



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

**Standards and Guidance Document
for the Catholic Church in Ireland**





Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Statement by Chairman of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church	5
Foreword by the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland, and the Irish Missionary Union	7
Introduction	
Who are the Standards for?	9
Why use Standards?	10
Founding principles	10
How to use this document	11
Section 1: The Standards	
Standard 1: A written policy on keeping children safe	14
Standard 2: Procedures – how to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions	15
Standard 3: Preventing harm to children	16
Standard 4: Training and education	18
Standard 5: Communicating the Church's safeguarding message	19
Standard 6: Access to advice and support	20
Standard 7: Implementing and monitoring the Standards	21
Section 2: Putting the Standards into Practice	
Part A: The evaluation of current activities	24
Part B: Achieving best practice	36
Section 3: Resources	53

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Abbreviations

DHAC	Department of Health and Children
DHSS	Department of Health and Social Services
HSCT	Health and Social Care Trust
HSE	Health Services Executive
NBSCCC	National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PSNI	Police Service for Northern Ireland



Statement by the Chairman of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church

'Our Children, Our Church: Child Protection Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland' (hereafter, *OCOC*) was launched in December 2005 following its endorsement by the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, (the 'Sponsoring Bodies'). A core recommendation of *OCOC* was the establishment of a National Board for Safeguarding Children and a National Office to implement the Board's decisions and policies. The authority of the National Board, including its responsibility to make recommendations as to best practice, derives from its specific functions agreed with the Sponsoring Bodies.

A key responsibility of the National Board is to assist those implementing safeguarding policy and procedures throughout the Church in Ireland to achieve a consistent and up-to-date standard of best practice.

In seeking to do this the members of the National Board are aware of the immense progress already made over recent years in developing a more effective and accountable safeguarding environment for children across many Irish dioceses and religious congregations. We are also aware of the great wealth of experience and commitment that exists among the trained volunteers and paid staff who already work for the Church in this area. We realise that building an effective and ongoing partnership with all of you is essential to the success of the National Board's efforts to monitor and develop the Church's safeguarding policy and practice. It is hoped the publication of this *Standards and Guidance* document will strengthen that collaboration and provide an opportunity for those already engaged in this vital work in parishes, dioceses, religious congregations or other Church organisations to become more familiar with the work of the National Board and the support available through the National Office for Safeguarding Children.

One of the key findings of the Board to date is that over the years most dioceses and religious orders have produced and implemented their own policies and procedures, largely in isolation from each other. The result is a multiplicity of guidance which contains different interpretations of what represents best practice for the Church.

The *Standards and Guidance* document seeks to address this situation by reiterating and developing further the core principles outlined in *OCOC*. These principles are drawn from Gospel values, mirrored in civil legislation and policy, and apply across both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.

From these core principles are drawn seven 'Standards' that represent, in our view, best practice in the area of safeguarding and protecting children. For each standard we have listed practical criteria by which performance in achieving each safeguarding standard can be measured.

The intention of this document is to provide a practical mechanism by which everyone in the Church in Ireland can reach a uniform standard of best practice in safeguarding based on the core principles established in *OCOC*.

To achieve this uniform standard the document contains a 'self audit tool' designed to enable those with responsibility for safeguarding children in the Church to identify areas of strength and weakness in current policy and practice. Our hope and expectation is that upon receiving this document each diocese, religious order and Church organisation will immediately review its policies and procedures using this tool. If deficits are identified, support in addressing these is available through the Office of the National Board for Safeguarding Children. The National Board also has the expectation that each diocese, religious order or other relevant Church organisation will seek advice from the National Office in advance of publishing any child safeguarding policy or procedures or any update of existing policies. For the Church in Ireland to achieve a uniform standard of best practice it is vital that the Board is kept informed of all policy and practice being developed in this area.

It is also important to note that this document involves some amendments to the structures and processes outlined in *OCOC*. These have been made by the Board in light of developments in best practice in safeguarding children. The Board therefore suggests that for all practical purposes this *Standards and Guidance* document now becomes the first and only necessary point of reference for all those with responsibility for implementing the Church's safeguarding policy and procedures across both jurisdictions in Ireland. Where aspects of *OCOC* have not yet been developed in this document, these will be considered in due course and presented in the form of supplementary material.

As this document is fully compliant with child protection legislation in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland, it does not stand alone but incorporates and complements the best practice and guidance provided in the two statutory policy documents '*Children First*' and '*Cooperating to Safeguard Children*'.

We are aware that some Church organisations come under the direct responsibility of government departments which already have procedures for reporting allegations and suspicions of child abuse. Where such procedures exist, they should continue to be followed.

The safeguarding of children is the responsibility of everyone in the Church whether clergy, religious or lay faithful. This document now becomes the definitive reference for all those involved in the safeguarding of children within the Church across the island of Ireland. Over the coming months, additional issues will be addressed by the Board and guidance provided to supplement this document as appendices. Examples include:

- Provision of safeguarding guidance in a child friendly format;
- Guidance on recording allegations and suspicions of abuse of a child;
- Policy guidelines on the application of natural justice in respect of alleged abusers of children;
- Guidance on other issues identified by the Board, the Sponsoring Bodies, victims of abuse, statutory and other safeguarding bodies and those working for the Church in this area.

In this way we hope to quickly provide a comprehensive range of guidance material to assist everyone in the Church in Ireland to play their part in continuing to build a safe and caring environment for children. We look forward to working in collaboration with all those who share this objective.

Further clarification of any aspect of the material contained in this document can be obtained from the National Office for Safeguarding Children.



Aidan A. Canavan
Chairman

Foreword by the Irish Bishops' Conference, The Conference of Religious of Ireland and The Irish Missionary Union

In December 2005 the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union (the 'Sponsoring Bodies') published *Our Children, Our Church: Child Protection Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (hereafter, *OCOC*). A key objective of *OCOC* was to produce a 'unified approach to child protection across the Catholic Church in Ireland' (*OCOC*, p.1).

To help achieve this and in keeping with the requirements of *OCOC* the Sponsoring Bodies established a National Board for Safeguarding Children. As specified in *OCOC* a key function of this Board is to 'advise the Sponsoring Bodies on best practice in relation to child protection policies and procedures' (*OCOC*, p. 11). This includes offering ongoing support and guidance on implementing, updating and developing the Church's safeguarding policies and procedures in response to legislative and other developments.

In keeping with this function of the Board we welcome its decision to publish this *Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. It represents the independent and considered view of the Board on a 'unified approach to child protection across the Catholic Church in Ireland' (*OCOC*, p.1) and how it can be best achieved. The Board has set out this guidance on the basis of its assessment of the most up-to-date developments in this area.

We wholeheartedly endorse this document and ask all those with responsibility for safeguarding children throughout the Church in Ireland to apply the *Standards and Guidance* contained in it at the earliest opportunity.

In practice this document now becomes an essential point of reference for all those concerned with safeguarding children within the Church in Ireland. It becomes the standard and policy against which all previous and existing child safeguarding policies and procedures, in both jurisdictions, shall be compared and where necessary brought up-to-date.

In endorsing this material we are mindful of the words of Pope Benedict XVI in his *Ad Limina* address to the Irish Bishops on 28 October 2006. Speaking of the 'deep wounds' caused by the abuse of children within the Church, Pope Benedict stressed the need to 'establish the truth of what happened in the past, to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it from occurring again, to ensure that the principles of justice are fully respected and, above all, to bring healing to the victims and to all those affected by these egregious crimes. In this way,' the Pope went on to say, 'the Church in Ireland will grow stronger and be ever more capable of giving witness to the redemptive power of the Cross of Christ.'

In supporting the publication of this *Standards and Guidance* we wish to express our continued commitment to this journey of justice, truth, prevention and healing. With all members of the Church, we are very painfully aware of the dreadful betrayal of trust and the scandalous contradictions that are involved when a child is abused by an adult. This betrayal is vastly greater when that adult is a priest or religious. Instead of being respected and protected by people whom they trusted, the children were used and humiliated and damaged in unthinkable ways. All of us, bishops, priests, religious and lay faithful have a particular responsibility to learn the deep wrong that has been done to them, to share their pain and to help in their healing. In supporting the implementation of this guidance of the *National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland* we want to show them that the whole Church community is appalled at what has happened to them and wishes to listen, to understand and to respond as a whole Church community in the most practical and effective way we can.

This document does not attempt to address every facet of the issue of child abuse. We welcome the intention of the Board to publish further reflections and advice on other aspects of this painful and complex reality in due course. As a Church we have learned some lessons. We know there are more that we need to learn.

Anything that could allow child abuse to happen and to be hidden has to be addressed and corrected. With parents, families and the many paid and voluntary personnel now working for the Church in this area we will do all we can to ensure that young people will find an active and warm welcome in the Church carried on according to the highest standards of best practice in safeguarding children. Everyone has their part to play. No one can abdicate their responsibility to be vigilant and to report any suspicion or concerns about the welfare of a child in the manner required by legislation and best practice.

We are particularly aware that the guidance and standards set out in this document will make new demands on the several thousand women and men across Ireland who have formal responsibility for the implementation of the Church's safeguarding policy as trained volunteers or paid personnel. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to them for all they do for children and for the Church in giving so generously of their time and talent to this urgent and vital Christian task. Their work is a practical living out of the baptismal vocation of every member of the Church to ensure the safety and well-being of those 'little ones' whom the Lord set before as those to whom the 'kingdom of God belongs' (Mt 19:14).

Ministry to children and young people is an essential and honoured part of the Church's mission and activity, given to us by Jesus himself. Children also have a right to participate in the life of the Church. Happily so many do so and experience there the life, meaning and joy of the Gospel. By working together to implement the standards and guidance in this document, especially at parish and community level, everyone can contribute to a Church in which every child feels valued and safe. In this way the whole Church community also gives its support to parents who have primary responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of their children.

Finally, we thank the National Board for providing all Church personnel with this invaluable and evolving tool for implementing the standards and procedures which will create the safest possible environment for children in the Church.

The Irish Bishops' Conference

The Conference of Religious of Ireland

The Irish Missionary Union.



Introduction

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church was established in 2006 to provide advice on best practice in safeguarding children and to monitor the implementation of safeguarding policy in the Church across both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.

Over recent years there has been an increasing recognition of the existence of child abuse and growing acceptance of the potential risks to children from others working in positions of trust. Greater attention, therefore, has been paid to how Church organisations ensure that the children with whom they are in contact are kept safe from harm. As a result, a range of policies and procedures have been developed, often by individual diocese, religious congregations or Church organisations.

However, many parts of the Church are still unsure of how to build protection measures into their work. Even those that have taken steps to address this are discovering the real challenges of making their work 'child safe'. There is a need for practical guidance, tools and support materials to assist them in overcoming a host of challenges that confront them in tackling the safeguarding and protection of children.

Church organisations need to develop a common understanding of how to safeguard children, develop good practice across the diverse and complex areas in which they operate and increase accountability in this crucial aspect of their work. The standards contained in this document are designed to help Church organisations keep children safe.

Who are the Standards for?

The Standards should be used by all Church organisations (e.g. diocese, parishes, religious, institutions, seminaries) and personnel (e.g. clergy, religious, lay employees or volunteers). They have been designed recognising the differences in legislation and protection systems that exist in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and some of the particular issues that arise in relation to missionaries who work overseas. Therefore, those using these Standards will need to think creatively about how to apply them in the contexts in which they are operating. If necessary, assistance should be sought from the National Office for Safeguarding Children.

Why use Standards?

The Standards described in this guidance document represent the expected level of performance that all parts of the Church should reach.

Meeting the Standards will protect:

- children – by ensuring they are in a good safe environment and minimising risk of abuse to them if allegations and suspicions of further abuse do arise
- Church personnel – by clarifying how they are expected to behave with children and what to do if there are allegations and suspicions about the safety of a child
- the integrity of the Church and its missions – by making clear its commitment to keeping children safe and by modelling best practice.

Founding principles

All children have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected. This right is embedded in Gospel values, best practice guidelines and international and domestic laws.

In the light of the teaching of the Church, civil legislation and guidance, every part of the Church must be committed to taking the necessary steps to:

- demonstrate that the right of the child to protection from harm is paramount
- cherish and safeguard children and young people
- foster best practice
- demonstrate accountability through establishing effective structures
- support Church organisations and personnel in safeguarding children
- establish safe recruitment and vetting practices – aimed at preventing those who pose a risk to children from holding positions of trust
- maintain codes of behaviour – having clear guidelines that set out what is and is not acceptable behaviour as an essential part of keeping children safe
- operate safe activities for children – helping ensure they can play and learn in a safe environment.



How to use this document

These Standards are the first part of a series of child protection resources to be issued by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church. They will be supported by the provision of additional recommended training materials for those within the Church in Ireland in both jurisdictions.

Taken together, the Standards, principles and supporting materials represent a comprehensive set of tools, which are intended to help a wide range of Church organisations address the challenges of keeping children safe.

Section 1 contains **seven Standards** structured as follows:

Standard 1	A written policy on keeping children safe.
Standard 2	Procedures – how to respond to allegations and suspicions in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
Standard 3	Preventing harm to children: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recruitment and vetting• running safe activities for children• codes of behaviour
Standard 4	Training and education
Standard 5	Communicating the Church’s safeguarding message: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to children• to parents and adults• to other organisations
Standard 6	Access to advice and support
Standard 7	Implementing and monitoring the Standards

Each Standard contains a list of **criteria** – indicators that will help decide whether this Standard has been met. The criteria give details of the steps that a Church organisation needs to take to meet the Standard and ways of providing evidence that the Standard has been met.

Section 2 contains examples, templates and tools to help meet the Standards.

Section 3 contains further information and resources to help build awareness and understanding of child protection, including useful sample policy and guidance documents that can be used as templates and adapted for those preparing their own guidelines and other materials.





THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
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IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Section 1: The Standards

Standard 1

A written policy on keeping children safe

Each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.

What is the Standard?

All Church organisations that work directly or indirectly with people under the age of 18 have a written policy on keeping children safe. This is generally known as a **child protection policy**.

The policy communicates the principle derived from the Gospel that the Church is committed to keeping children safe. It makes clear to everyone that children must be protected, helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and shows that the Church is taking its duty of care seriously.

