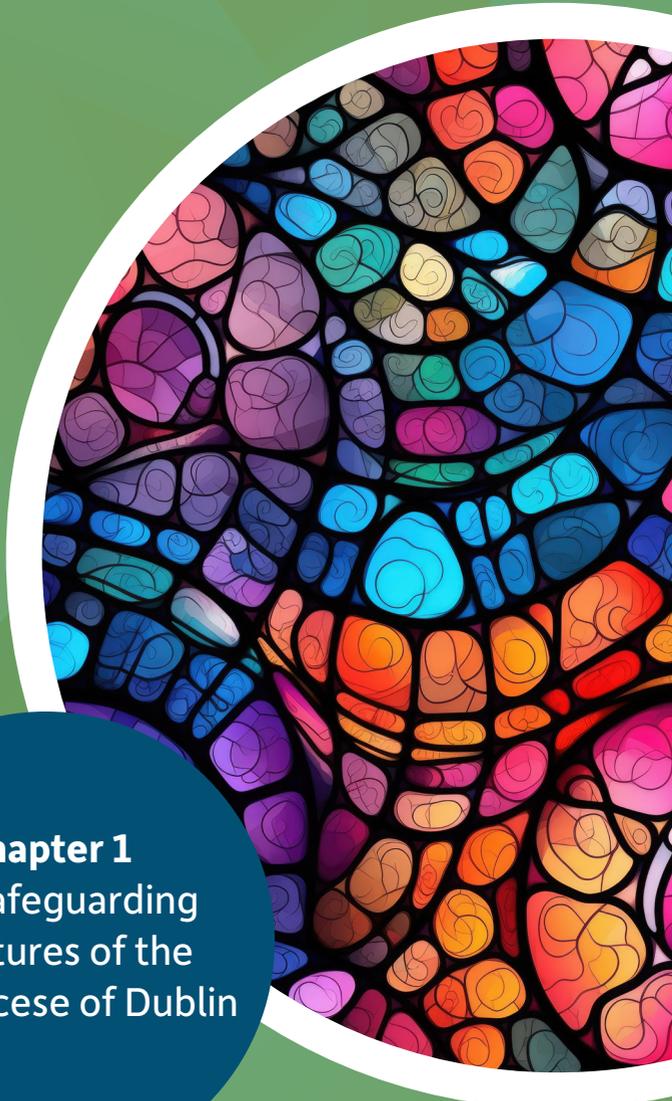
The **civil authorities** referred to in this document are Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and An Garda Síochána. These authorities have different responsibilities in relation to the protection of children. Tusla assesses current risk to children and advises on the implementation of appropriate protective measures. An Garda Síochána investigates alleged crimes and then refers cases to the Director of Public Prosecutions who decides on prosecution.

#### **4 REVIEW**

This document will be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation and in national or Church guidelines.

#### **5 RELATED POLICY DOCUMENTS**

As required under the Children First Act 2015, the Archdiocese of Dublin also publishes a *Child Safeguarding Statement*, which is reviewed and updated every two years, a *Procedure for Appointing a Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015*, and a *Procedure for Maintaining a List of Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015*. These policy documents are available on: [www.csps.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.csps.dublindiocese.ie) under Policy Documents.



**Chapter 1**  
The Safeguarding  
Structures of the  
Archdiocese of Dublin

The Archbishop of Dublin has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are adequate arrangements in place for the protection from harm of children who participate in the activities of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin. Since 1996 a number of structures have been established to assist the Archbishop in this task.

### **The Diocesan Advisory Panel on Child Protection**

The Panel was established in 1996 to provide independent, expert advice to the Archbishop on all aspects of the management of cases of alleged or confirmed child sexual abuse by clerics of the Diocese.

It is composed of clerics and lay people with a range of expertise in areas relevant to the management of child protection concerns. A majority of the members are lay people and the chair is a lay person. The Panel now considers allegations of all forms of child abuse and in 2016 its remit was extended to include adults who are vulnerable or at risk.

### **The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee**

This Committee was established in 2013. It advises the Archbishop on the creation and maintenance of safe environments in the parishes and diocesan agencies of Dublin Diocese. It has a particular focus on ensuring that diocesan safeguarding policy is implemented across all of the parishes in the Diocese. The Committee draws up a three-year strategic plan and monitors its implementation on a regular basis. It also comprises a majority of lay members and it is chaired by a lay person.

Both the Safeguarding Committee and the Advisory Panel work closely with the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service (CSPS).

### **The Child Safeguarding and Protection Service**

The CSPS was initially established as the Child Protection Service (CPS) in 2003. Its establishment was recommended by the Advisory Panel. The Panel identified a need for a cohesive and effective support service for those who had experienced abuse in childhood by clerics, and for their families, and for a proper system for the monitoring, supervision and support of those clerics against whom allegations of child sexual abuse had been made and who were out of ministry as a consequence.

The primary objective of the CSPS is the safeguarding and protection from abuse of children and adults who are vulnerable or at risk who participate in the life and work of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

The service has three functions that relate to this policy. These are:

### **1. Creating and maintaining safe environments for children who participate in Church activities.**

This is done through:

- providing safeguarding training and advice to diocesan and parish personnel,
- developing materials to assist parishes and diocesan organisations in creating safe environments,
- processing vetting applications on behalf of parishes and diocesan offices for those who require to be vetted in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012;
- carrying out audits of parishes to ensure they are operating in compliance with the requirements of diocesan safeguarding policy.

### **2. Providing a support service to those affected by abuse.**

This is a service provided to those who have experienced abuse in a Church context and to members of their family. The service provided consists of:

- facilitating people to make complaints about abuse,
- accessing counselling for those who need and want it,
- informing them of the steps being taken to address their concerns,
- providing ongoing support in accordance with their needs and wishes.

### **3. Case management.**

The management of child protection concerns<sup>(1)</sup> relating to clerics of the Diocese and oversight of the management of such concerns as they relate to other diocesan personnel. This involves a range of activities including:

- meeting with those who wish to discuss such concerns,
- meeting with the respondent (the cleric against whom the allegation has been made),
- notifying the civil authorities (An Garda Síochána and Tusla),
- advising the Archbishop on protective measures,
- ensuring that appropriate measures are taken to prevent any person who has offended against children from doing so again.

