

Newsletter

Latest News from the National Office for
Safeguarding Children in the Catholic
Church in Ireland

ALERT BOX

This part of the Newsletter is designed to draw the attention of Church authorities to important developments outlined below:

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June 2023

National Office Staff

Click on any of the links below to send an email directly to any member of staff

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Introduction

This Newsletter coincides with the publication of the National Board's Annual Report for 2022/23. We therefore are producing a shorter Newsletter, as information will be available within the Annual Report. You will be able to view the Annual Report on the National Board's website after June 13, 2023.

Significant time has been spent on finalising the draft revised Safeguarding Children Policy; working on child safeguarding reviews; training and migrating non-sensitive data onto the National Board's new database. Details of these are contained in this Newsletter.

In addition, this Newsletter provides information on:

- Amendments to Vos estis lux mundi
- Changes to National Board Guidance
- Resources
- Practice Issue

Communications from the National Board

The National Board details information on the website, newsletter, and annual report to keep safeguarding personnel and others updated about our work.

If you register for a training event on our website, we will hold this information on our database to retain a record of the training you have attended and update you about relevant training (as outlined in our privacy policy). This information is retained for the period of your involvement, or until you contact us to delete your records. If your records are deleted, and then you attend a training event on our website or contact us to give your consent, we will add you to the database again. However, we will only register you to receive our newsletter or annual report if you contact us to give additional consent.

If you would like to receive our annual report in addition to this newsletter (or if there are other people who would like to receive communication from us)- please ask the person to send an email to acunningham@safeguarding.ie with their name, Church body/organisation, email address and the communication they wish to receive. We will then add them to our database.

If you have received this newsletter and no longer wish to receive future newsletters, please let us know by emailing acunningham@safeguarding.ie and we will update the records on our database.

Scoping Inquiry by the Department of Education (ROI Only)

In March 2023, Mary O'Toole Senior Counsel was appointed by the Minister for Education in the Republic of Ireland as Chair of the Scoping Inquiry to inform the Government response to revelations of historical sexual abuse in schools run by religious orders.

Mary O'Toole has been in contact with the National Board and has forwarded questionnaires to many religious congregations who owned and/or managed schools. She has advised the National Board that the Scoping Inquiry is to consider the likelihood and possible volume of further complaints or allegations emerging, and the impact that this scale will have on any potential Government response.

The Scoping Inquiry is also charged with outlining findings of best practice that emerge from work streams as relevant to future practice in the area of child protection.

To assist Mary O'Toole, others have been appointed to support this project, including a junior counsel and a safeguarding expert, with the aim of producing a report addressing child protections matters in schools, including an historic analysis.

If your congregation has been involved in schools and you have not received a questionnaire, you can contact the Scoping Inquiry on inquiry@esi.gov.ie, or contact teresa.devlin@safeguarding.ie

Data Protection

Following engagement with some Provincials around sharing personal sensitive data with the National Board, the Board of Directors is considering engaging with Government to seek regulation to remove some of the barriers to the exchange of personal sensitive data. The National Board will consult further with the Provincials, AMRI and IEC on the appropriate way forward.

Following publication of the Annual Report in June 2023, the National Board will destroy all allegations received between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. We will notify relevant Church authorities of the date the data will be destroyed should any Church authority wish to access the data prior to destruction.

Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for Catholic Church in Ireland (2016) Revision

Firstly, the National Board would like to take the opportunity to thank the Steering Committee for their steadfast support and guidance in drafting a revised Safeguarding Children policy for the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Steering Committee members will continue to work on this following the next phase of consultation, which is set out below. The Members are:

Abbot Brendan Coffey – Benedictines and AMRI
Archbishop Francis Duffy – Tuam Archdiocese and IEC
Saoirse Fox – Jesuits
Avril Halley – Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
Garry Kehoe – Dublin Archdiocese
Philip O Hara – Down and Connor Diocese
Mary Tallon – Dominican Fathers, OFM Franciscan, Capuchins & Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
Joan Walsh - Meath Diocese

The draft policy will be issued to the Irish Episcopal Conference (IEC) and AMRI at the AGM of the National Board. Then the policy will be circulated for further consultation over July and August 2023. Responses will be collated, and a revised final policy will be presented to the IEC and AMRI in autumn 2023.

To accompany the policy the National Board has produced a GAP paper entitled Framing a New Policy for Safeguarding Children for the Catholic Church in Ireland. You can read the GAP paper here: https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/GAP_Papers/GAP%20Paper%2011-Framing%20a%20New%20Policy%20for%20Safeguarding%20Children%20in%20the%20Catholic%20Church%20in%20Ireland.pdf.