Criteria

1.1	The Church organisation has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.
1.2	The policy is approved and signed by the relevant leadership body of the Church organisation (e.g. the Bishop of the diocese or provincial of a religious congregation).
1.3	The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.
1.4	The policy is reviewed at regular intervals no more than three years apart and is adapted whenever there are significant changes in the organisation or legislation.
1.5	The policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work e.g. within a church building, community work, pilgrimages, trips and holidays.
1.6	The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.
1.7	The policy clearly describes the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse.
1.8	The policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay.
1.9	The Policy should be created at diocese or congregational level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the diocesan or congregational policy and approved by the relevant diocesan or congregational authority before distribution.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- a copy of the policy
- minutes of the meeting where the policy was signed/ agreed by the relevant Bishop or Religious Superior or other appropriate Church authority at diocesan or congregational level
- written evidence of how abuse is dealt with in the Church organisation and a timetable for review.

Standard 2

Procedures – how to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions

Children have a right to be listened to and heard: Church organisations must respond effectively and ensure any allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported both within the Church and to civil authorities.

What is the Standard?

All Church organisations must provide clear guidance on what to do when a concern arises.

Clear procedures and guidance will help to make sure there is a prompt response to allegations and suspicions about a child's safety or welfare. They also enable the Church to meet all national and international legal and practice requirements or guidance.

Criteria

2.1	There are clear child protection procedures in all Church organisations that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations or suspicions of abuse of a child (historic or current).
2.2	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear, easily understandable way.
2.3	There is a designated officer or officer(s) with a clearly defined role and responsibilities for safeguarding children at diocesan or congregational level.
2.4	There is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals. These will be stored securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.
2.5	There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.
2.6	There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration. The Seal of Confession is absolute.
2.7	The procedures include contact details for local child protection services e.g. (Republic of Ireland) the local Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána; (Northern Ireland) the local health and social services trust and the PSNI.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- a copy of written procedures
- a flow chart that describes steps in the Church organisation's child protection reporting process
- name and duties of those people with special responsibility for child protection in the Church organisation
- examples of forms for recording details of concerns.

Standard 3

Preventing harm to children

Children should have access to good role models they can trust, who will respect and nurture their spiritual, physical and emotional development. They also have a right to an environment free from abuse and neglect.

What is the Standard?

Church organisations develop a culture of safety that minimises risk to children. Some people who work in, or who seek to work in Church organisations (whether it is paid or voluntary work) pose a risk to children and young people.

Church organisations can minimise the risk of children and young people being abused by:

- safe recruitment and vetting practices – helping prevent those who pose a risk to children from holding positions of trust
- codes of behaviour – having clear guidelines that set out what is and is not acceptable behaviour as an essential part of keeping children safe
- operating safe activities for children – can help ensure a safe environment for children.

Criteria – safe recruitment and vetting

3.1	There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.
3.2	The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.
3.3	All those who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, complete a form declaring any previous court convictions and undergo other checks as required by legislation and guidance and this information is then properly assessed and recorded.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- a copy of agreed methods for recruiting
- examples of application, reference and declaration forms
- evidence of registration with or access to agencies that are in a position to provide details of an applicant's past behaviour, such as An Garda Síochána Central Vetting Unit or Access Northern Ireland.

Criteria – Codes of behaviour

3.4	The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of, adults towards children.
3.5	There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti-bullying policy).
3.6	There are clear ways in which Church personnel can raise allegations and suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel or volunteers ('whistle-blowing'), confidentially if necessary.
3.7	There are processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment.
3.8	Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.
3.9	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- guidelines for adult-to-child behaviour and for child-to-child behaviour
- guidance on physical contact
- a copy of the document explaining how Church personnel can confidentially discuss their allegations and suspicions about children with senior staff (whistle-blowing scheme) and information about this procedure.

Criteria – Operating safe activities for children

3.10	There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.
3.11	When operating projects/ activities children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.
3.12	Guidelines exist for appropriate use of information technology (such as mobile phones, email, digital cameras, websites, the Internet) to make sure that children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- example of child welfare plan for transporting children when taking them on trips, overnight stays, pilgrimages and retreats
- a copy of guidelines on the use of mobile phones, email, the Internet and filming and photography of children
- evidence to show compliance with national guidance on adult ratio to children.

Standard 4

Training and education for keeping children safe

All Church personnel should be offered training in child protection to maintain high standards and good practice.

What is the Standard?

There are opportunities for all Church personnel to develop and maintain the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to keep children safe.

Everyone in the Church who comes into contact with children has a role to play in their protection. To carry out this role confidently and effectively they need to be aware of child protection issues and to have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe.

Criteria

4.1	All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working within Church organisations.
4.2	Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.
4.3	Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk, acting as designated person.
4.4	Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- a copy of training plans and/ or programmes
- records of course attendance
- induction documentation/ guidance
- course evaluation documents
- systematic ongoing formation programmes for safeguarding children in seminaries and houses of religion.

Standard 5

Communicating the Church's safeguarding message

Children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church.

What is the Standard?

There are clear processes in place to disseminate the Church's child protection policy and procedures to personnel, parishioners and external agencies.

Policies and procedures put in place by Church organisations to protect children are only effective if Church personnel and parishioners, including children, understand them and know how to use them.

Criteria

5.1	The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.
5.2	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.
5.3	Everyone in the Church organisation knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.
5.4	Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as Health and Social Care Trusts/ Health Service Executive, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, telephone helplines and the designated person.
5.5	Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.
5.6	Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- examples of resources and materials that illustrate how the Church is committed to keeping children safe including reference to child protection policies, codes of behaviour and so on
- examples of ways the Church organisation's policy has been promoted, including to communities and to children
- information about where children should go to when they have a worry or a concern including contact details, which are different from the ones dealing with complaints from adults.

Standard 6

Access to advice and support

Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.

Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.

What is the Standard?

Anyone who has been abused or who has perpetrated abuse should be assisted and supported in seeking help.

Child abuse is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. Church organisations have a duty to ensure advice and support is available. Children in particular need someone to turn to when they are being abused. Often they do not know where to go for help.

Criteria

6.1	Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.
6.2	Contacts are established at a national and/ or local level with the relevant child protection/ welfare agencies and helplines that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.
6.3	There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members or peers.
6.4	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.
6.5	Appropriate support is provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- copies of information for children about sources of support
- information (leaflets, information sheets etc) about training, advice and support – for Church personnel, adults outside the Church, and children
- lists of contacts for specialist advice services
- copy of outreach programme for those abused and their families.

Standard 7

Implementing and monitoring the Standards

To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across all Church organisations. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside of Church organisations can help to improve the effectiveness of any measures taken.

What is the Standard?

The Church organisation develops a plan of action to monitor the effectiveness of the steps it is taking to keep children safe.

Criteria

7.1	There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed.
7.2	The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.
7.3	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.
7.4	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.
7.5	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.

Ways of providing evidence

The following documents can be used to provide evidence that the Standard has been met:

- an action plan for meeting the Standards
- a record of a date planned for review and who is responsible
- a summary of the number of incidents of abuse and number of complaints.





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Section 2: Putting the Standards into practice

Part A: The evaluation of current activities

This section will help you think about some of the actions your Church organisation already takes that help keep children safe. It will draw out the practices you do well and help identify where procedures need to be improved or are even potentially risky. There are a small number of activities for you to carry out either on your own or with others to help build an accurate picture of where you are now in relation to how your Church organisation safeguards children.

For many Church organisations, activities for children may not be the main focus; nevertheless, many are surprised to find how much contact they actually do have with children. Before you do the activities, make sure you have all the materials you will need – such as paper, pens, etc – to run it easily and effectively.

The first activity is designed to help you to map out the sort of contact you currently have with children.



Activity 1: Children and your Church

Aim

To get a picture of the amount of contact your Church organisation has with children.

Notes

Through this activity, you will begin to identify who, and in what ways, people in the Church organisation have contact or access to children.

Think about the key activities that your Church organisation provides for children, or the ways your organisation comes into contact with children.

Now imagine a day and identify how many children the organisation (staff, volunteers etc) normally meets, talks with, or has access to because of those activities. Think about how old the children are, whether they are children living in an institution, in an educational establishment, or with their families in the community etc.

It may help to draw a child on a piece of flipchart paper and have a series of lines coming out. You could use different colours to show whether the contact with children is regular, occasional or remote – via email, for example.

- Are there other ways you might have contact with children, such as by letter, phone, and email?
- Are you surprised by how much or little contact you have?

Activity 2: Good practice with children

Aim

To identify what your Church organisation does well in its contact work with children, and highlight any areas for improvement.

Notes

The Church's commitment to children and families is integral to the spiritual and emotional development of the community at large. It is always worth identifying what you believe you do well. You may undertake many activities in your work that are not formalised, not written down, but they do happen.

Either on your own, or with others, think about the strengths that your Church organisation brings to its work with children. As you go on to do the self-audit in the next activity, remember to balance the gaps in your practice with the positive outcomes that your organisation reaches.

Use a large piece of flipchart paper and draw two columns.

Write the following subject areas in the left hand column, with space to write notes opposite each heading. First think about:

- the way children are cared for and valued
- the involvement of children in Church/ parish events
- the Church personnel's commitment and attitude to children
- the attitude and values of Church leaders to children
- existing child protection policies or procedures
- access to child protection training
- how volunteers are recruited.

Review the above list and add more headings/ areas if you wish. Try and capture the way you believe the Church protects children from abuse and add them into the right hand column.

Next think about what you do less well, or you think may even be risky; add these to the other column. How do they balance up? Does it help you identify areas for improvement? After completing this go onto do the self-audit in Activity 3. It will build on this initial work and help identify gaps against the seven Standards.

Activity 3: Self-audit tool

The self-audit tool is an ideal way of measuring how close your Church organisation is to meeting the Standards for keeping children safe, and where you may need to improve.

The checklist in the following pages is designed to draw out the minimum requirements (criteria) that your Church organisation should be striving to meet. Before you start, take a copy of the self-audit tool, date the copy and then follow the steps outlined below. You can then keep a record in order to review your progress at a later date.

The self-audit tool asks you to think about the seven Standards.

Read each statement and decide whether each statement is:

- in place
- proposed
- not in place

Tick each box as appropriate.

	Standard 1: A written policy on keeping children safe	In place	Proposed	Not in place	Date reviewed
1	The Church organisation has a child protection policy that is written in a clear and easily understandable way.				
2	The policy is approved and signed by the relevant leadership body of the Church organisation.				
3	The policy states that all Church personnel are required to comply with it.				
4	The policy is reviewed as a <i>minimum</i> every three years and is adapted whenever there are significant changes in the organisation or legislation.				
5	The policy addresses child protection in the different aspects of Church work e.g. within a Church building, community work, pilgrimages, trips and holidays.				
6	The policy states how those individuals who pose a risk to children are managed.				
7	The policy clearly describes the Church's understanding and definitions of abuse.				
8	The policy states that all current child protection concerns must be reported to the civil authorities without delay.				
9	The Policy should be created at diocese or congregational level. If a separate policy document at parish or other level is necessary this should be consistent with the diocesan or congregational policy and approved by the relevant diocesan or congregational authority before distribution.				

	Standard 2: Procedures – how to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions	In place	Proposed	Not in place	Date reviewed
1	There are clear written child protection procedures that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are allegations and suspicions of abuse about a child (historic or current).				
2	The child protection procedures are consistent with legislation on child welfare and civil guidance for child protection and written in a clear and easily understandable way.				
3	There is a safeguarding/ designated person or person(s) with clearly defined role and responsibilities for child protection.				
4	There is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals and storing these securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.				
5	There is a process for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.				
6	There is guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration.				
7	The procedures include contact details for local child protection services e.g. (Republic of Ireland) the local health board manager and An Garda Síochána; (Northern Ireland) the local health and social services trust and the PSNI.				

	Standard 3: Preventing harm to children	In place	Proposed	Not in place	Date reviewed
1	There are policies and procedures for recruiting Church personnel and assessing their suitability to work with children.				
2	The safe recruitment and vetting policy is in line with best practice guidance.				
3	All those who have the opportunity for regular contact with children, or who are in positions of trust, complete a form declaring any previous court convictions and undergo other checks as required by legislation and guidance and this information is then properly assessed and recorded.				
4	The Church organisation provides guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour of adults towards children.				
5	There is guidance on expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (anti bullying policy).				
6	There are clear ways in which Church personnel can raise allegations and suspicions, about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other Church personnel or volunteers ('whistle-blowing'), confidentially if necessary.				
7	There are processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment.				
8	Guidance to staff and children makes it clear that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.				

9	Policies include guidelines on the personal/ intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch.				
10	There is guidance on assessing all possible risks when working with children – especially in activities that involve time spent away from home.				
11	When running projects/ activities ensure that children are adequately supervised and protected at all times.				
12	Guidelines exist for appropriate use of information technology (such as mobile phones, email, digital cameras, websites, internet) to make sure that children are not put in danger and exposed to abuse and exploitation.				

	Standard 4: Training and education	In place	Proposed	Not in place	Date reviewed
1	All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working within Church organisations.				
2	Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.				
3	Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk, acting as designated person.				
4	Training is provided in seminaries and houses of religious formation.				
5	Training programmes are monitored by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.				

	Standard 5: Communicating the Church's safeguarding message	In place	Proposed	Not in place	Date reviewed
1	The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.				
2	Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to speak to if they have concerns.				
3	Everyone in the Church organisation knows who the designated person is and how to contact them.				
4	Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as, HSC/T HSE, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, telephone helplines and designated person.				
5	Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop their working relationships in order to keep children safe.				
6	Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.				

	Standard 6: Access to advice and support	In place	Proposed	Not in place	Date reviewed
1	Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection.				
2	Contacts are established at a national and/ or local level with the relevant child protection/ welfare agencies that can provide information, support and assistance to children and Church personnel.				
3	There is guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused, whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the community, including family members or peers.				
4	Information is provided to those who have experienced abuse on how to seek support.				
5	Appropriate support should be provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as to promote healing and reconciliation in a manner which does not compromise children's safety.				

	Standard 7: Implementing and monitoring the Standards	In place	Proposed	Not in place	Date reviewed
1	There is a written plan showing what steps will be taken to keep children safe, who is responsible for implementing these measures and when these will be completed.				
2	The human or financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.				
3	Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with child protection policies and procedures.				
4	Processes are in place to ask parishioners (children and parents/ carers) about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.				
5	All incidents, allegations/ suspicions of abuse are recorded and stored securely.				

Part A has given you a variety of tools to enable you to get a good picture of your Church organisation, and be clear about what you do well and where the gaps are in terms of keeping children safe. It will also have helped you to identify possible risk areas. These activities may help with the creation of an action plan and ensure that you make progress. It may be useful to summarise your work in a report to local Church management, giving information about relevant issues, next steps and possible resource implications. Without their agreement and support, it will be very difficult to move forward.



Part B: Achieving best practice

You will need to refer to Section 1: The Standards, so that you can participate in the next phase.