<sup>(1)</sup> Child protection concerns are concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected

In addition the CSPS:

- Provides advice and assistance to parishes and diocesan agencies in their management of child protection concerns and
- Oversees practice in parishes and diocesan organisations in order to ensure they are fully compliant with *Children First* and *Safeguarding Children*.

### The team:

Under the direction of, and reporting to, the Archbishop, the Office is currently made up of a team of six people:

- Director, who has overall responsibility for the service;
- Safeguarding and Support Officer, who manages cases and provides support to those affected by abuse;
- Priest Delegate, who coordinates the relationship between the Diocese and the respondent, that is, the cleric against whom an allegation of abuse has been made,
- Training and Compliance Manager, who coordinates and delivers safeguarding training in the Diocese, provides advice and support on all aspects of safeguarding, and monitors compliance with diocesan safeguarding policy;
- Garda Vetting Coordinator, who processes Garda vetting applications on behalf of the diocesan offices, parishes and affiliated organisations;
- Administrator, who manages the offices of the service.

*The contact details for all team members are available on : <https://csps.dublindiocese.ie/contact-us/>*

### The Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The DLP is a person who has specific responsibility for ensuring that effective procedures are followed within the Diocese when dealing with child protection concerns.

The DLP for the Archdiocese of Dublin is the Director of the CSPS and the Safeguarding and Support Officer is the Deputy DLP. All child protection concerns that relate to Church personnel and activities in the Archdiocese of Dublin must be reported to the DLP or Deputy DLP who have the overall responsibility, entrusted to them by the Archbishop, to ensure that each child protection concern is correctly managed from start to finish.

## **Diocesan Safeguarding Trainers**

The Training and Compliance Manager has overall responsibility for implementing diocesan safeguarding training policy. He is assisted by volunteer trainers. The trainers are accredited by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) to deliver training that has been devised by NBSCCCI. The trainers deliver training to those working in parishes and diocesan organisations.

## **Parish Safeguarding Representatives**

Each parish in the Diocese is required to appoint a Safeguarding Representative and it is recommended that there are two or more. The Safeguarding Representative is responsible for the promotion of best practice and compliance with diocesan safeguarding policy at parish level. Each of these Representatives is trained for the role. The CSPS maintains regular contact with the Safeguarding Representatives.

## **Mandated Persons**

Under the Children First Act 2015 a mandated person is required by law to report to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, where he or she: “knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being harmed, has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed”. Included in the definition of a mandated person are members of the clergy, Church pastoral workers and safeguarding or child protection officers employed by a religious body or organisation. Parish Safeguarding Representatives, however, are not mandated persons as they work in a voluntary capacity and are not employed.

Detailed guidance on mandatory reporting is contained in Chapter 3.

## **Communicating the Diocese’s Safeguarding Message**

Each church in the Diocese is required to display, in a prominent place, a Child Safeguarding Statement as required under the Children First Act 2015 and Church guidelines. It is a statement of the Diocese’s commitment to keeping children safe and protected from harm, the principles the Diocese adheres to in working with children and contains contact details for:

- The DLP and deputy DLP,
- Tusla, the Child and Family Agency,
- An Garda Síochána.

The statement contains an outline risk assessment and a link (via QR code) to a more detailed risk assessment, also carried out in accordance with the

requirements of the Children First Act 2015. This outlines the possible risks to the safety of children that arise from their involvement in Church activities and the policies and procedures the Diocese has in place to mitigate these risks.

The Diocese produces a leaflet that explains the work of the CSPA and gives information on support services for those who have been abused in a Church context.

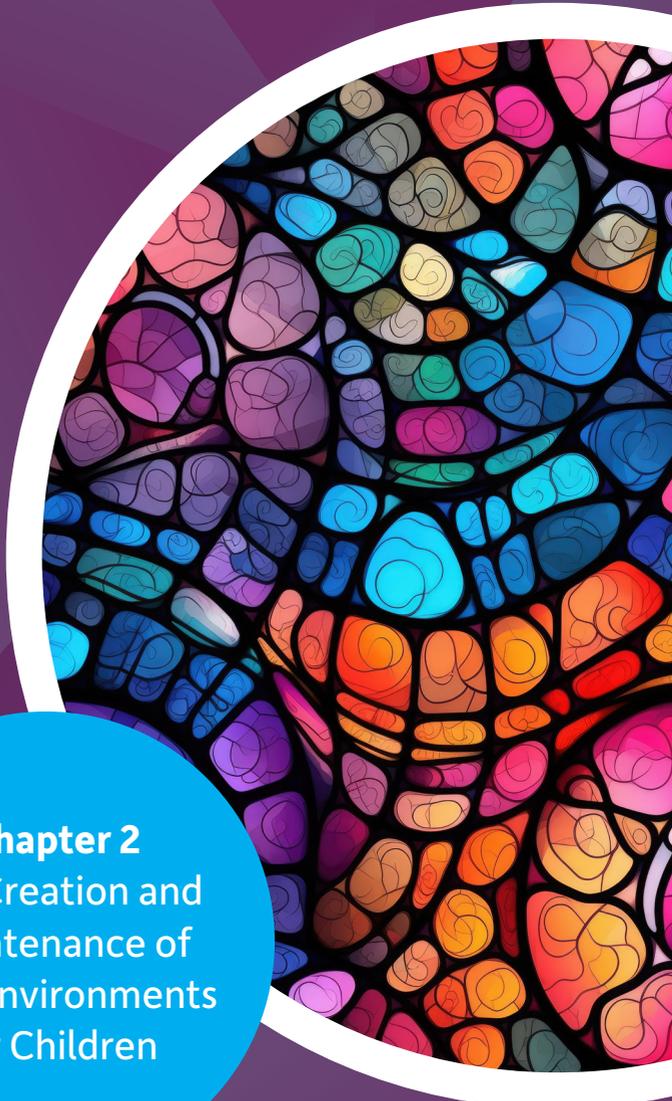
The CSPA has its own website: **[www.cspa.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.cspa.dublindiocese.ie)** which can be accessed directly or through the diocesan website: **[www.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.dublindiocese.ie)**. It provides information on the service, the team, relevant policies and procedures (including this one) and information on support services. The website also has copies of all the relevant forms that parishes should be using.