To assist with the consultation, the National Board will host a series of free meetings on Zoom to share the journey of the development of the revised policy. The meeting dates and the links to join are:

5th July at 10am - Armagh Ecclesiastical Provincial Area- register at

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/information-on-new-draft-safeguarding-policy-armagh>

6th July at 10am - Dublin Ecclesiastical Provincial Area- register at

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/information-on-new-draft-safeguarding-policy-dublin>

18th July at 11am - Tuam Ecclesiastical Provincial area

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/information-on-new-draft-safeguarding-policy-tuam>

25th July at 2pm - Cashel Ecclesiastical Provincial area

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/information-on-new-draft-safeguarding-policy-cashel>

27th July at 11am - Female Religious

<https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/information-on-new-draft-safeguarding-policy-female-religious>

If you are unable to join the area in which you minister, please feel free to join one of the other zoom meetings.

Training and Support

Since the last Newsletter, it has been a busy few months in relation to training.

The following events took place:

- Training for Safeguarding Committees
- Risk-assessment processes
- Online and face-to-face training for those taking young people on pilgrimages
- Embedding a culture of safeguarding
- Head to Heart modules to seminarians in St Patrick's College Maynooth, and the Redemptoris Mater seminary Dundalk
- Training for an international religious congregation on governance of safeguarding
- Training for students taking part in the Safeguarding Licenciate at the Gregorian University in Rome.
- Training with postgraduate students at the Pontifical Irish College, Rome.

Over the summer, we will set dates for other training including dates for the Annual Update for Trainers and other relevant courses. Please follow this link for future training events <https://www.safeguarding.ie/news-events/events>.

CPD Accreditation

The National Board has been recognised as a CPD provider, and we will be submitting courses to the CPD service for approval. Once a course has been approved, we will be able to offer CPD points for those undertaking it. The first of these courses we hope will be the trainers update day which will take place in the Autumn.

Training Returns

The National Board has completed a project developing a new database. From now, Trainers can use their trainers log in to enter details of training events they have delivered via the website. Contact niall.moore@safeguarding.ie for further information.

Train the Trainers Course

We have been approached by a number of Church bodies to run another Train the Trainers course. As this is a resource intensive course, we want to ensure that there are sufficient numbers to make the course viable. Should you wish to send people on this course, please email acunningham@safeguarding.ie before the end of August. If there is sufficient demand, we will run this course in the Autumn of 2023.

Booking Training on the National Board Website

When booking events on the National Board's website you will receive an email from events@webstoposting.net. This email address is simply used for confirming bookings. **Please do not reply to this email address.** If you have any queries regarding a training event contact admin@safeguarding.ie.

Reviews of Safeguarding Practice

Twenty-six diocesan reviews are now complete or in process. The National Board will produce a summary of key findings later in 2023. Seven reviews of religious orders have also been completed. All Review Reports that have been approved for release can be found at <https://www.safeguarding.ie/publications/national-board-publications>.

Should any male or female religious order wish to discuss inviting the National Board to conduct a Review, and the data protection difficulties this might pose, please contact Teresa Devlin on +35315053124.



Guidance Updates

There have been seven changes to National Board guidance since the last Newsletter. These have included:

- Whistleblowing, following the enactment of the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022 in the Republic of Ireland (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5201b-protected-disclosures-act-amendments-2023/>).
- Contact details for Gardaí in Appendix D.
- Updated definitions of abuse following the introduction of the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (*Coco's law* <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2020/act/32/enacted/en/print>) in the Republic of Ireland in Appendix C.
- Updated references in Standard 2 following the new version of *Vos estis lux Mundi* published in 2023.

More information on all the changes can be found at <https://www.safeguarding.ie/policy-guidance/view-latest-updates-to-the-guidance>.

Amendments to Vos estis lux mundi (VELM) published on March 25 and which became effective on April 30, 2023.

In 2019, Pope Francis issued a Motu Proprio *Vos estis lux mundi*. The directive was *ad experimentum*. In March 2023, Pope Francis released an updated version, which confirmed the requirements relating to managing allegations, with specific reference to bishops and their equivalents; and added procedures relating to Lay Associations, as well as clarifying a number of points. The following are the main changes:

- This is now permanent, with effective date of April 30, 2023.
- The updated text specifies that leaders of international Catholic Lay Associations of the Faithful, which are recognised by the Holy See, have the same responsibilities over their members that a bishop has over the priests of his diocese.
- In the first version of VELM, the text referred to sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person. The updated version specifically refers to 'vulnerable adults' as one of the category of victims covered by the procedures. The updated text reads, "...a crime against the Sixth Commandment of the Decalogue committed with a minor, or with a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason, or with a vulnerable adult."
- The original document included, and continues to include, not only abuse and violence against children and vulnerable adults, but also sexual violence and harassment resulting from the abuse of authority. Therefore, the obligation to report also includes cases of violence by clerics against religious women, as well as cases of harassment of adult seminarians or novices.
- The initial text in 2019 required that there were 'stable systems' for receipt of allegations: The revised text goes further and requires dioceses and eparchies to operate an "...organisation or office which is easily accessible to the public in order to receive reports of cases of abuse".
- The revised VELM clarifies the responsibilities of the Bishop or Ordinary, in terms of investigating where the reported events allegedly took place
- Finally, the revised VELM extends protections for those reporting alleged abuse to ensure they are not silenced to "...the person who claims to have been offended and those who were witnesses".