Under several of the Standards there are activities, resources and ideas to help you put that Standard into practice. You can work through each Standard in a logical order or move between them depending on what you see as the priority. In addition, the Resources has sample flow charts, forms, and other tools and resources for you to reproduce depending on what your Church organisation needs.



Standard 1: A written policy on keeping children safe

What is the Standard?

To help Church organisations develop a child protection policy.

Introduction

To create a child protection policy for your Church organisation, it is really important that you involve the right people in its development. Too often, one person is given the responsibility for developing the policy on their own. It is very important that everyone is involved – you will need agreement, resources, people to help and someone senior to approve the policy to make sure it works and is effective.

The following text in Standard 1 and 2 provide detailed step-by-step guidance to help you develop a child protection policy and procedure. Ideally the child protection policy should be developed at diocese or congregational level.

Step 1: Identifying who to involve

Make sure you involve the right people. If you do it will be more effective.

On a blank piece of paper write down the different parts of your Church organisation and think who might be able to help. Is there a natural way of bringing people together to talk about the policy? Or, do you need to organise an event to try and involve people in the process?

Think about:

Resources: Do you have any resources, human or financial, to support the work? Producing a clear policy does not have to cost a lot, but there may be costs such as printing and training. Often, members of the community have skills and may be able to help.

Research: Have you researched what similar Church organisations are doing? Who might be able to help you or share expertise? Write a list of people you think should be part of the task/ working group; it may include community members or partner organisations too. There may even be an existing committee that would be relevant.

Set a date for a first meeting.

Step 2: The task/ working group

Now you have managed to bring a small group of the right people together to discuss the development of policy and procedures. It is often helpful to call this a *child protection task* or *working group* so that everyone is clear what its function is.

With your working group:

1. Explain the issues, why and what is needed – what are policy and procedures for; why are they, and the Standards themselves, important; how the organisation and staff members will benefit and how children and families will benefit.
2. Develop terms of reference (reason and purpose) for the group – make sure everyone understands them.
3. Share issues and expertise/ experience – this will make everyone feel valued and encourage people to give their opinion and get involved.
4. Begin with the end! Where do you want to get to? What might a good child protection policy document look like? How might it be different to other policy documents? It might be a good idea to show everyone an example of another organisation's policy.

Acknowledge links to other Church-related policies such as recruitment, health and safety and complaints/ disciplinary.

Step 3: The first draft – a policy statement

The following list gives a simple framework to help the working group to design the first draft of the child protection policy. The first draft should begin with a statement and include:

- a simple policy statement that expresses principles from Gospel values
- reference to the national legislation or guidance that underpins the policy, including definitions of abuse. The Resources provide guidance on definitions and how to recognise abuse
- how you are going to meet your responsibilities
- how the policy will be put into action
- who the policy applies and relates to, e.g. Church personnel, volunteers and children up to 18
- recognition of the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children
- the name of the diocesan/ congregational designated officer and a description of their role and where appropriate, the name of any parish safeguarding representative and a description of their role
- clarity about the status of the document, for example, whether it is mandatory and who has approved it
- how the policy document will be monitored and reviewed.

Underlying principles

Every Church organisation's child protection policy should be based on a number of principles; these are specified in the beginning of this document.

Here is a sample child protection policy statement that might help you.

Child Protection Policy Statement

Each child shall be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.

Everyone in the Church has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected.

These guiding principles inform this policy. The policy has been written to ensure that ... takes every possible measure to prevent abuse. It aims to ensure that none of its personnel or volunteers engages in behaviour that could allow abuse to occur or actions that could be misinterpreted by children, their families or other adults as constituting, or leading to abuse.

You should now have drafted a short policy statement and included the core principles the child protection policy will be based on. The next Standard is about designing the actual reporting procedure.

Don't forget to draw an action plan with timeframes and say who will do what, by when. Set a time to meet again if possible and when the first draft will be out for consultation.

Standard 2: A written procedure – how to respond to allegations and suspicions

What is the Standard?

All Church organisations must provide clear guidance on what to do when a child protection concern arises.

Step 4: The procedures

It is important that all Church organisations have procedures so that everyone knows how to respond when there is a concern about a child – who to tell and how to record it. The following will help you to agree a local reporting procedure. To be consistent with a one-Church approach to child safeguarding, it is important that the local reporting procedure are consistent with the procedures in Resource 2 of this document. You should by now have your working/ task group to help. Try and collate ideas; the Resource section has templates suggested by the National Board for Safeguarding Children. They should be used as the main template and all you have to do is fill out key names. **It should not be too long! Keep it simple and clear.**

It might be helpful to identify what the current practice is when a concern about child abuse comes to light. Discuss how it fits into the guidance below.

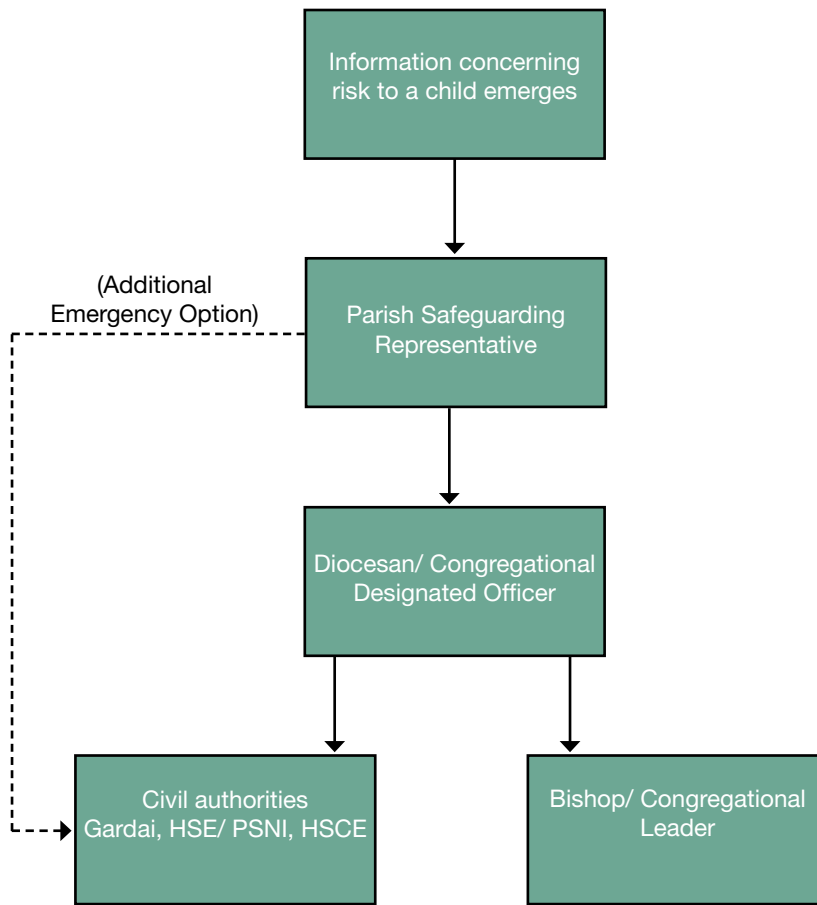
Deciding to report a concern can be a challenging responsibility. The procedure needs to ensure that everyone is clear what steps to take regarding the safety of children and other witnesses.

The **Reporting Flow Chart** overleaf refers to any child protection concern that involves a child in the community *including* where the concern is about a situation or person involved in the Church.

It is still the responsibility of everyone in the Church organisation to make a report to civil authorities to ensure that children who may need help and protection are not left at risk of abuse.



Reporting flow chart



Child Protection Guidance Reporting Procedure Flow Chart

A child protection concern arises about a child or a complaint is made about the behaviour of Church personnel or volunteer.

1. Child Protection concern arises and information is passed onto the diocesan or congregational designated officer.
2. Designated Officer informs the Bishop or Religious Superior and the civil authorities, without delay.
3. If the diocesan or congregational designated officer is not available or the circumstances of the complaint indicate that this action is not appropriate the parish safeguarding representative may need to contact the civil authorities directly. However, it is expected that they seek advice and support from the National Office for Safeguarding Children.

The guiding principle is that the safety of the child is always the most important consideration. Any allegation or concern regarding the abuse of a child should be treated seriously and for this reason it is important for anyone raising a concern to strictly follow a reporting procedure. Particular care should be taken in regard to confidentiality and the sharing of information with appropriate people.

More detailed guidance on how to manage allegations concerning Church personnel are found in **Resource 2**. But each Church organisation must identify who their local parish or other safeguarding representative is and who will help manage concerns as the diocesan/ congregational designated officer. More details on the safeguarding structure and job roles and function of the above can be found in **Resource 1 and 15**.

Whether or not a child protection concern involves a person in the Church or not, it is still the responsibility of everyone in the Church organisation to make a report to civil authorities to ensure that children who may need help and protection are not left at risk of abuse.

It is vital to remember that the safety and wellbeing of any child/ren should be the paramount consideration in any investigation and at no times should children be put at further risk of harm by delay or inaction. The Church has a responsibility to pass on child protection concerns about a child to civil authorities even when it does not concern Church personnel directly.

Standard 3: Prevention

What is the standard?

To help Church organisations develop a culture of safety that minimises risk to children.

Vulnerable organisations, vulnerable children

Experience shows that abuse of children is more likely to happen in organisations that do not build preventative measures into their structure and systems. Lessons learnt have shown that abuse is more likely where organisations have:

- minimal supervision of children
- informal guidelines or procedures for dealing with concerns
- an attitude of 'it can't happen here'
- very little or no specialist knowledge and awareness about child abuse/ child protection in the local community
- very few or no professional boundaries or codes of conduct
- poor co-ordination, support and supervision
- gaps between policy and practice
- either poor leadership or very strong charismatic leaders who have absolute power over staff, volunteers and the community.

What can Church organisations do to prevent harm to children?

There are various steps a Church organisation can take to encourage a culture of safety and prevent or reduce the risk of harm to children. These fall into three key areas:

Step 1 - Safe recruitment

Step 2 - Codes of behaviour

Step 3 - Safe activities



Step 1: Safe Recruitment

The first step is to make sure that whoever is employed by the Church either in a pastoral or voluntary role is recruited safely and is suitable for the job/ role with children that they are being asked to undertake.

In the Resources there are some templates to help with the process. You will find:

- a checklist for recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers (**Resource 3**)
- a sample declaration form (**Resource 4**)
- examples of child protection questions to ask during the recruitment process (**Resource 5**).

Step 2: Codes of Behaviour

A code of behaviour is a clear and concise guide of what is and is not acceptable behaviour and practice when working with children. A code of behaviour is an essential element of any organisation's child protection policy and all employees and volunteers should sign to say they have seen the code of behaviour and agree to follow it when they are employed and start their job.

When implemented properly a code of behaviour should reduce/ limit the risk of child abuse occurring. It should make clear what action you should take if the code is broken or not followed correctly.

It is also very important that everyone in the Church organisation is clear about what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working with children.

If you do not have local codes of behaviour look at the Resources for a sample code of behaviour that you can use to help develop one. Children and young people may also like to be involved in this process and you may want to design one for them too.

Step 3: Safe Activities

There should be clear guidelines for Church employees and volunteers on what to do to keep children safe before, during and after you have involved them in activities. Guidance can't cover every activity or event but you should be able to apply the broad principle to all events and activities.

Part A, Activity 1 should have helped you to identify the key activities that your Church organisation provides for children e.g. clubs, groups, trips, overnight stays, pilgrimages and retreats. Now consider in more detail the type of activity or event. In particular consider:

- whether or not the event/ activity/ contact is a 'one off'?
- will it involve parents and carers?
- what is the age range and level of ability of the children involved?

The next stage in the process is to think about doing a risk assessment to decide how best to run the activity or event. Consider each heading overleaf in detail and work out a strategy for dealing with any risks you identify.

Vetting for events/ activities

Where possible, any individual/ Church personnel who is in a position of trust with children should be vetted (see Step 1: Recruitment and Selection). Where the law requires vetting, this should, of course, be complied with.

Sometimes, Church organisations may run 'one off' events where people such as parents/ volunteers will help out or individuals will supply a service e.g. photographer. It may not be possible or appropriate to vet these people but you should ask everyone to sign a form declaring any previous or pending convictions or concerns relating to children. These forms must be stored securely and destroyed after the event/ activity.

You should also have some form of agreement with individuals/ organisations who are going to supply a service, or be involved in activities or events with children, stating that they will abide by the expected standards of behaviour and comply with your Church organisation's child protection policy.

For a sample self-declaration form and code of behaviour see **Resource 4 and 6**.

Supervision

You should also think about how many adults you will need to supervise the children, and helpers for your group, event, activity or trip. You should aim to have a certain number of adults per number of children.

Recommended ratios:

Under 8 years

0 to 2 years = one member of staff to 3 children

2 to 3 years = one member of staff to 4 children

3 to 7 years = one member of staff to 8 children (6 children for outdoor activity)

8 years and over

Two members of staff to 20 children (15 children for outdoor activity)

There should be one additional staff member for every 10 children.

This information will help you to design your code of behaviour for Church personnel and volunteers and identify what you need to do to run the activity or event safely. Please remember these ratios are recommendations. They are not statutory requirements.

For individuals who have not been vetted, adequate supervision arrangements must be in place to ensure they are not in a position to harm children.

Other ways to make sure individuals do not get the opportunity to harm children

- Try to use open plan venues/ spaces, where individuals cannot take children away on their own and adults are in sight of other adults.
- Maintain a culture of awareness amongst the adults and children present by ensuring everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities, and people are encouraged to challenge and report any inappropriate conduct with children.
- Inform children how to report concerns.
- Make sure there is good supervision of Church personnel and volunteers.
- Make sure you take feedback and debrief after the event.

Health and safety

There are lots of health and safety considerations when assessing the risk of events and activities. You will need to comply with your Church organisations health and safety guidance to make sure you ask yourself the right questions when planning an activity or event, such as:

- How does the venue measure up in terms of health and safety (e.g. fire)?
- Do you have adequate changing areas and toilet facilities?
- Do you have first aid supplies to deal with minor accidents?
- Are all trips away carefully planned, including adequate provision of safe transport?
- Do you have appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements for all overnight trips?
- Is there adequate insurance in place?

Parental consent

- Church organisations should ensure that they have signed consent from parents or guardians prior to children participating in an activity or event – use a consent form to record their permission (see **Resource 7: Sample parental consent form**).
- Make sure you ask about emergencies on the consent form – you need to know how and who to contact if there's an emergency – also ask permission for the child to receive treatment if needed.
- Ask parents or guardians about any specific dietary, medical or special needs of the child.

Use of IT equipment

Church organisations also need to assess the possible ways that children communicate with Church personnel, volunteers and each other using digital and online systems such as via the internet, mobile phones, and email.