The CSPA produces a Newsletter which is distributed to parishes and safeguarding representatives and is also available on the website. It provides an update on the work of the CSPA and highlights current issues of relevance to safeguarding and the support of those who were abused in a Church context.

Many parishes have their own websites that provide safeguarding information, along with the name/s and contact details of the parish's own safeguarding representative/s and links to the diocesan website.

Information about child safeguarding and protection is regularly included in parish newsletters and, in some parishes, the safeguarding representative speaks about his/her work at Mass on an occasional basis.

Since 2013, the Diocese has held an annual Safeguarding Day during which parishes are encouraged to draw attention to the work that is being done at parish and diocesan level to encourage the participation of children in Church activities. Safeguarding Day has now become an established part of the diocesan calendar and takes place on the fourth Sunday in September.



**Chapter 2**  
The Creation and  
Maintenance of  
Safe Environments  
for Children

This Chapter sets out the safeguarding principles and practices of the Archdiocese of Dublin.

## 2.1 A CHILD CENTRED APPROACH

This involves:

- Accepting as paramount our responsibility, both individually and collectively, for the welfare of children involved in Church activities in the Archdiocese of Dublin, and for their protection from harm;
- Valuing all children, demonstrating respect for them in our words and actions and rejecting all forms of discrimination against them;
- Listening to children, taking their views seriously and involving them in decision making, in a manner appropriate to their age and stage of development;
- Dealing with their complaints, and those of their parents or guardians, effectively and promptly (Appendix 2);
- Setting clear boundaries for children and young people and having appropriate expectations of their behaviour;
- Responding appropriately to those who raise concerns about poor practice (Appendix 3);
- Using appropriate means of communicating with children and young people;
- Risk assessing activities involving children and young people and putting in place strategies to manage the identified risks.

## 2.2 OBTAINING CONSENT

- A signed consent form from parents or guardians is to be obtained prior to the participation of children and young people in events, activities and groups.
- The consent of the child or young person should also be sought, in accordance with their age and understanding.
- The form should be accompanied by a description of the activity or outing, those organising it, and the contact details for a responsible person the parent or guardian can contact.
- The form should contain an emergency contact number for the parent/s or guardian/s.
- Parents or guardians should be asked to indicate if the children have any specific dietary requirements, medical or other needs.

- The form should indicate whether there will be filming (use of web cams), photographs taken or video recordings made and specific permission sought from parent or guardian for their children's inclusion.
- The form should give (or be accompanied by) the name and contact details of the person in charge of the outing or activity.

### **2.3 CHOOSING CAREFULLY THOSE WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN AND ENSURING THEY RECEIVE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

Clerics (priests and deacons) of the Diocese are required to:

- Complete a written application form,
- Provide references that are followed up through direct contact with referees,
- Be vetted,
- Undergo psychological evaluation,
- Undergo a period of discernment, training and formation, usually of 6 to 7 years' duration.

Religious who work in the Diocese undergo similar selection, recruitment and training.

Parish pastoral workers employed by the Diocese undergo similar processes though the training is of shorter duration.

The employment of other staff in parishes and diocesan agencies is carried out in accordance with the Diocese's HR policies and procedures which includes written applications, references, vetting (where applicable) and, for some positions, psychological evaluation. The recruitment of volunteers is as follows:

- People are required to complete an application form and provide the names and contact details of at least two referees;
- Candidates are interviewed for the post in question;
- Candidates for positions that involve contact with children are vetted;
- Candidates are asked to sign an undertaking to comply with the parish's/ diocesan agency's/ group's code of practice;
- All clerics, religious, parish safeguarding representatives, chairs of parish pastoral councils and those who are involved in ministry with children undertake a one-day safeguarding training programme and

they follow this with refresher training every three years. All others involved in diocesan or parish activities attend a shorter, two hour safeguarding information session.

## 2.4 ENSURING THAT DIOCESAN WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY

A customised Code of Practice should be drawn up by all organisations or groups working with children and young people in the Diocese. It should take particular account of the nature of the service or activity and the needs of those involved. For example, particular considerations apply when dealing with children with disabilities.

A code of practice contains some general guidance. It cannot cover every eventuality. Adults working with children have an overriding **Duty of Care** to them and this takes precedence over any specific requirement of a code of practice. For example, it is not appropriate for a cleric, worker or volunteer to travel in a car alone with a child in the course of their work on behalf of a parish or diocesan agency. However, if a child is in need of emergency medical treatment and there is no other way to get him or her to hospital than for an adult to travel alone with the child, it would be irresponsible not to do so. *Where it becomes necessary to depart from the code of practice, the reasons for this should be carefully recorded and steps taken to avoid such a situation recurring in the future.*

When considering what sorts of behaviour are appropriate in dealing with children and young people, it is important to bear in mind that the intentions of the adults/leaders are less important than the impact of their behaviour on the children and young people. For this reason, a key aspect of any code is the creation of an environment where it is safe for children and young people to ask questions and express their concerns, confident in the knowledge that what they say will be heard, taken seriously and acted on in an appropriate manner.

Codes of practice drawn up by diocesan agencies and parishes must contain the following:

- Positive statements, indicating what sorts of behaviours are appropriate, for example, listening to children and young people,
- Prohibitions, indicating behaviour that is never acceptable, such as any form of physical chastisement,

- Good practice guidelines, indicating what is generally acceptable or unacceptable.

### Positive statements that should form part of any code of conduct:

- Treat all people with respect;
- Provide children with good role models;
- Operate within Church and State child safeguarding and protection principles and guidelines;
- Be visible to others when working with children and young people;
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour;
- Develop a culture where children and young people can talk openly, ask questions and express any worries or concerns they may have;
- Respect each child and young person's boundaries;
- Parish and diocesan workers and volunteers work in partnership with parents and guardians and share information with them.

### The Code of Practice should make clear that it is never acceptable to:

- Abuse a child or young person in any way;
- Physically chastise a child or young person;
- Develop a relationship with a particular child or young person that is exclusive of others;
- Place a child or young person at risk of harm;
- Speak to a child or young person or behave in a manner that is offensive, developmentally inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or young person that he or she can do for him/herself;
- Condone unacceptable behaviour in a child or young person;
- Discriminate against any individual or group;
- Ask a child or young person to keep a secret.

