



Child Safeguarding  
& Protection Service

SAFEGUARDING  
HANDBOOK FOR PARISH  
STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Archdiocese of Dublin

# INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to help parish staff and volunteers ensure that Diocesan policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults are in place in their parishes. It is designed to ensure that best practice is employed when it comes to creating a safe environment for all who engage in parish activities.

*“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**

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- Definition of key terms
- Diocesan & parish safeguarding structures
- Recognising child and vulnerable adult abuse.
- Responding to abuse
- Reporting abuse
- Key safeguarding practices
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## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

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

A vulnerable adult is a person over 18 who lacks or has seriously impaired capacity to make informed decisions or to defend him or herself from harm.

Safeguarding is all the things we do to create and maintain safe environments for children and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities.

Child and vulnerable adult protection consists of the measures we take once a threat to the safety of a child or vulnerable adult has been identified

# THE SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF DUBLIN

- 1 The Archbishop Of Dublin
- 2 Child Safeguarding and Protection Service
- 3 Diocesan Safeguarding Committee
- 4 Diocesan Advisory Panel of Child Protection
- 5 Parish clergy, staff and volunteers
- 6 Mandated persons
- 7 Parish Safeguarding Representatives

# ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

Overall responsibility for ensuring adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that children and vulnerable adults who participate in Church activities are protected from harm

## THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION SERVICE (CSPS)

- 1 Case Management
- 2 Support for those who were abused as children in a church context
- 3 Training and advice giving

### Supported by:

- 1 Advisory Panel
- 2 Safeguarding Committee

# CSPS PERSONNEL

## **Director and Designated Liaison Person(DLP)**

Andrew Fagan:

[andrew.fagan@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:andrew.fagan@dublindiocese.ie)

## **Safeguarding & Support Officer and Deputy DLP**

Deirdre Donnelly:

[deirdre.donnelly@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:deirdre.donnelly@dublindiocese.ie)

## **Training and Development Coordinator**

Garry Kehoe:

[garry.kehoe@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:garry.kehoe@dublindiocese.ie)

## **Garda Vetting Coordinator**

Vivienne Knight

[vetting@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:vetting@dublindiocese.ie)

# LOCAL SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE

**Responsible to the parish priest/local superior to promote safeguarding by:**

- 1** Raising awareness of what safeguarding is.
- 2** Ensuring Church activities are provided in a way that ensures the safety and well being of children and vulnerable adults
- 3** Ensuring that the contact details of the Designated Liaison Person, Gardai, TUSLA and the HSE are widely publicised



## MANDATED PERSONS

**Mandated persons are defined in Schedule 2 of the Children First Act (2015) and have two main obligations:**

- 1** To report harm to children above a defined threshold to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency
- 2** To assist Tusla, if requested in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report

Includes “member of the clergy (howsoever described) or pastoral care worker (howsoever described) of a church or religious community”

# UNDERSTANDING ABUSE

- 1 Recognising: how do we know if a child or vulnerable adult is being abused?
  - 2 Responding: how do we respond if we believe a child or vulnerable adult is being abused?
  - 3 Reporting: how do we report abuse?
- 

## ABUSE CATEGORIES

**It is generally recognised that there are four categories of child abuse:**

- 1 Neglect
- 2 Emotional
- 3 Physical
- 4 Sexual

**When looking at the abuse of vulnerable adults there are three additional categories of abuse to be considered:**

- 1 Financial Abuse
- 2 Discriminatory Abuse
- 3 Institutional Abuse

## NEGLECT

An omission where the child or vulnerable adult suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care.

## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

The systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child or a vulnerable adult.

## PHYSICAL ABUSE

The deliberate injury to person, or the willful or neglectful failure to prevent injury or suffering.

## SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child, young person or vulnerable adult is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

## CHILD WELFARE CONCERN

You may come across situations where there are reasonable grounds to be concerned for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, but your concern does not necessarily fit the categories of abuse. Examples may include children who engage in self-harm, children who engage in risky or criminal behaviour or children who are in need. The child and/or their family may be in need of support, professional intervention or community services. In such cases you should bring this to the attention of your parish clergy or parish pastoral worker.

## VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

When considering the abuse of vulnerable adults there are three additional categories of abuse on top of the four already discussed, to be considered:

- 1 Financial Abuse
- 2 Discriminatory Abuse
- 3 Institutional Abuse

## FINANCIAL ABUSE/MATERIAL ABUSE

Financial or material abuse is the unauthorised interference with or theft of personal possessions, money or property belonging to another.

## DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE

Discriminatory abuse includes ageism, racism, sexism, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

# INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE

Institutional abuse occurs where an institution in which vulnerable adult is living or receiving a service, such as day care, fails to protect him or her from abuse within the care setting. It frequently involves:

- 1 Poor standards of care,
- 2 Rigid routines
- 3 Inadequate responses to the individual needs of the vulnerable adult.

# BULLYING

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression whether it be verbal, psychological or physical that is conducted by an individual or group against others.

It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more persons against a victim.

# RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

## Do

- Stay calm, listen carefully & patiently.
- Accept what the person says.
- Reassure them that it was right to tell you.
- Explain that you will have to inform the appropriate authorities.
- Record what they've said as soon as possible after the meeting, using their own words.

## Do not

- Make judgments about the alleged abuser.
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Tell them stories about others.
- Don't fill in words or finish sentences.
- Don't convey your anger, shock or embarrassment, or give your opinion.
- Don't press for details, except to clarify.

## REPORTING PROCEDURE AT PARISH LEVEL

All concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse towards children or vulnerable adults within a church setting must be reported to one of the following :

**Designated Liaison Person:** Mr. Andrew Fagan

**Phone:** 01- 8306314

**Email:** [andrew.fagan@dublindioocese.ie](mailto:andrew.fagan@dublindioocese.ie)

Or

**Deputy DLP:** Ms. Deirdre Donnelly

**Phone:** 01- 8306314

**Email:** [deirdre.donnelly@dublindioocese.ie](mailto:deirdre.donnelly@dublindioocese.ie)

You can also report directly to the civil authorities i.e local Tusla office if a child is at risk, HSE if a vulnerable adult is at risk. In an emergency, if a child or vulnerable adult is at risk contact the Gardai.

***“Never Do Nothing”***

## KEY SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES

- Valuing children and vulnerable adults and demonstrating respect for them.
- Obtaining consent for their participation in parish activities.
- Choosing carefully those who work with children and vulnerable adults (this includes Garda Vetting)
- Ensuring staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them (Code of Conduct).
- Making proper arrangements for children and vulnerable adults who attend activities.
- Keeping appropriate records
- Promptly reporting all concerns for the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults



## CODE OF PRACTICE (EXTRACTS)

### **All parish clergy, staff and volunteers will:**

- Treat all people with justice and respect
- Encourage everyone to contribute to parish life
- Listen to and respect the views of others
- Respect people's personal boundaries
- Encourage people to speak openly about anything that may be worrying them
- Operate in accordance with the diocesan safeguarding policy

### **WE WILL NOT:**

- Engage in any form of bullying or harassment of a child or vulnerable adult
- Have any sexual contact with a child or vulnerable adult
- Physically chastise a child or vulnerable adult
- Develop an exclusive relationship with a particular child or vulnerable adult
- Condone or fail to challenge unacceptable behavior

## HOUSE VISITATION BY VOLUNTEERS

**When parish volunteers as part of their ministry, visit homes of parishioners, they should do so in pairs. Where this is not possible the following should be taken into consideration.**

- 1** All visits should be pre-arranged with the person you are visiting or with a family member or carer. In the case of a vulnerable adult living alone, you should ask that a family member, friend or neighbour be present.
- 2** A record of all visits should be kept by the parish. This record should include the volunteers name, date and time of visit, purpose of visit and who else was present.
- 3** If a volunteer has a concern or a suspicion that the person they have visited is at risk of abuse or if the person they are visiting discloses they are being abused, this must be reported immediately as per the reporting instructions in this handbook.

# LAST THOUGHTS

- 1 The protection of children & vulnerable adults is your responsibility
- 2 It is a responsibility you share with others
- 3 CSPA is there to provide advice and support
- 4 Good safeguarding practice also protects you, the parish and the Diocese, but the children and vulnerable adults come first

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