It is important to develop guidance to reduce the risk to children associated with online activity when they are involved in an activity, group or event to prevent them:

- being groomed online by paedophiles
- experiencing online bullying
- accessing or being exposed to inappropriate or harmful material
- personal contact details not being secure
- personal images being uploaded and used without consent.

It is also important to think about how Church organisations, Church personnel and volunteers use images (photographs/ film) of children in publications or on websites. If this happens then guidance needs to be developed to make sure that:

- the content of the photo/ film is appropriate
- photographs/ images likely to be published in press or on the Internet should avoid using children's full names (first name and surname) and detailed addresses
- parents and children consent to the use of an image and that this is recorded
- parents and children are aware of the way the image will be used to represent the Church organisation or activity
- one-to-one photo sessions with children are supervised.

Church organisations can get further help and guidance about online safety from the following:

For adults – Child exploitation and online protection centre (CEOP)

www.ispai.ie
www.copine.ie
www.ceop.gov.uk

For children – Child exploitation and online protection centre (CEOP)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Standard 4: Training and education

What is the Standard?

There are opportunities for all Church personnel to develop and maintain the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to keep children safe.

Why education and training is essential

All Church personnel that are involved in either providing or overseeing activities with children or have a designated child protection/ welfare role must be provided with appropriate child protection training. They can only perform their role confidently if they are aware of the issues and have the necessary understanding and skills.

Every Church organisation must identify personnel, both paid and unpaid, who need to access child protection training. Not everyone has the same training needs and it is helpful to have a variety of opportunities for training to make sure individual training needs are met.

In order to help identify what sort of training might be appropriate go through the questions below and use the template questionnaire for identifying training needs. This can be found as **Resource 8: Identification of training needs**.

Key questions:

- How are child protection training needs currently identified in your Church organisation?
- If you currently have child protection training does it meet everyone's training needs?
- Is there a budget for training?
- How is the learning from it shared with others?

Now look at the table opposite. Use it to identify training needs and priorities. Then begin to map out how to put this into a training strategy for approval and endorsement by Church management. The examples in italics are just that – examples – and you may have different ones.

Identification of child protection training needs

Sample questionnaire

Who needs to be trained?	What training do they need?	How could the identified training needs be met? (You may be able to join up with other Church orgs or providers to reduce cost)	Priority High=4 Low=1	Resources/ costs
Safeguarding officers	Safeguarding training	Internal training programme	4	Met by organisation
New staff	Introduction to policies and procedures	Local providers Induction Staff briefing	4	Low

More information and details of where to access appropriate child protection training can be obtained by contacting the National Board for Safeguarding Children, New House, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth Co. Kildare.

Standard 5: Communicating the Church child safeguarding message

What is the Standard?

There are clear processes in place to disseminate the Church's child safeguarding policy and procedures to personnel, parishioners and external agencies.

Policies and procedures are only effective if everyone, including children, understands their purpose and know how to use them.

To successfully implement the Church standards you must have effective communication systems, and Church personnel who are able to listen to and communicate with children.

It is helpful to identify what currently happens now and what different methods of communication exist in your Church organisation. The following checklist suggests some ideas for you to consider. Do you:

- advertise the name of the person who has safeguarding responsibility for children during your Church organisation's youth activities and have a record of their contact details?
- ensure that Church personnel are easily identifiable when at work, for example, by wearing a T-shirt or badge?
- make sure that communications between the Church organisation and parents/ carers/ children/ community leaders take account of language or communication differences?
- make sure that parents, children and relevant others know about your child protection policies and reporting procedures?
- have a process for enabling people including children to make a complaint and make sure that this process is publicised and that everyone knows about it?
- involve parents, as well as children, in developing codes of behaviour e.g. about anti-bullying etc.
- devise ways of obtaining feedback from parents/ carers/ children/ the Church community to find out what you are doing well, and what's not working?

Partnership with children and young people

It is very important to establish a culture within your Church organisation whereby children feel they can have open and honest discussions about anything that is worrying them. This only happens if you actively introduce this to them and regularly ask how they feel and what is happening in their lives.

Giving children the confidence to speak out

For many complex reasons, children who are abused often hide their experience, and do not tell even the adults that they know and trust. One of the reasons for this may be that the child has experienced abuse in which an adult has exercised their control and power over them. The adult may also have used threats to harm them or their family if they do tell, or manipulated the child to believe they are at fault in some way, or the cause of the abuse, or that they are complicit and should be ashamed. Different children respond to different experiences in different ways, but many children do not speak out about being abused.

If you really want your Church organisation to promote a safe culture and environment then you must be sure that children know they can speak out, and will be listened to. You can do this in several ways. Don't forget that for very young children, disabled children or children whose first language is not English, you may need to make extra effort to ensure that they understand the same messages.

These are some things you can do:

- Openly discuss your child safeguarding principles, policy, codes of behaviour with them and make sure they know who to turn to if they have a worry or concern.
- Ask children what makes them feel safe and not safe. Really listen and take account of what they say – make sure it is not tokenistic – and make sure that they know you are listening.
- Display posters or have information leaflets especially for new children who join about child safeguarding and children's helplines.
- Publicise details of the name of the local safeguarding representative/ officer and give details of how to contact them should they have any concerns.
- Make sure that your posters or leaflets make it clear that certain behaviour is totally unacceptable, such as bullying, racist language or threatening behaviour etc. They should also state what will happen if the behaviour does not stop.
- Conduct short questionnaires or run groups to check on how things are going.
- Have a copy of your code of behaviour and complaints procedure on display in the organisation and as brochures available to all staff, volunteers, children and young people, families, visitors and partners.
- Have a suggestion box. This provides a confidential or less intimidating way for children and young people to make suggestions or complaints about your Church organisation and the activities or events they participate in.
- Consider how disabled children can communicate their complaints especially if they have verbal communication difficulties. Remember how vulnerable disabled children are to abuse. It is especially important that their communication needs are not forgotten.

Don't forget that communication systems and practices do not just lie within the Church organisation. It is important that there are established links with other organisations in the locality in order to promote a safe and caring community and to share good practices.

Standard 6: Access to advice and support

What is the Standard?

Anyone who has been abused or who has perpetrated abuse should be assisted and supported in seeking help.

Child abuse is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. Church organisations have a duty to ensure advice and support is available to help Church personnel and volunteers play their part in protecting children.

Ensuring children have access to support and advice

Children need someone to turn to when they are being abused. Often they do not know where to go for help so it is important to give them information about where and how to get help and advice if they have a concern.

One way to achieve this is to develop lists for children giving information about how and where they can get help and support in the local community or area.

Some children are particularly vulnerable, such as disabled children or children with communication difficulties so it is important to develop alternative ways of enabling them to access information and support e.g. braille, interpreters or by identifying experienced workers in the area who can assist if required.

Church personnel and volunteers will also need to know what services are available in the area so they can respond and support children.

- Make a list of the services, authorities and organisations in your area that can provide assistance to children. These lists will need to contain essential contact details and will need to be kept up-to-date.

Children should be aware that they can seek advice and support for a range of issues not just about abuse. They should know where to go to talk to someone about issues regarding: teachers, parents/ carers, bullying, relationship problems, medical advice and legal advice.

Remember: all Church organisations and personnel can access specialist advice about child protection issues from National Board for Safeguarding Children.

Developing guidance for Church personnel and volunteers about how to appropriately respond to a child who tells them about abuse can help staff to feel supported and better equipped should a child confide in them and will help reassure the child that they have taken the right action in speaking out (see **Resource 9: How to respond to a child making an allegation**).

When an allegation of abuse is made against a member of the Church e.g. priest, religious, employee or volunteer, it can have a major impact on the parish, congregation, Church organisation and personnel. Church organisations and colleagues may want to offer support to all those people involved such as the victim and their family, and possibly the accused and their family. Whether an allegation concerns current or historical abuse it is important that the support offered is appropriate and does not compromise any future enquiries or put children at further risk. Contact may be made with the National Board for Safeguarding Children who will be able to advise on the most appropriate action to take and offer practical advice and support if required.

Standard 7: Implementation and monitoring

What is the Standard?

The Church organisation develops a plan of action to monitor the effectiveness of the steps it is taking to keep children safe.

To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across all parts of Church organisations. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening consistently. The view of those involved inside and outside the organisation can help to improve the effectiveness of any measures taken.

It is important to be clear about how to implement the policy and what might block you doing it successfully. Are policies left on a shelf unread? Or are they 'live' and helpful guides to practice for personnel in your organisation?

It is helpful to think about what other policy changes there have been and how these have been introduced.

- What worked well?
- Why?
- How was it presented?
- How are things communicated across your Church organisation?

Implementation strategy

Many policies are implemented but very few are monitored to see how successful they have been. Implementation and monitoring are essential to putting child protection standards into practice.

The key to successful implementation is to develop a strategy. Ideally, this should be part of developing the child protection standards for your organisation; you should think about it at the beginning, not at the end!

There are four stages of implementation:

1. Developing the policy
2. Implementing the policy – when, where and to whom
3. Disseminating the policy – how it gets to people, telling people about it
4. Review and evaluation



Activity 4: Implementation – How to make it happen

Aim

To identify the different ways to make implementation easier

Notes

There are two different and effective ways of implementing policy – formal and informal. See the table below for some examples:

Formal	Informal
Briefings/ meetings	Networks
Newsletters	Listening/ talking
Memos	Sharing
All-staff emails	Discussion
Conferences	Training
Policy documents	Internal Internet discussion sites

On a large piece of paper draw two columns, with the headings below. Think about your own Church organisation. What kind of communication already exists – is it formal or informal?

Formal	Informal

Summarise what you have thought about and look at the bullet points below – this should give you an outline of a strategy for implementation including:

- clear implementation objectives
- formal and informal ways of communicating
- know who can help
- what resources you need
- what timescale is realistic
- what difficulties or barriers there might be
- how the policy will be kept up-to-date and reviewed on a regular basis.

By reading through Section 2 and completing the activities you should be equipped to put your Church organisation's policy and procedures into practice. Further support and guidance can be obtained from the National Safeguarding Board for Children.



Section 3: Resources

Resource 1: Church safeguarding structures and personnel

Resource 2: Procedure – How to manage concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers

Resource 3: Recruitment and selection checklist

Resource 4: Sample declaration form for all persons working as employees or volunteers with children and young people

Resource 5: Example of child protection questions

Resource 6: Sample code of behaviour

Resource 7: Sample parental consent form

Resource 8: Identification of training needs (template)

Resource 9: How to respond to a child making an allegation of abuse

Resource 10: Definitions of abuse

Resource 11: How to recognise child abuse

Resource 12: Information for people wishing to raise a child protection concern

Resource 13: Child protection allegations and concerns – Review procedures

Resource 14: Audit process and procedures

Resource 15: Roles and responsibilities of Church personnel

Resource 16: Child protection recording form (template)

Glossary and terminology

Resource 1: Church safeguarding structures and personnel

Aim

- To develop structures which provide consistent and effective responses to the safeguarding needs of children across the Church as a whole

Introduction

This safeguarding structure represents the simplest way for the Church as a whole to ensure effective procedures and practices are in place to keep children safe, and allows for these to be monitored regularly. Ensuring children are properly safeguarded requires co-operation and a willingness to work across traditional boundaries to ensure that any allegation or disclosure of abuse is handled compassionately, effectively and professionally.

The paragraphs below outline the roles of personnel across the Church from parish / local level to national level, that form the essential elements of the safeguarding framework.

Those fulfilling any of the roles listed below must abide by the highest possible standards of professional conduct in all aspects of their work, including the maintenance of appropriate confidentiality.

Because of the obligations of the sacramental seal, no priest performing a function under the procedures for dealing with a child-protection matter should celebrate the Sacrament of Penance with a respondent.

Parish / Local Safeguarding Representative

It is expected that one or two people within each Church organisation will be identified to act as Local Safeguarding Representatives to work alongside the relevant Church authority.

The position is voluntary, but Local Safeguarding Representatives will be provided with induction, support and regular training.

Their role will be to promote the safeguarding of children within that Church organisation by:

- raising awareness of what safeguarding is
- disseminating information on *Safeguarding Children – the Standards and Guidelines Document for the Catholic Church*, and circulating information widely to the public especially among Church counselling agencies and parishes
- ensuring that any activities run within that Church organisation are provided in a manner which ensures the safety and well-being of the children involved (e.g. appropriate level of supervision is in place for the activity, or that insurance has been provided, and so on)
- ensuring that the contact details of the relevant designated officer/delegate are widely publicised.

The overall responsibility for safeguarding children in any Church organisation remains with the relevant Church authority, such as the parish priest.

Any safeguarding concerns raised with a Local Safeguarding Representative should be dealt with in accordance with the Initial Contact procedures, set out in **Resource 2**.

Diocesan / Congregational Designated Officer or Delegate

The *Safeguarding Children- Standards and Guidelines Document for the Catholic Church* refers to this person as the 'Designated Officer'.

The post holder should have a competent level of knowledge of the presenting indicators of child abuse and an appreciation of the nature of risk. The key practical dimensions in undertaking the role are as described in **Resource 2** (particularly parts 3, 4 and 5). The one post may cover a number of dioceses or congregations.

The Designated Officer will be located at the level of a diocese or religious congregation and appointed by the Bishop or Religious Superior.

The Designated Officer should be widely identified so that everyone knows who to go to in the event that they have a concern about a child or other safeguarding issue, and for children disclosing abuse; for example, his/her details should be highlighted in parish/congregational websites and at the back of all churches. Their role should also be made clear – in language and a format that is accessible to children and adults alike.

This position may be salaried to reflect the responsibilities that the role carries.

The role of the designated officer will be:

- to hear any concerns relating to safeguarding, including any disclosures or allegations of abuse, and take responsibility for managing the response to that concern or disclosure, from start to finish. This would include the preliminary internal inquiry and referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI, and any subsequent internal investigations
- to ensure that the person raising a concern, disclosing abuse, or making an allegation and anyone who is implicated by that are regularly informed about the progress of the inquiry process
- to liaise with the National Office and have an overview of all matters dealt with under these procedures within their diocese / congregation
- to carefully record all steps undertaken as part of these procedures.

Each diocese / religious congregation must also appoint a **Deputy Designated Officer**, who can act in the event that the Designated Officer is not able to deal with a concern/allegation, where there may be a conflict of interest, or where they are unavailable due to absence or incapacity.

Each diocese and religious congregation may wish to consider the possibility of appointing both a female and a male Designated Officer (or Deputy Designated Officer) as some children or adults may welcome the choice when talking about very difficult, sensitive or personal issues.

