



Child Safeguarding  
& Protection Service

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN:  
HANDBOOK  
FOR PARISH CLERGY

Archdiocese of Dublin



“Families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children. They should also know that they have every right to turn to the Church with full confidence, for it is a safe and secure home”.

**-Pope Francis, letter to Presidents of Episcopal Conferences and Religious Superiors, 2nd February 2015**



## CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Parish Safeguarding Personnel
- Nomination of Parish Safeguarding Representative
- Parish Volunteer Recruitment Process
- Useful Contacts

# INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to help Parish Priests ensure that Diocesan policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children are in place within their respective parishes. It is designed to ensure that best practice is employed when it comes to creating a safe environment for all children and young people who engage in parish activities. The Parish Priest is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all parish volunteers, clergy, staff, children and their parents/guardians are fully aware of Diocesan child safeguarding policies and procedures.

## PARISH SAFEGUARDING PERSONNEL

- **The Parish Priest (Priest in charge)**
- **The Parish Child Safeguarding Representatives**
- **Organisers of youth activities**
- **The Parish Pastoral Council**
- **Parish staff**

## THE PARISH PRIEST (PRIEST INCHARGE)

The Parish Priest is ultimately responsible for ensuring that diocesan policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of children who partake in church activities are in place and maintained. He is responsible for:

- 1 The appointment of Parish Safeguarding Representatives.
- 2 The recruitment of all volunteers.
- 3 He ensures that all documentation relating to Safeguarding is stored in a central and secure location.
- 4 He is also responsible for ensuring that diocesan policies & procedures are maintained and updated as required.
- 5 He, along with the other safeguarding personnel complete an annual Parish Self Audit, so as to ensure best practice is being applied within the parish.
- 6 He ensures that an up-to-date register of all volunteers is maintained.

# THE PARISH CHILD SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE

The Parish Safeguarding Representative is required to:

- 1 Raise awareness of what safeguarding entails at parish level.
- 2 Offer information and advice on safeguarding matters to individuals and groups involved with children in the parish.
- 3 Ensure that all those working in the parish understand their responsibilities in relation to child safeguarding.
- 4 Ensure that the contact details of the relevant civil and diocesan safeguarding personnel are widely publicised.
- 5 Report to the Parish Priest and the Parish Pastoral Council on a regular basis

# ORGANISERS OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Those who organise youth activities such as the altar servers, youth choirs, family mass etc.. They must ensure the following policies & procedures are in place :

- 1 They must have signed Parental, Child & Medical Consent Forms for every child partaking in the activity.
- 2 Ensure that attendance records are in place for all practices and meetings with children.
- 3 That proper adult/children ratios are adhered to.
- 4 That all leaders in the group are Garda vetted and trained.
- 5 Implement an anti –bullying policy for the group.
- 6 Adhere to the Code of Conduct for Adult Staff & volunteers .
- 7 They must undergo proper safeguarding training before taking up their post.

**Note:** This list is not exhaustive



# PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council under the guidance of its Chairperson has a major role to play in supporting the Parish Priest and the Parish Safeguarding Representative in ensuring that Diocesan policies & procedures are implemented and maintained with regards to safeguarding children .

**They should :**

- 1** Have Child Safeguarding on the agenda of every meeting.
- 2** Contact the Safeguarding Representative before every meeting to see if there are any issues to report.
- 3** Invite the Safeguarding Representatives to address the pastoral council meetings at least twice a year.
- 4** Support the Parish Priest and Safeguarding Representatives in implementing action plans that arise from the annual Parish Self Audit.
- 5** Work collectively to promote child safeguarding within the parish.

# PARISH STAFF

## **Sacristans**

The parish sacristans in most cases come in regular contact with children , mainly altar servers. There should be a sign in book in every sacristy and when children are in the sacristy, there should be at least two adults present at all times.

## **Parish Secretaries**

The parish secretary can play a very important safeguarding role within the parish. Very often they may take bookings from non parish groups that use parish property. It is very important that the secretary is aware of the Diocesan policies and procedures for this. They also can be a communication conduit between the Diocese and the parish, consequently it is very important they are aware of Safeguarding personnel within the parish.

**All parish staff must undergo Safeguarding Training.**

# NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF THE PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE

**The Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR) is nominated and appointed by the Parish Priest usually with advice from the Parish Pastoral Council. The process is as follows :**

- The nominee completes a Garda Vetting Invitation form. The Parish Priest submits the form to the Diocesan Child Safeguarding & Protection Service (CSPS).
- Once Garda vetting is complete, the CSPS will arrange for the nominee to undergo a mandatory One Day Child Safeguarding Training programme.
- On completion of the nominee's training , the Parish Priest can appoint the person to the role ( see Letter Of Appointment) . The Parish Priest sends the name and contact details of the nominee to the CSPS

**PARISH:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LETTER OF APPOINTMENT**

For Parish Child Safeguarding Representative

Dear

Thank you for volunteering to work in the parish as Child Safeguarding Representative.

The term of your appointment is for a three year period, which can be extended by a further three years, with agreement from all parties.

The job description has been discussed with you during your training. If you have any further questions or wish to discuss a situation arising from your work, please feel free to contact me or your Diocesan support person. If you wish to meet with me at any time, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Working with children and young people is a responsibility but it also brings rewards. I hope you will enjoy your work.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Priest

# PARISH VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

## **1: Existing volunteers who do not work with children**

- Must complete the 2 hour Safeguarding Training Information Session and do a refresher every 3 years
- Must have their name, role and contact details entered into the Parish Volunteer Register.

## **Category 2: Existing volunteers who work with children**

- Must complete the Adult Volunteer form
- Must complete the Garda Vetting process. This must be renewed every 3 years.
- Must complete full day Safeguarding Training programme and do a refresher every 3 years
- Must have their name, role and contact details entered into the Parish Volunteer Register

### **Category 3: New volunteers who will not be working with children**

- The applicant will complete the Adult Volunteer Form
- The priest in charge will meet the individual for an interview.
- The priest will consult with 3rd parties to confirm the applicant's suitability (references) and keep a written record of all verbal references.

Once recruited:

- The applicant will be given a copy of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy (2023), given time to read this and revert to the priest in charge with any questions. Once this is done the applicant will be asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the document and agree to abide by its contents.
- The applicant will complete the 2 hour Safeguarding Training Information session and do a refresher every 3 years
- The parish will enter the applicant's name, role and contact details into the Parish Volunteer Register.

## Category 4: New volunteers who will work with children

- The applicant will complete the Adult Volunteer Form
- The priest in charge will meet the individual for an interview and induction (explaining role)
- The priest will consult with 3rd parties to confirm the applicant's suitability (references) and keep a written record of all verbal references.
- The applicant will complete the Garda Vetting form
- The parish will submit the completed Garda Vetting form to CSPS. This must be renewed every 3 years

### Once recruited:

- The applicant will be given a copy of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy (2023), given time to read this and revert to the priest in charge with any queries. Once this is done the applicant will be asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understand the document and agree to abide by its contents
- The applicant will be given a written role description
- The parish will enter the applicant's name, role and contact details into the Parish Volunteer Register
- The applicant will complete the full day Safeguarding Training programme
- The applicant will complete an agreed probationary period.

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION SERVICE

**Andrew Fagan, Diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**  
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# NOTES:

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