### Code of Behaviour for Children and Young People

Where activities are being run specifically for children or young people, they should be involved in drawing up a code of behaviour for themselves. They will require assistance and guidance from adult staff and volunteers in doing so. Nonetheless they should contribute to the process in accordance with their age and understanding. They should be encouraged to avoid simply drawing

up a list of prohibitions. The code should commit them to upholding values such as respect for self and others, valuing the contribution of each individual, and including those who are different by virtue of ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or social background. The code should also refer to the issue of bullying in its many forms and how it is to be addressed. (detailed guidance on tackling bullying in all its forms is available from the anti-bully centre in Dublin City University: <https://antibullyingcentre.ie/> ).

Further advice and assistance on drawing up codes of practice and behaviour is available from the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service.

## **2.5 MAKING PROPER ARRANGEMENTS WHEN ORGANISING ACTIVITIES AND OUTINGS**

All activities involving children and young people must be risk assessed. Guidance on carrying out risk assessments is available from the Training and Compliance Manager of the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service.

Arrangements should be made with the parents or guardians of children and young people. It is not acceptable to make arrangements with children or young people without consulting and informing the parents or guardians. If the parents or guardians give their consent, messages concerning arrangements (for example, the time and venue of the next choir practice) can be sent to the mobile phones of 16 and 17 year olds provided they are simultaneously sent to the mobile phones of the parents or guardians.

The physical environment in which an activity is due to take place should be assessed for possible hazards and the necessary steps taken to minimise the risk of accident or injury.

### **Trips away from Home**

- All trips, including day trips, overnight stays and holidays, need careful advance planning, including adequate provision for safety in regard to supervision, transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place.
- Consent should be sought, as described above.
- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents/ guardians of the children.
- There should be adequate, age and gender-appropriate supervision of children and young people.

- Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of children and young people is respected when they are away on trips.
- The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements should be ensured in advance of the trip.
- There should be separate male and female sleeping areas and appropriate supervision of them.
- The tasks required of those taking part should be appropriate to their age. For example, a young person under 18 should not be asked to carry out personal care tasks for others unless this is discussed and agreed with a parent or guardian (for example, where siblings are travelling together).
- There should be a named person to whom all concerns and complaints are referred and all such concerns and complaints should be followed up in a timely and efficient manner.

*Note: specific guidance has been developed for the provision of catechesis in non-school settings and it is available on the CSPS website:*

***[www.csp.s.dublindioocese.ie](http://www.csp.s.dublindioocese.ie)*** under Policy Documents.

## **2.6 COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

As stated in 2.5, arrangements are made with the parents or guardians of children, not with the children themselves.

Those who minister and/or work for or on behalf of the Archdiocese of Dublin, its agencies and parishes must observe appropriate professional boundaries with the children and young people they encounter through their work and this requirement applies to their use of information technology, mobile phones and social media. They should not use any of these media to initiate or maintain personal relationships with the children. In particular, they should not:

- gather or retain a young person's mobile phone number except where this is done for a specific purpose related to their work;
- provide a young person with their own personal mobile phone number or email address;
- access the internet with a young person unless authorised to do so as part of their work;
- befriend a young person on a social media website such as Facebook;
- take photographs of young people without obtaining their permission

and that of their parent or guardians;

- communicate with a young person by email except where this is done with the approval of the parish/diocesan agency and then only from a parish/agency email address;
- communicate with a young person by text except where this is done with the approval of the parish/diocesan agency and then only from a parish/agency mobile phone.

Note: more detailed guidance is contained in a separate policy document, *Working Safely with Children and Young People: Use of Information and Digital Technology*, available at [www.csps.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.csps.dublindiocese.ie) under Policy Documents.

## **2.7 FOLLOWING GOOD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE WHEN WORKING WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- Clerics and other diocesan personnel are obliged at all times and in all situations to work in accordance with diocesan child safeguarding and protection policies whether operating within the Diocese or on behalf of the Diocese in an external organisation.
- In the event that a diocesan cleric is working for an external organisation that does not have a safeguarding policy in place or one that the cleric considers inadequate, the advice of CSPS should be sought.

## **2.8 ENSURING EXTERNAL GROUPS HAVE THEIR OWN SAFEGUARDING POLICIES**

- Any group or individual who uses diocesan or parish premises to run activities must be insured to do so and have their own safeguarding policy.
- It is not the responsibility of the agency or parish to evaluate the safeguarding policies of external groups. It is sufficient to ask them to sign to confirm that the policy exists.

## **2.9 KEEPING GOOD RECORDS**

Since the Diocese is, amongst other things, an organisation that must account for the manner in which it takes care of children and young people, it is very important that the following records are kept and stored securely.

- An accurate record should be kept for each child participating in activities, including the programme details.

- Consent forms should be retained.
- A written record of organisers, supervisors, employees and volunteers in attendance at events, such as meetings, choir rehearsals and sports activities, should be kept.
- An Incident/Accident Report Form should be completed in the event of an accident or incident relating to a child.
- All records should be dated and signed.

The issue of record retention is a complex one, given the requirements of GDPR and associated legislation. Our policy is set out in detail in the Data Privacy Notice, 2022: [www.csps.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.csps.dublindiocese.ie) under Policy Documents.



**Chapter 3**  
Dealing with Child  
Protection Concerns

The work of child protection consists of the ‘Three Rs’: the recognition of, response to, and reporting of concerns that a child has been abused, is being abused or is at risk of abuse. This chapter provides guidance in relation to these. It is taken from *Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*.

### 3.1 RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

In order to recognise child abuse, it is necessary to know what is meant by it. The abuse of children is generally categorised under four headings:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect

It is important to remember that children may suffer different forms of abuse. The sexual abuse of children, for example, is also a form of emotional abuse especially when it takes place in the context of a relationship of trust.

#### Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It can be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. It can include the following:

- physical punishment,
- beating, slapping, hitting or kicking,
- pushing, shaking or throwing,
- pinching, biting, choking or hair pulling,
- use of excessive force in handling,
- deliberate poisoning,
- suffocation,
- fabricated or induced illness,
- female genital mutilation.

#### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a parent or guardian/carer and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties in such relationships are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child’s basic need for

attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or guardians/ carers. Emotional abuse may take the form of:

- rejection,
- continuous lack of praise and encouragement,
- lack of love and comfort,
- lack of attachment,
- lack of proper stimulation (for example, fun and play),
- lack of continuity of care (for example, frequent unplanned moves),
- persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming,
- bullying,
- conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions,
- extreme over-protectiveness,
- inappropriate non-physical punishments (for example, locking in bedrooms),
- ongoing family conflicts and/ or violence,
- inappropriate expectations of a child's behaviour relative to his or her age and stage of development.