Safeguarding Committees (also known as Child Protection Committees)

Safeguarding Committees will be located at diocese or congregational level. A number of dioceses or religious congregations may have joint committees.

Their role is supportive and developmental. It is not related in any way to the management of individual cases of suspected or alleged abuse.

The Safeguarding Committee has responsibility for:

- the provision of training
- the safe recruitment of volunteers and staff within their service area.
- Their role is primarily focused on creating, maintaining and monitoring a safe environment for children in all aspects of Church life and activity and for advising on the human resources required for implementing best safeguarding practice across services.

Advisory Panels

These consultative Advisory Panels are normally appointed by the Bishop of a diocese or by the leader of a religious congregation in order to advise and assist him or her at all stages of the investigative process into alleged abuse.

It is recommended that The National Office is consulted regarding the skill set and composition of the Panel. The Panel will provide a consistent and accessible source of guidance, through a process of risk assessment for Bishops and leaders of congregations who are charged with specific responsibilities for decision-making in response to alleged or actual child abuse involving a priest or religious.

The Panel will consist of not less than five members who collectively provide expertise, experience and impartiality necessary in this field of safeguarding. The members shall include each of the following competencies:

- a Canon Lawyer
- a civil lawyer
- a child care professional (being either a psychologist or a social worker) knowledgeable in the field of child protection issues and the effects of child abuse
- a priest or religious with strong pastoral experience
- a lay person with qualities and expertise relevant to the functions of the Panel, such as a parent representative.

The Advisory Panel may provide advice on:

- the complaint itself
- ensuring the safety and welfare of the child(ren) remains paramount
- the appropriateness of providing help to a child making an allegation and to the family of the child
- the appropriateness of the respondent continuing in his or her present pastoral assignment, having regard to the paramount need to protect children
- how the right of the respondent to a fair trial on any criminal charge may be preserved, and his or her good name and reputation may be appropriately safeguarded
- whether a specialist risk assessment of the respondent should be sought
- the needs of a parish or other community in which a respondent has served
- the needs of the wider community, including the appropriateness and timing of any public statement.

The Panel will create a record of its recommendations and should note the matters upon which it has been asked to advise and the documents which it has considered. These documents should include information on any previous allegations that have been made against the individual concerned.

The advice that is provided by an Advisory Panel shall be included in any inspection of an incident/allegation report file conducted by the National Office.

No member of an Advisory Panel shall act in a professional capacity to either the person making the allegation or the respondent.

National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church ('the National Board')

The first National Board was established by the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union to provide independent advice and to monitor safeguarding practices in the Church. The composition of the reconstituted Board includes the disciplines of:

- civil law
- Canon Law
- psychology
- child care
- probation of offenders; and
- managerial / business experience.

The National Board is independent in order to allow it to undertake independent advisory, audit and inspection functions.

The National Board, following a request for a review, will appoint Reviewers in line with the process outlined below.

The National Board, in consultation with the National Office, will appoint auditors to carry out the functions outlined in Part 6, 7, 8 and 9 of **Resource 2**.

The National Board will produce an **annual report**, which provides data and commentary on the practice of the Church organisations regarding the safeguarding of children. In particular, the annual report will contain summaries of the learning gained from reviews and audits carried out during the year to which the annual report relates.

The National Office for Safeguarding Children ('the National Office')

The National Office for Safeguarding Children was established by the National Board. Its main purpose is to:

- implement the policies and decisions of the National Board
- undertake advisory and audit tasks (detailed in **Resource 14**)
- act as a resource for Church organisations and will be accessible to all such bodies for advice, or guidance
- support the diocesan / congregational Designated Officers
- audit process and monitor the work of diocesan / congregational Designated Officers
- monitor practice within the Church organisations regarding adherence to the standards set down within this guidance, both through the self-audit process and through its auditors
- respond to requests for assistance and offer advice within its mandate to any Church organisation as it sees fit
- consider whether any grievance which is not an allegation or disclosure of abuse, such as a concern about implementation of safeguarding procedures can be resolved through pastoral interventions, including dialogue and mediation.

Note: all current risks must be processed through the procedures outlined in **Resource 2**.

Under no circumstances should allegations of abuse be resolved by bringing together the victim and alleged abuser to discuss the allegation.

The Chief Executive Officer of the National Office will support and report to the National Board on all relevant developments as they happen.

The National Review Panel

The role of the National Review Panel is to consider requests made by individuals for a review of process.

Upon receipt of a request for review and with the approval of the Sponsoring Bodies, the National Board shall appoint a National Review Panel to conduct a review of the process of an allegation or concern.

Resource 13: Child protection allegations and concerns - Review procedures contains details of this procedure.

The National Review Panel shall consist of at least three, and up to nine, independent members who will

- be drawn from the wider community
- be chosen for their professional competence
- be independent and impartial

not have any close associations either with the person alleging or disclosing abuse or with the Church Authority responsible for dealing with the alleged abuse.

Each review will be conducted by a panel of at least three reviewers comprising: a child care professional, a Canon Lawyer and a civil lawyer chosen from the nine Panel members.

The child care professional will act as the lead reviewer and will consult with the other two panel members throughout the course of the review. The reviewers may deliberate in person, by exchange of letters, email or telephone.

The recommendations arising out of the review must be agreed by all panel members. The Panel members will provide a written report summarising their decisions and recommendations. This report will be circulated to the National Board and other parties as appropriate and agreed as outlined in the **Child protection allegations and concerns - Review procedures** outlined in **Resource 13**.

Support Person

Each Bishop or Religious Superior should appoint Support People to be available to those who make an allegation/disclose abuse under these procedures. The person (which can be a child or adult) making the allegation will be offered a choice between a male or female Support Person.

The role of the Support Person is to assist, where appropriate, with communication between the child or adult making an allegation/disclosure and the Designated Officer, to facilitate the child or adult in gaining access to information and help, and to represent their concerns during the inquiry process.

In larger dioceses and religious congregations there may be a need to have more than one Support Person available to act in this capacity.

The Support Person needs to be clear about his/her role and should receive appropriate training.

The Support Person is not a counsellor to the child or adult, and must not be or act as their therapist.

Support Persons must be particularly attentive to the expressed needs and objectives of the child or adult, and the fact that some may be reluctant to seek help. Support Persons should, therefore, consider how any therapeutic or spiritual needs of a child or adult who has made an allegation/ disclosed abuse may be met and will be mindful of his/her ongoing vulnerability during this process.

In addition, the Support Person should:

- consider any wishes of the child or adult disclosing abuse, in regard to a pastoral response by the Church to his or her family
- be available to the child or adult throughout the course of the inquiry process, and thereafter as required
- ensure the child or adult is kept informed of developments in relation to them
- represent the wishes and any therapeutic needs of the child or adult to the Designated Officer, as required
- arrange, if considered helpful, a meeting between the child or adult and the Church authority, such as the priest, or Bishop.

Under no circumstances should the same Support Person be provided for the child or adult making the allegation / disclosure of abuse and for the respondent.

Adviser

Each Bishop or Religious Superior should appoint an Adviser to be available to the respondent. Advisers shall represent the needs of the respondent to the Church Authority and assist, where appropriate, with the care of the respondent and with communication between the respondent, the Designated Officer and the Church authority / Church organisation. The respondent's adviser shall not be the respondent's therapist or spiritual adviser.

Advisers should be particularly alert to the sense of isolation and vulnerability which a respondent may experience following an allegation of this nature. He or she will:

- accompany, if so requested, and be available after the respondent's meeting with the Church authority and the Designated Officer
- inform the respondent of his or her right to obtain advice in both in civil and Canon Law³
- identify any therapeutic or other needs of the respondent and suggest how these may be met
- consider the wishes of the respondent in regard to a pastoral response by the Church to his or her family
- be available to the respondent throughout the inquiry process, and thereafter as required
- ensure that the respondent is kept informed of developments in regard to the inquiry
- represent the needs and wishes of the respondent to the Designated Officer, as required.

Advisers should receive appropriate training. Under no circumstances should the same Support Person be provided for the child or adult making the allegation/ disclosure of abuse and for the respondent.

Professional Practice Committee

A Professional Practice Committee will be a national resource. The role and functions of this Committee will be the subject of consultation with constituents of the Sponsoring Bodies, and further guidance will follow.

1. It is not appropriate that a respondent be represented by lawyers working for the diocese / religious congregation.

Resource 2: Procedure – How to manage concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers

The Catholic Church is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and protection of children and takes all concerns, allegations, suspicions and disclosures of abuse very seriously.

This procedure sets out the action that must be taken if any concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure is made, whether current or historical, that indicates a member of the Church staff (current or former) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- committed a criminal offence against a child or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Applies to:

All Church staff and volunteers

Initial contact

Procedure: Action to take when you receive a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse

Remember: It is not your role to investigate.

1. If you receive a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse, you must act immediately and refer the matter to your Designated Officer as soon as possible; the Designated Officer will refer the complaint to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI.
2. Whenever possible and practical, take notes during the conversation. Always ask permission to do this and explain the importance of recording all information. Where it is not appropriate to make notes at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards and in any case before the end of the day.
3. Record the time, date, location (or if the matter has been communicated by letter or telephone), and persons present. (You should use **Resource 16: Child protection recording form** template to do this.) The record should be signed and dated by the author. The record would also normally include:
 - a. accurate identifying information as far as it is known. This should include the name and address of the person who has raised a concern (as well as their date of birth, and parents'/carers'/ names and addresses where the person who has raised a concern/allegation is a child)
 - b. the name of the individual against whom the concern/allegation is being raised and any other identifying information
 - c. as much information as possible about the circumstances that led to the concern/allegation being raised, why is the person worried about the welfare and safety of the child or children
 - d. dates when the concern arose, or when the incident(s) occurred
 - e. circumstances in which the concern arose, or the incident(s) occurred
 - f. any explanation offered to account for the risk, injury or concern
 - g. the child's own statement using the words they used to describe the events or incident(s), if possible. Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of words used
 - h. details of any action already taken about the incident/concern/allegation
 - i. any views expressed by the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) about the matter.
4. Do not be selective. Include detail which to you may seem irrelevant. It may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation.

5. Use the suggested form for this use (see **Resource 16**). This initial recording will form the first entry in a file of information about the case which will be retained by the relevant Designated Officer.
6. All original records, including rough notes, must be passed immediately to the relevant Designated Officer. Any copies of records retained must be kept secure and confidential.
7. Not all persons raising a concern will wish to go through the process described below. Nonetheless, information about the existence of a potential allegation **must** always be communicated to the relevant Designated Officer.
8. In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, an immediate report should be made to the Health and Social Services as well as to the relevant Designated Officer. Where the appropriate Health and Social Services staff are not available, An Garda Síochána / PSNI should be contacted to ensure that **under no circumstances a child is left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention**. Consideration should, in all cases, also be given to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve, and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of potential evidence or forensic evidence.
9. Explain to the child/person raising the concern what will happen next. Indicate who will be made aware of the information given by them. Leave contact details of the Designated Officer in case the referrer needs to ask questions later.
10. It is important not to discuss the incident/concern with anyone other than those detailed in these procedures.

Guidance on how to respond to people making an allegation

It is often very difficult for people to talk about abuse so it is important to make sure that you are patient, listen carefully and actively, and create a safe environment in which they feel able to tell you as much as they can remember. This will help those people whose responsibility it is to investigate the incident(s) do so as thoroughly as possible.

People may tell you about:

- abuse that's happened to them now – current
- abuse that happened to them some time ago – historical
- something they've been told by someone else and that they strongly believe is true
- seeing signs of abuse, such as physical injuries on a child
- something that they have witnessed, such as the behaviour of an adult to a child that made them feel uncomfortable.

Where information is given in person, consider the following.

- Listen carefully to that person, but do not ask intrusive or leading questions.
- Stay calm, take what the person raising the concern says seriously, and reassure them.
- Allow the person to continue at his/her own pace.
- Check with the person to make sure that you have understood what they actually said. Do not suggest words, but use theirs.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept, particularly in relation to secrecy, but listen carefully to what is being sought.
- Explain these procedures and the referral procedures⁴ to the person.
- Offer to accompany the person to the Support Person.
- Do not make any comments about the respondent, make assumptions or speculate.
- Be aware that a person's ability to recount his or her concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, nationality and upon any disability which may affect use of language and range of vocabulary.
- Adopt a listening style which is compassionate, calm and reassuring. If the information given to you shocks, disgusts or distresses you, do not allow these feelings to show. If you do, you may inadvertently dissuade the person from giving any further information.

2. Including, in Northern Ireland, the requirements of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967.

- Avoid statements about your belief or otherwise, of the information given.
- Do not question beyond checking what has been said. It is the job of the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI to investigate. There must be no probing for detail beyond that which has been freely given.

Listening does not mean telling a person to stop when they are freely recalling events; because some facts are only ever told once, the information given must be fully and accurately recorded. However, it is better that such detail is given directly to a professional from one of the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI, to allow proper procedures to be observed and to avoid the distress of having to repeat the account more than once.

A Priest must be clear about the status of such a conversation. Make sure there is no misunderstanding about whether the Seal of Confession applies.

Listening to a child

A child might tell you directly about abuse happening to them. For additional or specific guidance about listening to a child, please refer to **Resource 9**.

Listening to a person who admits abusing a child

It is necessary to tell a person who admits an offence against a child or young person that such information cannot be kept confidential. If such an admission is made to you, even where the admission relates to something which happened a long time ago, you must refer the matter to the Designated Officer as soon as possible, who will follow the procedures for referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI.

Anonymous allegations or concerns

Anonymous complaints are to be treated carefully. Anxiety and fear may persuade some people not to reveal their identity immediately. It is sometimes difficult to act on information under these procedures unless at some point the name of the person raising the concern/making an allegation becomes known. The person raising the concern should be informed that anonymity might restrict the ability of professionals to access information or to intervene to protect a child. As much openness as possible should be encouraged.

Resource 3: Recruitment and selection checklist for employees and volunteers

It is important that all possible steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people working with children in Church organisations. While the vast majority of people who want to work with children are well-motivated, good recruitment and selection procedures will help screen out those who are not suitable and enhance the prospects of identifying the best person for the post.

Opposite and following you will find a list of recommended steps to take to ensure safe recruitment practices.