Emotional abuse is often not easy to detect. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. It includes:

- any sexual act deliberately performed in the presence of a child,
- an invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification,
- masturbation in the presence of a child, or the involvement of a child in the act of masturbation,
- sexual intercourse with a child whether oral, vaginal or anal,

Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:

- Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography or the manipulation of an image of a child for the production of child pornography,
- Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act,
- Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the process of grooming children for abuse,
- exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an under-age person

*Note: the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls and any sexual relationship where one or both parties is under the age of consent is illegal. However, a consensual sexual relationship between, for example, two 16 year olds of a similar level of understanding and maturity is not considered to be sexual abuse (this matter is considered further below).*

## Neglect

Neglect occurs where a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care. Emotional neglect may lead to the child having attachment and relationship difficulties. The following are features of child neglect:

- children persistently left alone, without adequate care or supervision,
- malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding,
- inadequate living conditions,
- lack of warmth,
- lack of adequate clothing,
- inattention to basic hygiene,
- lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age,
- persistent failure to attend school,
- non-organic failure to thrive, that is, a child not gaining weight, not alone due to malnutrition but also due to emotional deprivation,
- failure to provide adequate care for a child's medical and emotional needs, including intellectual stimulation,

- abandonment or desertion.

*Note: neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly associated with parental substance abuse, domestic violence, parental mental illness and disability.*

### Indicators of abuse

Concerns that a child has been abused, is being abused or is at risk of abuse arise when there is:

- a specific indication from a child that he or she was abused (see next section);
- an account from a person who saw a child being abused;
- an admission or indication by someone that he or she has abused a child;
- evidence, such as an injury to a child or a child's behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to have been caused in any other way;
- any concern about possible sexual abuse as per the indicators listed above.

## 3.2 RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

### Explaining the reporting requirements

It is good practice to inform a person of the requirement to report child protection concerns to the civil authorities before any disclosure is made. It is not always possible to know that a person is about to disclose child abuse so the opportunity to do this may not arise. However, where a person, whether child or adult, asks to speak in confidence to a cleric, pastoral worker or any other person associated with the Diocese, it is important to tell the person that certain kinds of information have to be reported to the civil authorities. This allows the person to make an informed decision whether to disclose the abuse or not. This applies when a child or adult discloses that he or she was abused, when a child or adult discloses abuse of another person or where a child or adult discloses that he or she abused a child. It applies in every instance, outside of the sacrament of Confession.

### Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

Where a child or young person discloses abuse to a person working in any capacity in the Diocese, it is important that the situation is handled sensitively and compassionately. It should be kept in mind that the child may feel he or

she has taken a huge risk in disclosing the abuse. It is likely that he or she is doing so in the hope that something will be done to bring an end to the abuse, even if the child says he or she does not want anything done about it.

The person hearing the disclosure of abuse should:

- Remain calm,
- Listen carefully and in a manner that conveys that the child is being heard and taken seriously,
- Give the child the opportunity to tell their story in his or her own time,
- Ask questions only for the purposes of clarification, such as, ‘can you tell me what you mean by that?’,
- Reassure the child that he or she has done the right thing in disclosing the abuse,
- Tell the child that he or she is not responsible for the abuse,
- Not promise to keep the information secret. However, the child should be reassured that the information will be shared only with those who need to know it in order to keep the child and other children safe,
- Not express any judgments about the person against whom the allegation is being made,
- Explain the steps that are likely to be followed after the disclosure of the abuse, including referral to the civil authorities,
- Not offer to provide continuing support unless sure that this can be provided. It is better to make no commitment than to let the child down,
- Record the disclosure, using the child’s own words and without comment or interpretation, and date and sign the record,
- Report the disclosure (see next section).

In the case of an adult disclosing child abuse, it is equally important that the initial response is characterised by compassion and sensitivity. The general guidance outlined above should be followed.

The parents or guardians of a child affected by suspected or disclosed abuse must be notified as soon as possible, unless doing so places the child at risk. CSPA should be consulted as to how best to manage informing the parents or guardians.

The CSPS is available to offer advice in such matters and should be informed of all such disclosures that relate to those working for or on behalf of the Diocese.

### 3.3 REPORTING ABUSE

Tusla, the Child and Family Agency must be informed without delay when there are **reasonable grounds for concern** that a child has been abused, is being abused or is at risk of abuse. Reasonable grounds exist when the indicators outlined in Section 3.1 of this Chapter are present.

Information that a person has committed a serious offence against a child must be reported to the Gardai in addition to Tusla. The relevant offences are specified in the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act. They include most sexual offences and others such as assault causing harm, abduction, manslaughter and murder.

The diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP are available to offer advice on whether the reporting threshold has been reached. The DLP or Deputy DLP will report the matter to the civil authorities on behalf of the person concerned about the possible abuse of a child or make a joint report if the person is a mandated person making a mandated report where the matter relates to Church personnel (see 3.5).

Any person is free to take their concern directly to the civil authorities. Where the concern relates to possible abuse within a Church context, for example, an allegation that a parish worker has harmed a child, the policy of the Diocese is that this information should be reported to the DLP or Deputy DLP, even if the person making the report also reports directly to the civil authorities. If the report goes directly to the civil authorities and is not shared with the DLP or deputy DLP, the Diocese is not in a position to take immediate protective action thus exposing children to the risk of harm.

If the person decides to report their concern directly to Tusla, contact should be made with the social worker on duty in the local Tusla office. Tusla's child protection service operates through a network of local area-based social work teams. These teams operate a 'screening system', that is, there is a social worker on duty each working day during normal office hours to deal with queries about child protection concerns. The contact details of the local office are available on **[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)**. The social worker on duty will be familiar

with dealing with such concerns and will assist in identifying the key issues.

If the person who has a concern about possible abuse of a child takes it to the DLP/ Deputy DLP and he or she decides not to report to the civil authorities, the DLP/ Deputy DLP will inform the person of this in writing giving their reasons. The person is then free to take the concern directly to the civil authorities. The only reason why the DLP/ Deputy DLP would have for not reporting the concern would be that, in their assessment, the threshold of 'reasonable grounds for concern' had not been reached.

There may be a concern that a particular person represents a risk to the safety of children, even though the children at risk from this person cannot be identified. This could arise when, for example, a person known to have abused children in the past is seen in the presence of children. Such concerns should also be reported to Tusla.

In cases where there is information of a child being abused by another child, both should be reported to Tusla as child protection concerns.

Parish and diocesan personnel need to understand the limits of their child protection role. They can best help children by passing on information to those who can protect them, not by instigating their own investigation. The information should not be shared with anyone else. It is highly confidential information, to be shared only with those who need to know it for the purposes of protecting children.

**If there is an immediate concern for the protection of a child, the Gardai should be contacted.** Such a concern could arise, for example, if the child states that he or she cannot go home for fear of being assaulted and Tusla and/or the DLP/ Deputy DLP cannot be contacted.

The contact details for those who need to be contacted are given over page:

Designated Liaison Person (DLP):	<b>Andrew Fagan</b> 01 8360314, andrew.fagan@dublindiocese.ie
Deputy DLP:	<b>Deirdre Donnelly</b> 01 8360314, deirdre.donnelly@dublindiocese.ie
An Garda Siochana:	Contact details for local Garda stations are available from directory enquiries on 11811/ 11850, and on <a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a> . In an emergency call 112 or 199.
Tusla, Child and Family Agency:	Contact details of local offices are available on <a href="http://www.tusla.ie">www.tusla.ie</a>

### 3.4 DEALING WITH CONCERNS THAT ARISE WITHIN A CHURCH CONTEXT

The following steps are taken in relation to all child protection concerns that relate to diocesan personnel, including employees and volunteers, in the context of Church activities. Such concerns typically (but not exclusively) arise when adults disclose that they were abused as children by clerics or lay volunteers or employees.

- All child protection concerns that reach the threshold of ‘reasonable grounds for concern’ are reported without delay to the civil authorities as outlined above.
- The person whose actions have given rise to the child protection concern is informed of the matter and given an opportunity to respond to the information received. This step is taken after consultation with the Gardai and Tusla in order to minimise any possible interference with civil processes.
- Appropriate interim protective measures are taken, pending the outcome of any investigation and/or assessment by the civil authorities. Such measures include the person against whom an allegation of abuse has been made having no contact with children.
- Final determination of the person’s future role within the Diocese is informed by the outcome of any Garda investigation, Tusla assessment and internal disciplinary processes. Such internal disciplinary processes are initiated once the Garda have completed their investigation and Tusla have completed their assessment.

- Information about child protection concerns is only shared with those who need such information in order to keep children safe.
- A record is made of all child protection concerns and it is stored and retained in accordance with the appropriate professional and legal requirements in relation to confidentiality and data protection and in accordance with canon law and diocesan policy.
- All such child protection concerns are notified to the Archbishop.
- Child protection concerns that relate to clerics or religious are notified to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.
- Allegations against clerics are dealt with in accordance with procedures set out in Archdiocese of Dublin: *Procedure for dealing with allegations of Child Sexual Abuse against Clerics of the Diocese*. The procedures for dealing with allegations against employees and volunteers form part of the diocesan human resources and other policies. In both instances, the civil processes undertaken by Tusla and An Garda Síochána take precedence over internal diocesan and canonical processes.
- No person against whom an allegation of the child sexual abuse has been substantiated is permitted to work with children on behalf of the Diocese, its parishes or agencies and no cleric against whom such an allegation has been substantiated can exercise clerical ministry in the Diocese.

### Role of the CSPS

The CSPS, under the authority of the Archbishop and working in close cooperation with Tusla and An Garda Síochána, manages cases involving clerics working for the Diocese. The role of the CSPS in situations relating to parish workers or employees of diocesan agencies is to provide advice and assistance and to ensure that the parishes and diocesan agencies act in compliance with national and Church guidelines. In every case, civil processes take precedence over internal diocesan processes. Every effort is made to avoid undue delay so that a just outcome is achieved for all concerned.

### 3.5 MANDATED PERSONS

A mandated person is required by law to report to Tusla where he or she: “knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being harmed, has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed”. Mandated persons may also be required to assist Tusla in the assessment of such concerns.

Included in the definition of mandated persons are members of the clergy, Church pastoral workers and safeguarding or child protection officers employed by a religious body or organisation. Parish safeguarding representatives are not included, as they work in a voluntary capacity and are not *employed* to perform a child welfare and protection function.

The Director and Safeguarding and Support Officer (DLP and Deputy DLP) of the Diocese are mandated persons. Priests, deacons, religious ministering in the Diocese and parish pastoral workers are also mandated persons. Where a priest, for example, comes across a child protection concern that reaches the threshold described below his legal obligation is not discharged if this is reported to Tusla by the diocesan DLP. In this instance a joint notification may be sent from the Diocese by the priest and the DLP/ Deputy DLP. CSPA will send the notification, naming the priest concerned as a 'joint reporter'.

### Reporting mandated concerns

Children First guidelines place a moral obligation on anyone who comes into contact with a child to report to Tusla where he or she has reasonable grounds for concern that the child has been abused, is being abused or is at risk of abuse. The Children First Act 2015 places a **legal obligation** on mandated reporters to report to Tusla any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed. The threshold for mandated reports is higher than for nonmandated reports. The threshold is 'harm' as compared with 'reasonable grounds for concern' that abuse may have occurred.

### Mandated reporting of neglect, physical and emotional abuse

The threshold for mandated reporting of neglect, emotional abuse/ ill-treatment and physical abuse is reached when the mandated person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected by these forms of abuse. Mandated persons such as doctors, psychologists and social care workers will draw on their training and professional knowledge and experience in deciding whether the threshold has been reached. However, for those in other professions, such as clerics and parish pastoral workers, deciding whether the threshold for a mandated report has been reached presents a greater challenge. Mandated persons ministering or working for or on behalf of the Diocese, diocesan agencies or parishes should seek the advice of CSPA or Tusla if in doubt as to whether a child protection concern reaches the threshold for a mandated report to Tusla.