Safe recruitment and selection checklist

<p>Contact with children</p> <p>What contact with children will the job involve?</p> <p>Will the employee have unsupervised contact with children or hold a position of trust?</p> <p>What other forms of contact will the person have with children e.g. email, telephone, letter, Internet?</p>	
<p>Defining the role</p> <p>Have the tasks and skills necessary for the job been considered?</p> <p>Does the job description make reference to working with and having responsibility for children?</p>	
<p>Key selection criteria</p> <p>Has a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience been developed?</p>	
<p>Written application</p> <p>Have all applicants been asked to supply information in writing including personal details, past and current work/ volunteering experience?</p> <p>Have you developed application forms?</p>	

	<p>Interview</p> <p>Have at least two representatives from the organisation been identified to meet with an applicant to explore information contained in their application?</p> <p>Have the applicant and the application forms been carefully considered, highlighting points to raise in interview including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the applicant's attitudes towards working with children • areas you want to explore in more detail • gaps in employment history • vague statements or unsubstantiated qualifications • frequent changes of employment.
	<p>Declaration</p> <p>Have applicants been asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children?</p> <p>Have applicants been asked to declare any past criminal convictions and cases pending against them?</p>
	<p>Identification</p> <p>Have applicants been asked for photographic documentation to confirm their identity e.g. birth certificate, passport?</p> <p>Is documentation relating to the applicant's identity and relevant qualifications checked at interview?</p>
	<p>Qualifications</p> <p>Are applicants asked for documentation to confirm qualifications?</p>

	<p>References</p> <p>Are applicants asked to supply the names of two referees who are not family members and ideally, who have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's experience of work/contact with children?</p> <p>Are referees asked specifically to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children?</p> <p>Are all references provided in writing and followed up with a telephone call if appropriate?</p> <p>Is the identity of referees verified?</p>
	<p>Vetting procedure</p> <p>Has the vetting procedure that you will need for your selected applicant been considered? (In the Republic of Ireland An Garda Síochána central vetting unit if applicable. In Northern Ireland POCVA vetting.)</p> <p>Has the applicant been informed that you will need to conduct essential background checks before they take up any appointment?</p>
	<p>Records</p> <p>Are details kept of the selection and induction process on the personnel file of the person appointed?</p> <p>Are references kept on file as part of the record of the recruitment process?</p>
	<p>Confidentiality</p> <p>Is information about the applicant only seen by those directly involved in the recruitment process?</p> <p>Are applicants reassured that information about them, including information about convictions, will be treated in confidence and not used against them unfairly?</p>

Resource 4: Declaration form for all persons working as employees or volunteers with children and young people

Confidential

Legislation in both jurisdictions in Ireland, have at their core, the principle that the welfare of children and young people must be the paramount consideration.

Church organisations therefore ask that everyone working or volunteering for the Church, who will come into contact with children or personal details of children, abide by good practice by completing and sign this declaration:

Do you have any prosecutions pending or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order (please tick)

Yes No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

Date of offence: _____

Nature of offence: _____

Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards a child? (Please tick)

Yes No

If yes, please give details including date(s) below:

Full name (print): _____

Any surname previously known by: _____

Address: _____

Date of birth: _____ **Place of birth:** _____

Declaration

I understand that, if it is found that I have withheld information or included any false or misleading information above, I may be removed from my post whether paid or voluntary, without notice. I understand that the information will be kept securely by the Church organisation.

I hereby declare the information I have provided is accurate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Resource 5: Example of child protection questions

Establishing a fuller picture of the character and attitudes of an applicant is an important part of the safe recruitment process.

The formal interview is an opportunity to discuss and assess the applicant's values, motivations, abilities, experience and suitability.

Here are some examples of child protection questions you could ask during the interview process:

- Tell us about any experiences that have been difficult for you when working with children and young people and how you handled them?
- Tell us how you respond to aggression or young people who are especially challenging?
- Tell us how you go about advising a young person about sexual matters?
- How would you respond to a young person who tells you that they are being abused?
- Tell us what you would do if a young person started sending you text messages unrelated to your work?



Resource 6: Sample code of behaviour

It is important for all employees and volunteers and others in contact with children to:

- treat all children with respect
- provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- operate within the Church principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- be visible to others when working with children whenever possible
- challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour
- develop a culture where children can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly
- respect each child's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- take children to your own home, especially where they will be alone with you.

Employees, volunteers and others must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- develop sexual relationships with children
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

Employees, volunteers and others must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:

- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- have a child/ children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- discriminate against, show different treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

Resource 7: Sample parental consent form

Activity permission form for persons under 18 years

1. Name of Church organisation _____

Venue/Activity/Group/Event _____

Date/Time _____

Name of Group Leader/person responsible _____

2. Name of Child/Young Person _____

Address _____

Telephone No _____

Date of Birth _____

Give details of **any** medical condition of which the Organisers ought to be aware, please include details of any medication which has to be taken or any dietary requirements.
(This information will be treated with confidence).

3. I have read all the information provided concerning the programme of the above activity. I hereby give permission for my son/daughter/ward to participate in the above activity.

4. The _____ *organisation* only accepts liability or responsibility for an incident or accident caused by the negligence or breach of statutory duty of the *organisation* its servants or agents.

Signed _____ Date _____

(Parent/Guardian)

Address _____

(if different from above)

Any additional telephone numbers during the period of the activity _____

Resource 9: Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

Children will occasionally tell an adult they are being abused if they feel they can trust this person. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is if they do tell you they are doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information.

If a child begins to tell you about abuse it is important that you

Do:

- stay calm
- listen carefully and take them seriously
- ask questions for clarification only if you are unclear what the child is saying
- allow the child to continue at his/ her own pace
- reassure the child that, in disclosing the abuse, they have done the right thing
- tell them they are not to blame for the abuse
- let them know you will do what you can to help
- report the child's disclosure to your manager or the designated person immediately (or in the absence of the designated, or if the disclosure in any way involves the designated person, then seek advice from the National Safeguarding Board Support Team).

As soon as possible, write down everything that you were told by the child, using their own words to describe the abuse. Sign and date this record and pass it onto the designated person.

Do not:

- dismiss the concerns
- panic
- probe for more information/ ask other questions
- 'promise not to tell anyone' or say 'you'll keep it a secret'
- make negative comments about the accused person
- make assumptions or speculate
- disclose details of the allegation to anyone else – even if the allegations involve them in any way.

Find an opportunity to explain that it is likely that this information will need to be shared with others and at the end of the discussion tell them what you plan to do next and with whom this information will be shared.

Remember: It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is **not** responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of the concerns about the child.

Resource 10: Definitions of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in their family, in a faith based, institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult/s, another child or children. It often involves people they trust and know well.

The abuse of children generally involves one or more of four main forms of abuse:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect.

It is essential that any personnel in the Catholic Church recognise that the abuse of children is **not just about sexual abuse**. Many children experience harm through emotional, physical abuse and neglect. The Church must take responsibility to nurture, protect and take action for any child who is suffering harm, whatever the harm may be and whoever is causing it.

Some children may be particularly vulnerable to abuse. For example there is research which has found that disabled children are three times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children.

Some studies suggest children from minority ethnic groups may be at increased risk of abuse through factors such as stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. There is also extensive evidence that these children and families often fail to receive an appropriate service when concerns are raised about a child's welfare. Over-reaction and inaction have both been shown to be based on misunderstandings and misinterpretations of different cultural patterns, which have led to failure to meet children's needs.

Other groups of children who might be particularly vulnerable include asylum-seeking children, children who are in care, children who are living with parents/ carers who misuse drugs and/ or alcohol.

Definitions

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (oral sex). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/ or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from all different walks of life.

Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child 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 failure to access appropriate medical care or treatment.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, such as the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may also occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.



Resource 11: How to recognise child abuse

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. You do however, have a responsibility and duty to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child.

The following information should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

Physical abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury or when it appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. on the cheeks or thighs. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- cigarette burns
- bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- depression
- withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/ play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from their parents care
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- sudden speech disorders
- self harm
- fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.

Sexual abuse

Adults, who use children to meet their own sexual needs, abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital area
- bruising or bleeding near genital area
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/ or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive but only to serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too, to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between their parents/ carers etc.

Resource 12: Information for people wishing to raise a child protection concern

There are a number of ways that you might become aware of actual or likely occurrence of abuse.

- You might be or have experienced it yourself.
- Someone might tell you.
- You might see physical injuries that have no satisfactory explanation.
- A child's behaviour may indicate that s/he might be being abused.
- Something about the behaviour of an adult in the Church, perhaps in the way they relate to a child, makes you feel uncomfortable in some way.
- You might observe abuse.

Who should I talk to?

If you wish to talk to someone about a concern or suspicion of abuse it is important to do so as soon as possible. You will be listened to and what you say will be taken seriously.

If you have suffered abuse in the past, again, please tell someone about the abuse. You will be listened to and what you have to say will be taken seriously.

Understandably, many people find it difficult to tell anyone about the abuse they have suffered. It may be many years after the event before a disclosure is made, perhaps when the victim is an adult. Even then, the Church will act.

If you want to raise a concern or suspicions, or make an allegation or disclosure, you can choose who to talk to. You may choose to contact the Health and Social Services or local An Garda Síochána or member of the PSNI.

There are some people in the Church who have special safeguarding jobs; they are called Local or Parish Safeguarding Representatives (at least one in every parish) and Designated Officers or Delegates (at least one in every diocese or religious congregation). Details of your Diocesan / Congregational Safeguarding Team can be found at the back of your local Church or via the relevant Diocesan or Congregation website. Alternatively, please contact the National Office for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, and we will be able to give you the contact details.

Alternatively, you may prefer to tell someone in the Church that you already know such as a priest or a youth leader. They will refer you to sources of support and also let the Designated Officer know that they need to address a child protection matter.

What happens next?

The Designated Officer will then meet with you to find out more information, and the details of what you have to say. They will also explain to you what will happen next.

It will be necessary to give details of the matter you are raising to certain other people externally, including the Health and Social Services and Police / An Garda Síochána and, internally within the Church. All allegations or disclosures will be addressed sensitively, openly and in a timely manner.

You will also be offered a Support Person to help and advise you of the process as any inquiry progresses.

If you are a child or you are raising a concern about a child, the Designated Officer will not interview a child, as he/she will not be trained to do so.

The Designated Officer will talk with the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI about what to do next.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at an immediate and serious risk of harm, the Designated Officer will make an immediate referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI.

If your concern is about the behaviour or actions of an adult in the Church, then that person will be informed, to allow him or her to respond to it, unless to do so would put the child and others at greater risk. The person may also be asked to stand aside from his or her role while the matter is being investigated.

If the concern relates to abuse that has occurred to you in the past, the Designated Officer will ask you to provide a description of what happened, including the background and circumstances. You will be given plenty of time to do this.

If appropriate, and if he/she has not already done so, the Designated Officer will then inform the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI of your concerns/allegation. The Designated Officer **must** do this if he/she has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, which may be the case even where your concern/allegation relates to abuse that took place a long time ago.

The Designated Officer is not involved with the statutory investigation, but will keep in contact with the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI. The Designated Officer will normally be informed when the statutory investigation has concluded. The Church inquiry process will then continue.

What happens next may vary depending on whether the concern raised is about a Priest or religious, or a lay employee or volunteer. This is because each is subject to their own internal procedures.

As the process unfolds, you will be regularly informed about what is happening.

For more details regarding the process, please refer to the full document, *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. You can obtain this by contacting the National Office or visiting our website.

What if I am unhappy with the way my concerns were dealt with?

If you are unhappy with the way that the Church dealt with your concerns, you can ask for it to be independently reviewed. You cannot ask for the matter to be re-investigated but you can ask for the process (i.e. how it was dealt with) to be reviewed.

You must ask for a review within three months after the Church's investigative process has finished, but this timeframe can be extended in certain circumstances.

You should write to the National Board, setting out the reasons why you are unhappy with the process. If you have any difficulty in doing this, please contact the National Office to discuss other ways they may be able to help you to ask for a review.

The review will be conducted by an independent review panel of three persons with specialist expertise.

The Review Panel cannot review the outcome of the process, but will look at the manner in which the process was conducted and ensure that all the required steps were followed.

At the end of the review the Review Panel will then make a recommendation.

The person who your concern/allegation was about is also entitled to seek such a review if he or she is unhappy with the way the process was conducted.

For further details of the review process, please see the ***Child protection allegations and concerns- Review procedures*** outlined in **Resource 13**, or contact the National Office for further information.

Resource 13: Child protection allegations and concerns – Review procedures

1. If the person who raised a child protection concern/made an allegation or the person they raised the concern about (the respondent) is unhappy with the way in which the concern/allegation was managed they can ask for this process to be reviewed.
2. The person requesting a review will normally be required to provide written reasons for his or her dissatisfaction with the process. There may be circumstances where this is not possible for example, where the person making the allegation is a child or has an impairment. In these situations their request will be accepted verbally and assistance will be offered to enable them to access a review.
3. The person's written request for a review should be forwarded to the National Board within three calendar months of the conclusion of the investigation of the matter. However, the National Board can accept requests for review outside this timeframe if it feels it is appropriate.
4. The Review of Process is an independent evaluation, not only of whether the child protection procedures have been properly observed, but also of whether the Standards established in the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* have been adhered to. This review of process shall not, however, include or extend to a review of the outcomes determined under the child protection procedures.
5. A review under these procedures is to be conducted otherwise than in public and, save as appears below, in confidence. The review will be carried out with respect to similar confidentiality guidelines as the initial inquiry.
6. The National Board will appoint three Reviewers from the National Review Panel, who will arrange for a review to take place. The Reviewers will be independent and they will decide how best to conduct the review in line with these procedures.
7. The National Board will inform the Church authority concerned that a review of process has been requested and approved. The National Board will also ensure that both the complainant and/or respondent are informed that a review has been requested and will take place.
8. The Reviewers can use their discretion after looking at the information and decide not to carry out a review or to discontinue a review if they consider the request to be inappropriate.
9. In any case where a request is made to the National Board for a review and the Reviewers, having been appointed, decide not to carry out a review they will write to the person who has requested the review and the National Board outlining their decision.
10. The Reviewers can ask to interview any person concerned (other than a child), and will, in the case of a Church organisation or Church authority, be given, and have access to all such information and documentation relating to the matter in the possession of the body or authority. Some information and documentation may be given, or access afforded, to the Reviewers may be legally privileged material³ (referred to below as 'material'). This will be done to ensure that the Reviewers have all they need to properly, fully and effectively carry out their role. It will also ensure full transparency, openness and cooperation, and so foster confidence and trust in the child protection process as a whole, and assist in facilitating the best possible handling of child protection concerns generally.

3. Such material, which is exempt from disclosure in court, and other relevant proceedings, comprises the following types of written and/or oral communications:

- confidential communications between a client and his professional legal adviser, which communications are made in the course of a professional legal relationship between them for the purpose of either seeking or giving legal advice (not other advice, and not mere legal 'assistance'); and

- confidential communications between a client and his professional legal adviser, or between the client and a third party, or between his professional legal adviser and a third party, the dominant purpose for which was preparation for pending, contemplated or reasonably apprehended litigation.