### Mandated reporting of sexual abuse

In the case of sexual abuse, the situation is clearer. All sexual abuse falls within the category of seriously affecting a child's health, welfare and development and all concerns about sexual abuse require a mandated report to Tusla. There is one exception, however, and this concerns consensual sexual activity between older teenagers. The age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 and sexual intercourse below that age is against the law.

There is no requirement to report sexual activity between young people where **all** of the following criteria apply:

- Either or both young persons is aged between 15 and 17 years,
- The age difference between them is not more than 24 months,
- There is no material difference in their maturity or capacity to consent,
- There is no intimidation or exploitation of either young person,
- The young people concerned state clearly that they do not want the matter reported to Tusla.

The advice of CSPS should be sought in such situations.

### Mandated reporting of disclosures of historic abuse

Most disclosures of abuse that come to the attention of diocesan personnel involve adults talking about experiences of abuse they suffered as children. The requirements of mandatory reporting apply to such disclosures.

### Exemptions from requirements to report

Apart from the limited exemption concerning consensual sexual activity between teenagers there are two other situations where mandatory reporting does not apply:

- The legal obligation under the *Children First Act 2015* applies only to information acquired in the course of the mandated person's professional work or employment. However, there is a general obligation to report concerns (as defined above) under *Children First Guidance*.

- The legal obligation does not apply retrospectively, that is, mandated reporting only applies to information received, or that the mandated person became aware of, after the relevant section of the *Children First Act 2015* came into force on 11 December 2017.

### How to make a mandated report

Reports should be sent to Tusla ‘as soon as practicable’ using the required form (available from <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms#SRP> ). The form can be posted or sent electronically. If the matter is urgent Tusla can be contacted in advance of submitting the form but it must be submitted within three working days.

### Failure to report

There are no criminal sanctions under the *Children First Act 2015* on mandated persons who fail to make a report to Tusla. Tusla may however report the matter to the professional regulatory body to which the person belongs. The matter may also be reported to the National Vetting Bureau and could, therefore, be disclosed in the course of the person’s next vetting application.

As stated in 3.3 (above) the *Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012* makes it a criminal offence to fail to report to the Gardai information about a serious offence against a child. This requirement is additional to the requirement to make mandatory reports to Tusla.

The Diocese requires all of those who minister or work for or on behalf of the Diocese, its agencies and parishes to comply with the requirements of this policy and to meet their obligations under both the *Children First Act 2015* and the *Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012*.

### Mandated Assisting

The *Children First Act 2015* provides that mandated persons can be asked by Tusla to provide assistance to it in assessing the risk to children arising from a mandated report. Such requests are more likely to be made to medical and social care professionals than priests or pastoral workers. Any such requests received by diocesan personnel should be referred to CSPS for advice on how best to respond.



**Appendices**

## APPENDIX 1

### CONFIDENTIALITY, DATA PROTECTION AND RECORD KEEPING

The Archdiocese of Dublin recognises the importance of ensuring every person's right to confidentiality and is committed to keeping confidential all personal information about complainants and respondents in so far as this is possible and lawful. When a child protection concern arises the information is shared on a "need to know" basis, that is, it is shared with those who need to know it in order to ensure that children are protected from harm. It is shared with the civil authorities, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and An Garda Síochána. If it relates to a cleric or parish worker, it is shared with the relevant Church authority, including the Archbishop. The information is shared in accordance with the requirements of Church and national child protection guidelines, this policy and as required by law. Sharing information about child protection concerns, following the procedure outlined in this policy, with the appropriate authorities is not a breach of confidentiality. Those who work for or on behalf of the Diocese cannot give an undertaking to any person not to disclose information about child protection concerns on the grounds of confidentiality.

*The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012* creates an offence of failing to disclose to An Garda Síochána, without reasonable excuse, information relating to certain specified serious offences against a child or vulnerable person, where it is known or believed that the information will be of material assistance in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of another person known or believed by the first person to have committed an offence. The specified offences include most sexual offences and others such as assault causing harm, abduction, manslaughter and murder.

The *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998* provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse to the relevant authorities "reasonably and in good faith". Even if the reported concern proves unfounded, the person taking action against a reporter would have to prove that he or she had not acted "reasonably and in good faith". As well as providing protection from civil liability, the Act protects reporters from being penalised by their employers for reporting child abuse. However, it is an offence to report child abuse in the knowledge that the information reported is false.

Data protection legislation ensures that an individual's rights to privacy and dignity are respected, particularly regarding the use and sharing of personal data (information), whether the personal data is held electronically or in manual form. Article 6(1)(c) & (d) and Article 9(2)(c) & (f) of the GDPR 2018 allows the sharing of this personal and sensitive data.

The records of the CSPA that contain personal information about respondents, complainants and others are stored in secure, locked fireproof cabinets and can only be accessed by members of CSPA staff.

Computer records are password protected and encrypted and the use of Multi Factor Authentication is required when accessing them remotely. Those staff members accessing computer records are required to log on to diocesan computers using their own personalised password. They are also required to complete cyber security training.

Personal computers and servers used by CSPA staff have multiple levels of protection including:

- Firewalls
- Endpoint protection software
- Cyber security protection
- Automated patching of Operating System and application software
- Email filtering to block malicious emails
- Laptop disk encryption
- Restrictions on software installations and configuration changes.

Records relating to child protection concerns are retained for 100 years. Other records are deleted from computer records once they are no longer required for the purpose for which they were created and paper records are shredded.

Those on whom the CSPA holds personal data are entitled to it subject to limited exceptions. Applications to obtain such personal data should be made to the Director of the CSPA in writing. Applicants may be asked to provide proof of identity . There is no charge for this.

The data protection policy is set out in detail in the Data Privacy Notice, 2022, available at: [www.csps.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.csps.dublindiocese.ie) under Policy Documents.

## APPENDIX 2

### DIOCESAN COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Archdiocese of Dublin's Standards and Guidelines for Priestly Life and Ministry sets out a procedure for dealing with complaints against priests of the Diocese. What follows in this document applies to others who work in parishes and other diocesan organisations.

A simple way of understanding a complaint is as an expression of dissatisfaction. People complain when they are unhappy about something. Dealing with complaints is about trying to put things right, rather than allocating blame for something that has gone wrong. Most people respond positively when their complaints are heard, taken seriously and they are given an undertaking that steps will be taken to ensure that the thing that caused them unhappiness does not recur. A simple apology can go a long way to address a person's complaint and to establish or restore a positive relationship with the complainant.