Any such material will be disclosed on the following bases:

- a. there being no intention whatsoever, in giving and/or affording access to the material to abandon or waive legal professional privilege over the material concerned;
 - b. access being afforded for the specific and limited purposes of the Review, and in the context outlined above;
 - c. access being afforded on the strict condition and understanding that the confidentiality of the material, which it is the intention of the Church organisation / Church authority to maintain into the future, be strictly observed by the Reviewer, and, without prejudice to the generality of this, the following strictures be abided by:
 - In the case of documents, access to the material will be given by means of inspection only (copies will not be made) in a confidential setting, at the premises of the Church organisation/Church authority where the relevant files are normally kept.
 - Any notes made on foot of any inspection, interview or other disclosure of the contents of the material for the purposes of the Reviewer carrying out the Review, be kept secure and confidential, and be promptly destroyed once used for those purposes; and
 - Disclosure of the material, or its contents, not being effected to any third party (including any other party to a Review), without the prior, written, consent of the Church organisation/ Church authority.
11. If, at any stage during the course of a review, the Reviewers have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, they will inform the Health and Social Services or An Garda Síochána / PSNI if this has not already occurred.
 12. The Reviewers will carry out the review within three calendar months, unless the National Board agrees an extension. The Reviewers shall prepare a draft report upon conclusion of the review.
 13. The Reviewers shall be free to make interim recommendations to the Church authority in the course of its work and, in so doing, shall afford to the Church authority the opportunity of responding to such interim recommendations.
 14. The Reviewers shall check for factual accuracy in the report and to this end, the Reviewers shall provide excerpts of the draft report, containing those parts of the report which refer to or affect the person who has raised a concern/made an allegation, the respondent and the Church authority respectively, to each of those persons, for their checking of the facts.
 15. After considering any comments provided by the person raising a concern, the respondent and the Church authority, the Reviewers shall then prepare a written final report containing recommendations. A copy of the report shall be provided to the National Board and, insofar as they have given their reasonable co-operation to the process, the Church authority, the Church organisation, the person raising the concern/making an allegation and the respondent. The report shall not be published.
 16. If the Reviewers consider that there has been a failure to observe the required processes, the National Board will discuss the case with the Reviewers. Upon such consideration of the report, the National Board shall make such recommendations as it sees fit to the Church authority in relation to the child protection matter.
 17. The Church authority, having considered the recommendations, will decide upon the appropriate course of action and inform the person who has raised the concern/made an allegation, and the respondent.
 18. The Annual Report of the National Board shall contain a summary of the learning identified through such reviews carried out during the previous year, with care being taken to ensure that the identity of all persons involved, including the Church authority, is not revealed.
 19. The Church authority shall bear all ordinary and reasonable expenses of the review.

Resource 14: Audit process and procedures

The audit procedures are a systematic method of monitoring the extent to which the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* is being implemented by and in Church organisations. This is an important method of ensuring that a process of continuous improvement takes place, and of demonstrating accountability and transparency.

Auditing will take place by two methods: the annual self-audit scheme and planned audits by the National Board itself.

Annual self-audit scheme

1. The primary method of ensuring compliance with the *Safeguarding Children Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* is by means of self-audit and the document has primarily been prepared with self-audit in mind. Each Standard contains a list of criteria, which give details of the steps that a Church organisation needs to take to meet the Standard and ways of providing evidence that the Standard has been met.
2. Section 2 of the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* contains checklists for each of the Standards. These have been prepared on the basis that each Church organisation must complete the checklists and return them to the National Office by 31 December each year.
3. Where the completed checklists returned by a Church organisation give rise to any significant issues, the National Office will discuss this with the relevant Church authority in order to establish what additional help or support may be needed.
4. The results of the self-audits will be collated by the National Board and will be contained in the annual report for the relevant year. However, no individual Church organisation will be named in the collated information.

Audits by the National Board

5. The National Board, through the National Office, will conduct a limited number of audits throughout the year. These will be carried out on a planned discretionary basis. It is anticipated that each Church organisation will be subject to an audit at least once every five years. Twenty-eight days notice will be given to the Church authority and Church organisation of the proposed audit. The details of these procedures are set out below.
6. The National Board, in consultation with the National Office, may authorise appropriate people to be auditors for the purposes of these procedures.
7. The primary focus of an auditor is a preventative one, which is to raise the awareness among Church organisations and Church personnel of their responsibilities under the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*.
8. With this in mind, an auditor will look at the level of compliance of Church organisations with the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and, in particular, the preparation and implementation of the various policies required by the Standards and the management of child protection procedures.
9. The aim of any audit is to:
 - a. confirm compliance with the Standards set out in the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*
 - b. identify any risks arising from a failure to comply with the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*
 - c. educate and guide the Church organisation and Church personnel to help bring about any improvements by identifying strengths and weaknesses and highlighting good and poor practice in matters relating to the safeguarding of children; and
 - d. to focus attention on the safeguarding of children in the Church organisation.

10. During an audit the auditor will meet the appropriate personnel, such as the priest or religious superior, and outline the nature of the audit.
11. An auditor shall, subject to paragraph 12, have the power to have access to and examine any documents which he or she believes would assist him or her in assessing the Church organisation's compliance with the Standards set out in the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, including, but not limited to, the following:
- a. the Church organisation's child protection policy
 - b. the Church organisation's child protection concerns/allegations files and documents
 - c. the Church organisation's safe recruitment and vetting policy
 - d. the Church organisation's codes of behaviour of adults towards children
 - e. the Church organisation's guidance on operating safe activities for children; and
 - f. details of the Church organisation's training programme in safeguarding children for those working with children.
12. Some information and documentation may be given, or access afforded, to the Auditor may be legally privileged material ⁴ (referred to below as 'material'). This will be done to ensure that the Auditor have all they need to properly, fully and effectively carry out their role. It will also ensure full transparency, openness and cooperation, and so foster confidence and trust in the child protection process as a whole, and assist in facilitating the best possible handling of child protection concerns generally. Any such material will be disclosed on the following bases:
- a. there being no intention whatsoever, in giving and/or affording access to the material to abandon or waive legal professional privilege over the material concerned
 - b. access being afforded for the specific and limited purposes of the audit, and in the context outlined above
 - c. access being afforded on the strict condition and understanding that the confidentiality of the material, which it is the intention of the Church organisation / Church authority to maintain into the future, be strictly observed by the auditor, and, without prejudice to the generality of this, the following strictures be abided by:
 - In the case of documents, access to the material be given by means of inspection only (copies will not be made) in a confidential setting, at the premises of the Church organisation/Church authority where the relevant files are normally kept
 - Any notes made on foot of any audit or other disclosure of the contents of the material for the purposes of the auditor carrying out the audit, be kept secure and confidential, and be promptly destroyed once used for those purposes; and
 - Disclosure of the material, or its contents, not being effected to any third party (including any other party to an inspection), without the prior, written, consent of the Church organisation/Church authority.
13. The audit will only relate to the implementation of the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and to concerns raised since the adoption of these procedures by the Church organisation. However, in considering the adequacy of compliance of any investigation with the managing a child protection procedure, the Auditor may consider the existence of allegations made prior to the adoption of these procedures.
14. If, at any stage during the course of an audit, the Auditor has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, he/she shall inform the Health and Social Services or An Garda Síochána / PSNI of same, if this has not already occurred.

4. Such material, which is exempt from disclosure in court, and other relevant proceedings, comprises the following types of written and/or oral communications:

- confidential communications between a client and his professional legal adviser, which communications are made in the course of a professional legal relationship between them for the purpose of either seeking or giving legal advice (not other advice, and not mere legal 'assistance'); and

- confidential communications between a client and his professional legal adviser, or between the client and a third party, or between his professional legal adviser and a third party, the dominant purpose for which was preparation for pending, contemplated or reasonably apprehended litigation.

15. Following the conclusion of the audit, a meeting will then be held with the Church authority and such others as may be appropriate in order to give a verbal report of the audit.
16. The Auditor will then issue a written report to the Church authority on his audit, in relation to the Church organisation's compliance with the *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and, if appropriate, giving recommendations as to how improvements could be achieved.
17. The Annual Report of the National Board shall contain a summary of the learning identified through such audits carried out during the previous year, with care being taken to ensure that the identity of all persons involved, including the Church authority, is not revealed.
18. Except as required by law, an Auditor shall not disclose confidential information obtained by the person while performing or as a result of performing any functions as an Auditor.

Resource 15: Roles and responsibilities of Church personnel

The following sections outline the roles and responsibilities of Church personnel with child protection responsibilities.

Designated officer or Delegate⁵

It is the Designated Officer's responsibility to receive information where it is alleged or suspected that a child(ren) has been or is being abused by any member of the Church including volunteers.

The Designated Officer is responsible for managing the allegation/disclosure or concern, from start to finish including:

- the preliminary internal enquiry
- referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI
- any subsequent internal investigations.

He or she is also responsible for ensuring the person raising the concern/suspicion or making an allegation and the respondent or alleged perpetrator are regularly informed about how the inquiry into the matter is progressing.

Where an external investigation is being conducted advice and agreement about what and how much information to share must be obtained from the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI or from the National Office.

It is expected that the Designated Officer will seek advice from the appropriate authority if they are in any doubt about interviewing a person making a complaint about abuse.

Where the person raising a concern/making an allegation or disclosure is a child or the parent or guardian of a child who alleges abuse:

Under no circumstances should a Designated Officer interview a child alone. Designated Officers should not interview a child or a child's parents or guardians in any detail about the matter without first consulting the Health and Social Services, as the interview may more appropriately be carried out by the Health and Social Services or An Garda Síochána / PSNI.

Where an adult is making an allegation or disclosure about historical or retrospective abuse:

Ask the individual to provide a detailed account of what happened and the circumstances. The Designated Officer should carefully record what is said, and check with the person who has raised the concern/made the allegation the accuracy of what has been recorded. Ample time must be given to this. A written note of the details of the matter must be prepared and these notes are to be confirmed by the signature of the person raising the concern. The Designated Officer should try to obtain sufficient information about the nature of the concern for the respondent to know what has been alleged against him or her.

Procedure

The role of the Designated Officer

1. Receive information about a concern or allegation.
2. Ensure that the procedure about how to manage concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers in **Resource 2** have been followed, and to ensure a referral has been made to the statutory authority where appropriate if this has not already happened.

5. Note: where an allegation or suspicion is made against the Designated Officer, the information must be passed to the Deputy Designated Officer and the process as outlined should be carried out by the Deputy Designated Officer.

3. Create a child protection case file for every referral that includes a log of actions, events and information received using the dedicated form for this purpose (Resource 16). Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event but before the end of the day. They must be timed, dated and signed by the author.
4. Take possession of any written records made by any person in connection with the case and place them on the Child Protection Case File.
5. Explain the procedures for addressing the concern, allegation or disclosure to the person who has raised the concern and ensure that they (including the child's parent or guardian where appropriate) sign the data protection declaration of consent. This consent relates to this child protection concerns process only – consent is **not** required for the making of a referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI.
6. To contact emergency or appropriate services where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk of harm. An immediate referral in accordance with **Resource 16** should be made to the Health and Social Services. Where appropriate, if Health and Social Services staff are not available, An Garda Síochána / PSNI should be contacted to ensure that **under no circumstances is a child left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention**. Consideration should, in all cases, also be given to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve, and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of potential evidence or forensic evidence.
7. Inform the Church authority that a complaint has been made and make a recommendation to the Church authority about any immediate action(s) that may need to be taken in order to ensure the safety of children.
8. Make enquiries to identify the present and previous appointments of the respondent in order to establish whether there are any previous concerns about his/her practice, or any current grounds for concern in relation to the safety and well-being of children. (Again, in cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate or possible risk, an immediate referral (in accordance with **Resource 2 Procedure – How to manage concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers** should be made to the Health and Social Services. Where appropriate, if Health and Social Services staff are not available, An Garda Síochána / PSNI should be contacted so as to ensure that **under no circumstances is a child be left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention**).
9. Alert the Adviser to be on standby, without identifying the respondent.
10. Conduct an initial interview with the respondent as soon as possible, unless (where an earlier referral has been made) the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI have requested that such an interview be deferred. The respondent shall be given information about his or her entitlement to seek legal advice (both civil and, where appropriate, canonical) and about the child protection process. The respondent should be informed that he/she is not obliged, in law, to respond or to furnish evidence, but that any statement provided will be taken into account in the investigation. The Designated Officer and the Church authority should then inform the respondent of the nature and detail of the allegation/concern and the name of the person raising it. The purpose of the interview is to inform the respondent of the existence of the allegation and of the process being followed. The respondent needs to be given enough detail about the disclosure/allegation/concern, and the person raising it, to be able to offer a response. The respondent shall be offered the services of an Adviser. A written record of the interview must be prepared, agreed with the respondent, signed and dated.
11. Implement the referral policy as outlined in **Resource 2 Procedure – How to manage concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers**

12. In cases where a Designated Officer has a concern about a child but is not sure whether to make a referral, he or she should seek appropriate advice. He or she may consult the National Office, the Health and Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána / PSNI on the appropriate steps to be taken. The Designated Officer must keep a written record of the outcome of the consultation with the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI on the Child Protection Case File. Decisions not to refer a matter must always be in consultation with the National Office.
13. Ensure the availability of the Advisory Panel, if required, and convene the Advisory Panel at an appropriate time.
14. Follow the advice given by Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI where a child protection concern has been referred to them. Allow the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána to conduct their enquiries unimpeded. Do not visit the family or contact family members without prior discussion with investigators.
15. Maintain a dialogue with the Investigating Officer or Social Worker to monitor the progress of the case and act on any advice given. Details of contacts made should be recorded chronologically on the Child Protection Case File.
16. Ask for an update from the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI about the outcome of their investigations; this request should be made in writing.
17. Conduct an internal investigation at the conclusion any external investigation or where no such investigation takes place. Any internal investigation will be initiated in cases where child protection concerns remain or where disciplinary action needs to be considered.

Such an investigation will gather and assess available information from all sources and witnesses. Every effort should be made, in consultation with the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI, to avoid the necessity to interview child witnesses for the purposes of disciplinary inquiries.

This investigation (which takes place after the statutory enquiries have been completed) should be conducted expeditiously, taking no longer than three months, wherever possible. In cases where there is a delay, and particularly where a Priest or religious has been temporarily removed from active ministry or a lay person suspended from duties, it is important to keep everyone informed of the progress of the investigation and to maintain records of such communications. There can be no excuse for a respondent to be left uninformed and 'in limbo' indefinitely.