A person may never use the term 'complaint' when expressing unhappiness about something that has happened. Indeed, many people find it difficult to make or to be seen to 'make a complaint'. There is a responsibility on those who work in parishes and diocesan agencies to be alert to expressions of unhappiness (which may be non-verbal) and to respond appropriately. Such a response could be as simple as asking the person if everything is okay with them. Ignoring signs of unhappiness is not good safeguarding practice.

Complaints are best addressed as close as possible to the source of the problem. For example, if a parish volunteer inadvertently does something to upset a parishioner an immediate and unqualified apology is the most appropriate response.

Where a matter cannot be resolved in this simple and direct manner, another volunteer or church worker may be able to assist in bringing about resolution through negotiation and mediation. Such an intervention can be effective where a misunderstanding has arisen between the parties involved.

Sometimes complaints cannot be resolved immediately and it is good practice that within every activity or group there is a person designated to deal with complaints. A member of the choir will be reassured if she knows that there is someone in the choir who she can approach if she is unhappy about something. This person's role is to attempt to resolve the matter through negotiation

and mediation between the parties involved. If resolution is not achieved, or if there is no designated person to deal with the matter within the group, responsibility for resolution is likely to fall on the parish priest.

At the point where a complaint is referred to the group's designated person or to the parish priest a note should be made of the incident or situation giving rise to the complaint and the outstanding issues.

The parish priest will then have to determine what steps need to be taken to resolve the matter. One option to be considered is to have the complaint investigated by a person from outside the parish. This is likely to be expensive and time consuming and, in considering such a course of action, the parish priest should consider the following:

- the seriousness of the matter complained of;
- the integrity of the complaint, that is, whether it stands on its merits or relates to an underlying issue such as antipathy between individuals or groups;
- the impact of the process of investigation, which can sometimes encourage those in dispute to take up more entrenched positions as they seek to justify their own position or prove an opponent wrong;
- the likely outcome of the investigation and whether it will lead to a resolution of the issues that gave rise to it.

In many instances informal means of resolving complaints are to be preferred. This is not always possible and formal, independent investigations are required. Parish priests who are uncertain how to proceed should seek the advice of the Office for Clergy, and/or the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service.

When complaints relate to the behaviour of Church personnel other procedures may have to be invoked such as the disciplinary procedure or the child or adult protection procedure. Where such procedures are invoked they are additional to and not a substitute for attempts to resolve the unhappiness or dissatisfaction of the complainant.

## APPENDIX 3

### DIOCESAN WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Whistleblowing is a term used to describe the action of someone who reveals/discloses wrongdoing within an organisation to the public or to those in positions of authority. There is legal protection for whistleblowers. The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 provides legal safeguards to employees, contract and agency workers and people on work experience schemes who report illegal practices or other specified wrongdoings. This applies where the disclosure is made in good faith and on reasonable grounds and relates to any conduct or action which raises a significant danger to public health or safety.

Wrongdoing in the legislation is widely defined and includes:

- criminal acts;
- failure to comply with legal obligations;
- endangering the health and safety of people;
- damaging the environment;
- misuse of public funds;
- concealment or destruction of information concerning any of the above.

This guidance refers to malpractice in relation to child safeguarding and protection such as failure to follow the reporting requirements or to implement good safeguarding practice. Such malpractice should be reported to an appropriate person within the parish, diocesan or civil authorities.

The Archdiocese of Dublin is committed to accountability and transparency as described throughout this document. The purpose of this policy is to encourage those who have concerns for the welfare or safety of those involved in church activities in the Diocese, its parishes and agencies to express their concerns without the fear that they will be victimised or harassed for so doing.

It may be difficult to raise concerns about the practice of colleagues. There can be a reluctance due to:

- fear of getting it wrong and damaging the reputation of a colleague;
- fear of disrupting working relationships;
- fear of not being believed;

- fear that the information will be used inappropriately, precipitating a chain of events that spirals out of control.

These considerations have to be considered in the light of the following:

- the responsibility of everyone working for or on behalf of the Diocese for the protection and welfare of all, especially children and adults who are vulnerable or at risk;
- that raising a concern in a timely manner can prevent a bad situation from spiralling out of control;
- that raising a concern about one situation can reduce the risk of a similar situation arising in another part of the organisation;
- that raising a concern about poor or inappropriate practice will prevent the person raising the concern from becoming implicated in such practice.

The Archdiocese of Dublin is committed to ensuring that any person who raises a concern for the safety or welfare of any person arising from their involvement with the Diocese will not be victimised, harassed or in any way disadvantaged provided that the person has reasonable grounds for concern and is acting in good faith.

There may be occasions where a member of staff, paid or voluntary, has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. That person has a responsibility to discuss such a situation with his/her group leader or parish priest so that professional and personal support can be offered. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the protection and welfare of children or adults who are vulnerable or at risk.

Any person who is concerned about poor or inappropriate practice or behaviour in a parish or diocesan agency should report it to the person in charge. However, the person may decide to take the concern directly to the diocesan DLP or deputy DLP or to the civil authorities. Whatever decision the person takes, the concern will be taken seriously, investigated and the appropriate action taken. At another point, there may need to be a discussion as to why the person was unable to take their concern to the person in charge or to the DLP (if he or she has gone directly to the civil authorities) but this will be after the concern itself has been addressed. If the person believes that their concern has not been heard or taken seriously or that they have suffered

negative consequences for raising the concern, they should bring the matter to the attention of the Moderator of the Curia, Diocesan Offices, 20-23 Arran Quay, Dublin 7, D07 XK85, Phone: 01 808 7559 .

The Child Safeguarding and Protection Service is available to provide advice and support to any person who is concerned about the protection and welfare of children and adults who are vulnerable or at risk. Andrew Fagan (Director) or Deirdre Donnelly (Safeguarding and Support Officer) are available during office hours on 01 8360314. They can also be contacted by email on: **andrew.fagan@dublindiocese.ie** and **deirdre.donnelly@dublindiocese.ie**



**Child Safeguarding and Protection Service**  
**Diocesan Offices, 20-23 Arran Quay, Dublin D07 XK85**  
**Phone: 01 836 0314**  
**Web: [www.csps.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.csps.dublindiocese.ie)**

Archdiocese of Dublin