Where an investigation concerns Clergy or religious, the requirements of Canon Law will be observed.

The Church authority (Bishop, Religious Superior, Senior Administrative Authority)

The role of the Church authority

1. Inform the Designated Officer immediately upon receipt or notification of a current or historical allegation, suspicion or concern about abuse of a child from any person.
2. Co-operate, contribute to and assist any investigation being undertaken by Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI and / or Designated Officer.
3. Upon being contacted by the Designated Officer following his/her receipt of a concern or allegation, the Church authority must carry out a risk assessment. In urgent situations, a decision may be required at short notice.
4. Contact the Holy See as appropriate.

5. At the conclusion of a statutory investigation or where no statutory investigation takes place, an internal investigation will be mounted in case there are disciplinary or child protection matters to consider. Where an investigation concerns Clergy or religious the requirements of Canon Law will be observed.
6. In cases where there has been an acquittal or a decision not to prosecute there may be, nonetheless, sufficient evidence to meet the civil standard of proof of the concern/allegation that has been made. The duty of the Church authority, in the event of:
 - a. an acquittal where there remain concerns
 - b. a criminal inquiry which does not lead to a prosecution, or
 - c. an internal investigation of apparently inappropriate conduct but not amounting to a crime is to examine the position of the respondent within the Church. The continued role of the respondent within the Church must be considered carefully.

This investigation (which takes place after the statutory enquiries have been completed) should be conducted expeditiously, taking no longer than three months wherever possible. In cases where there is a delay, and particularly where a Priest or religious has been temporarily removed from active ministry or a lay person suspended from duties, it is important to keep everyone informed of the progress of the investigation and to maintain records of such communications. There can be no excuse for a respondent to be left uninformed and 'in limbo' indefinitely.

The next steps depend on whether a canonical or other process is to be followed.

Canonical

In addition to being a crime in civil law, the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in Canon Law. When a concern is raised, the Church authority is to initiate a preliminary investigation (c. 1717, §1). The stages hereafter of this procedure assume that, if a decree under c. 1717 is made, the Designated Officer has been appointed to carry out the enquiry⁶. If a person other than the Designated Officer is appointed, appropriate adjustment will be required to ensure that all of the objectives of the protocol are fulfilled.

No Church investigation shall be undertaken in such a manner as to interfere in any way with any investigation by the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI, whether such is in progress or is contemplated in the foreseeable future. If, following referral of the matter, the person raising a concern/making an allegation has elected not to pursue the matter with the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI, or if those bodies have confirmed that they are not pursuing an investigation or that their investigation is concluded, a Church investigation, having been suspended to allow the investigation of the civil authorities, may resume and shall be carried out expeditiously.

During the preliminary investigation the Church authority may seek the advice of others.

At the conclusion of the preliminary investigation, the Church authority is to follow the requirements of the Holy See⁷.

In the case of a non-ordained religious, the investigation is carried out in accordance with c. 695, §§1–2.

Canon Law confers all necessary powers to take measures in promoting and ensuring the safety and welfare of children who receive pastoral care from Church personnel. Among the actions necessary may be the requirement to restrict a respondent's exercise of his office and/or public ministry. A respondent may be asked to stand aside from a particular office or offices, and from other forms of public ministry, including the public celebration of the Mass and other sacraments, for the duration of any investigation by the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI and under Canon Law.

6. In the event that an allegation is made against a Bishop, the Designated Officer should contact the Metropolitan; if the allegation is against the Metropolitan, the Bishop senior by appointment should be contacted. In the case of a Major Superior, the matter should be referred to the Supreme Moderator, or to the Holy See in the case of a Supreme Moderator, by the Designated Officer.

7. The Motu Proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela, 30 April, 2001; The Circular Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, De Delictis Gravioribus, 18 May, 2001.

While the matter is pending the respondent enjoys the presumption of innocence and the right to his or her good name.

Respondents shall receive normal remuneration and other entitlements while they are standing aside. They shall be provided with an appropriate place to live and, where possible, given some suitable activity.

The Church authority may avail of the advice of the Advisory Panel and, if appropriate, the Professional Practice Committee, from time to time and as required.

Lay employees and volunteers

If the allegation/disclosure/suspicion raised concerns about a current employee or volunteer of a Church organisation, then the Designated Officer should refer the matter to be dealt with under the grievance and disciplinary procedures of the body concerned, to be investigated in accordance with the applicable procedures of employment law (and any other relevant laws) in the relevant jurisdiction. The Designated Officer will inform the person who raised the concern or allegation as identified in the procedures contained in **Resources 12 and 15**.

The documents or other material arising from the investigation are to be kept in accordance with the practices of the employing authority and any relevant laws.

Clergy or religious

Some Clergy and religious will be child protection professionals and may be tempted to initiate investigative action because of their knowledge and expertise. Such blurring of boundaries between roles should be avoided. It is not the role of Clergy or religious to investigate child abuse allegations or concerns.

The role of Clergy and religious

1. Inform the Designated Officer, upon receipt or notification of an allegation, suspicion or concern about abuse of a child, current or historical, from any person and to follow the guidelines in **Resource 2 and 12**.
2. Co-operate with, contribute to and assist any investigation being undertaken by Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI and / or the Designated Officer.
3. Maintain an impartial stance with parish communities during an investigation, even when tensions exist and recognise the need to respect the rights of all parties involved.

Local Safeguarding Representative ('LSR')

Some LSRs will be child protection professionals and may be tempted to initiate investigative action because of their knowledge and expertise. Such blurring of boundaries between roles should be avoided. The LSR does not have an investigative role.

The role of the LSR

1. Inform the Designated Officer, upon receipt or notification of an allegation, suspicion or concern about abuse of a child, current or historical, from any person and to follow the guidelines in **Resource 2 and 12**
2. Co-operate, contribute to and assist any investigation being undertaken by Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI and / or Designated Officer with any practical matters.
3. The LSR in a religious congregation will refer child protection concerns to the Designated Officer appointed to act for that congregation.
4. The LSR in a diocese will refer child protection concerns to the diocesan Designated Officer.
5. The LSR must not take on the role of Support Person to the person raising a concern/making an allegation or disclosure; nor should they take on the role of Adviser to the respondent.

Resource 16: Child protection recording form (template)

Child Protection Recording Form

1. About the disclosure/concern

Date of disclosure/concern _____

Time of disclosure/concern _____

How was information received? (attached any written information to this form)

Telephone Letter Email In person

2. Details of person making disclosure/raising concern

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Relationship to child or alleged victim _____

3. Details of child or alleged victim

Name _____ DOB _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Ethnic origin _____

Language (is interpreter/ signer needed) _____

Disability _____

Special needs _____

Parish / Order (if applicable) _____

4. Parent / Carer details *(where appropriate)*

Name _____

Address (if different from above) _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Are they aware of the allegation, suspicion or complaint?

Yes No

5. Details of alleged perpetrator

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Relationship to child/ victim *(parent/Priest/teacher etc)* _____

Position in Church/ Order _____

Address at time of incident(s) _____

Current contact with children if known *(sit on board of governors of school, runs youth activities etc)* _____

Any additional information _____

6. Details of concern, allegation or complaint

(Include dates / times and location the incident(s) occurred, witnesses, if known. Does the child / victim know this referral is being made?)

7. Action taken

Has the matter been referred to civil authorities?

Yes No

If yes

Date _____ Time _____

If no explain why _____

Who was it referred to:

Name _____

Designation _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Email _____

Has the matter been referred to a member of the Church?

Yes No

If yes

Date _____ Time _____

If no explain why _____

Who was it referred to:

Name _____

Designation _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Email _____

8. Next Steps

What actions were agreed and by whom when the matter was referred onto civil / Church authority?

Are there any immediate child protection concerns? If so please record what they are and state what actions have been taken by whom to address them:

9. Designated Officer details:

Date form sent _____

10. Details of person completing the form

Name:

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Position in Church _____

Parish/Order _____

Form completed

Date _____ Time _____

Signed

(A copy must be retained by the recipient and filed in a secure location, and a copy must be sent to the designated officer and civil / statutory authorities)

Glossary and terminology

Adviser is a person appointed to offer support to a person who has had an allegation or concern raised against them.

Advisory Panels are consultative panels of not less than five people appointed by the Bishop of a diocese or by the leader of a religious congregation, to advise and assist during a child protection process.

Assessment of a child, is any systematic process of assessing the needs, circumstances or progress of a child (or family) against defined norms, an established scale or standardised benchmarks, with the intention of understanding the child's needs (and the family's needs), circumstances or progress, in order to decide on appropriate further action (or to confirm that no additional help is required).

Abuser, offender, perpetrator are all words used to describe someone who poses a risk to children or young people. While it mostly refers to sexual abuse, the terms cover all forms of deliberate harm to children. Offender describes someone who has been convicted and found guilty of a criminal offence.

Audit is a word that is likely to be used in a number of contexts. It is commonly used to refer to an audit of a service or services, in other words, a systematic appraisal or critical evaluation of a service provider's practice and effectiveness. Implementing change to bring about service improvement is integral to such a process.

Child 'A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.' (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1, 1989)

Child abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, such as:

- physical abuse, e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning
- sexual abuse, e.g. inappropriate physical contact and non-contact activities (including exposure to pornography)
- emotional abuse, e.g. excessively criticising, withholding love, humiliating or degrading treatment
- neglect, e.g. persistent failure to provide for physical needs.

Child abuse also includes the following areas of concern:

- domestic violence
- parental drug and alcohol abuse
- parental mental health concerns.

Child protection case conference is a meeting of family members, the child (where appropriate) and those professionals most involved with the child and family, following investigations into concerns about a child's welfare. This meeting will analyse all information about the child and make judgements about the likelihood that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, and whether their name should be further assessment and a child protection plan.

Church authority includes a bishop, religious superior, parish priest and the senior administrative authority of a lay organisation, association, ecclesial movement, and prelate, or volunteer group, exercising authority in relation to a respondent.

Church personnel is a generic term used to describe people who serve the Church and includes any Bishop, religious superior, Priest, Deacon, religious, lay employee and volunteer.

Complaint is a generic term used to describe a report or account of actual or suspected abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

Complainant, is a term used to describe a person who has made a complaint of abuse. In some cases the complainant will also be the person against whom it is alleged that the abuse was directed.

Designated Officer or Delegate is a person who has specific responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding procedures are followed within the diocese or congregation.

Disclosure of abuse is the statement a child or young person makes to another person that describes abuse that has occurred.

Disclosure is also the term used to check with the An Garda Síochána Central Vetting Unit or Access Northern Ireland for any past convictions held by an individual who is seeking to work in a paid or volunteer capacity and who may have contact with children.

Equality and diversity means acknowledging the diversity within society and treating all people with equal respect and giving them equal status and opportunities.

Grooming and targeting are words used to describe the way sex offenders deliberately select and establish a relationship of trust which they then manipulate to exercise power over the victim (their family, the organisation or professional setting).

Job description is the description of the role and tasks expected of the successful applicant for a post.

Learning difficulty is a term used to describe any one of a number of barriers to learning that a child may experience. Children with learning difficulties may find activities that involve thinking and understanding particularly difficult, and many need support in their everyday lives as well as at school. Learning difficulty is a broad term that covers a wide range of needs and problems, including dyslexia and behavioural problems, and the full range of ability.

Learning disability: people who have a learning disability have difficulties learning and find it particularly hard to understand new and complex information, and to develop new skills. A learning disability is a lifelong condition that is usually present from birth, although it may not become apparent until a child fails to reach particular developmental milestones. Learning disability is a relatively new term that has emerged over the last 20 years or so. Previously, people used to refer to someone as having a 'mental handicap'.

Local Safeguarding Representative or Parish Representative is the person within each local area identified to promote the safeguarding of children within that area and to act as a point of contact for parishioners and to liaise with the relevant Designated Officer as necessary.

National Board, the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church was established by the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union. It comprises individuals with a range of experience from the disciplines of civil and Canon law, psychology, child care, probation and managerial / business. The role of the Board is to provide independent advice and to monitor safeguarding practice in the Church in Ireland.

National Office, the National Office for Safeguarding Children was established by the implements the policies and decisions of the National Board.

National Review Panel is the independent panel of persons appointed by the National Board to decide upon and conduct reviews of a child protection process.

Organisation is used as a generic term to cover a wide range of agencies, clubs or groups where activities or services are provided for children. Some of these might include: youth groups, faith based organisations, pre-school groups, out of school groups, day care agencies, leisure groups, recreational groups, drama and arts activities, holiday/play schemes, services provided by international development or aid agencies, and any other groups working with children or young people. It includes sports organisations but these are not covered by this publication.

Paedophile refers to a person who has a fixed and/or sole interest in sexual activity with children.

Parents and carers include anyone with parental responsibility or who undertakes day-to-day care for a child. It may include step-parents or grandparents or other members of the family.

Person specification is the list of qualifications, skills or attributes required for a post within an organisation.

Professional Practice Committee, it is envisaged that this committee will be a national resource whose function will be to provide advice and support to Bishops and religious superiors.

Recruitment and vetting means selecting staff and volunteers and having clear procedures for checking that they are safe to employ in your organisation.

Respondent is the person about whom a child protection concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation has been made.

Retrospective disclosure is one made by an adult who suffered abuse during his or her childhood.

Reviewer is a member of the National Review Panel selected to conduct a review of process.

Risk to children is the term for those persons who have been identified as posing an ongoing risk to children.

Safeguarding Children Guidance is the document entitled Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland, published by the National Board.

Support Person is the person appointed to support anyone making an allegation or disclosure, or raising a concern about actual or suspected abuse.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the process of 'protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care which is undertaken so as to enable children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully' (from Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government 2006).

Selection refers to the procedures used to select a candidate.

Staff, volunteers or workers refer to anyone in paid or unpaid work who provides services or activities on behalf of the organisation. This may include coaches, course instructors or leaders.

Volunteer refers to 'anyone who gives their time in a position in a non-profit organisation, free of charge, doing something for the good of the community or a voluntary group (for which they may get travelling and other out-of-pocket expenses) and which is not for their own benefit or for the benefit of a close relative'.(Access NI, 2008)

Vulnerable children is a broadly descriptive term defined in some guidance as 'those disadvantaged children who would benefit from extra help from public agencies in order to make the best of their life chances '.

This includes children living in poor quality housing, for example, children with special educational needs, and children with a special health need that could limit their access to social and cultural activities. Such children are unlikely to be vulnerable throughout their childhoods, but rather to go through periods of vulnerability.

Notes