See https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/20230325-motu-proprio-vos-estis-lux-mundi-aggiornato.html.

New Child Care Amendment Act- 2023 (ROI Only)

New legislation is going through the process of approval in the Oireachtas, which will have an impact on the work of safeguarding in the Catholic Church – see <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d5ddf-heads-and-general-scheme-of-the-child-care-amendment-bill-2023/>. The National Board is monitoring the progress of the new legislation, and when it is enacted, we will make the required changes to our guidance programmes.

and training

Practice Issue-Boarding Schools-Department of Education Guidance (ROI only)

New guidance has been issued by the Department of Education (ROI) in relation to safeguarding within boarding schools, the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools, March 2023*. This new guidance applies to boarding facilities associated with recognised schools; it states, 'Boarding facilities may be separate to recognised schools, but they are associated with recognised schools and operate because of the existence of the recognised school. The Department and its Inspectorate are committed to providing oversight of the requirements of the *Children First Act 2015* in such boarding facilities.'

A recognised School as defined in the Education Act of 1998 as:

The Minister may designate a school or a proposed school to be a school recognised for the purposes of this Act where the Minister, on a request being made for that purpose by the patron of a school or a proposed school, is satisfied that—

- (a) the number of students who are attending or are likely to attend the school is such or is likely to be such as to make the school viable,*
- (b) in the case of a proposed school, and having regard to the desirability of diversity in the classes of school operating in the area likely to be served by the school, the needs of students attending or likely to attend the school cannot reasonably be met by existing schools,*
- (c) the patron undertakes that the school shall provide the curriculum as determined in accordance with section 30,*
- (d) the patron agrees to permit and co-operate with regular inspection and evaluation by the Inspectorate,*
- (e) the school complies, or in the case of a proposed school shall comply, with health, safety and building standards as are determined by law and any further such standards as are determined from time to time by the Minister, and*
- (f) the patron agrees that the school shall operate in accordance with such regulations as may be made by the Minister from time to time under section 33 and with this Act and with any other terms and conditions as may reasonably be attached to recognition by the Minister.*

(3) A school that, on the commencement of this section, is in receipt of funds provided by the Oireachtas in respect of—

- (a) the education activities for students of that school, or*
- (b) the remuneration of teachers in that school, shall be deemed to be a school recognised in accordance with this section.*

The aims of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection in Boarding Facilities procedures are to ensure children are protected and safe in boarding facilities associated with recognised schools. The 2023 procedures state that 'It is a requirement of these procedures that boarding facilities comply with the relevant requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*. The particular risk associated with boarding facilities requires that the procedures outlined in this document, *Child Protection Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools*, are also followed.'

To help clarify the situation for male and female religious who run schools and boarding facilities, the National Board sought clarity from the Department in relation to the situation and this is our understanding:

- All recognised schools that have boarding facilities (however managed) both the school and the boarding facility are required to following the Child Protection Procedures of 2017 and the new procedures for Boarding Schools produced in 2023. This includes the Tusla Child Safeguarding Statement (including risks around children being away from home).
- Schools which are not recognised and run boarding facilities should consult the relevant Information and Advice Officer from Tusla to seek advice as to which policy applies, but the Department of Education recommend that it would be good practice that such schools follow the new Boarding School Procedures published in 2023.
- Schools that are not recognised schools and do not run boarding facilities should consult with Tusla to ascertain the requirements that they are required to meet in relation to safeguarding children and obligations under Children First.

Resources- Global Theological Ethics-Book Series

Series Editors

Jason King, St. Vincent College

M. Therese Lysaught, Loyola University Chicago

The Global Theological Ethics book series focuses on works that feature authors from around the world, draw on resources from the traditions of Catholic theological ethics, and attend to concrete issues facing the world today. It advances the *Journal of Moral Theology's* mission of fostering scholarship deeply rooted in traditions of inquiry about the moral life, engaged with contemporary issues, and exploring the interface of Catholic moral theology, philosophy, economics, political philosophy, psychology, and more.

The series is sponsored in conjunction with the Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church (CTEWC). The CTEWC recognises the need to dialogue from and beyond local cultures and to interconnect within a world Church. Its global network of scholars, practitioners, and activists fosters cross-cultural, interdisciplinary conversations - via conferences, symposia, and colloquia, both in-person and virtually - about critical issues in theological ethics, shaped by shared visions of hope.

Online versions of the volumes in the *Global Theological Ethics* series are available for free download as chapters at jmt.scholasticahq.com. Paper copies may be purchased from Wipf & Stock. This dual approach reflects the *Journal of Moral Theology's* commitment to the common good, as it seeks to make broadly available the scholarship of Catholic theological ethicists, especially across borders. Additionally, you can find the series listed on the CTEWC website at <https://catholicethics.com/book-series/catholic-theological-ethics-series/>

Series Titles

Ethical Challenges in Global Public Health: Climate Change, Pollution, and the Health of the Poor, edited by Philip J. Landrigan and Andrea Vicini, SJ (2021)

The Rising Global Cancer Pandemic: Health, Ethics, and Social Justice, edited by Andrea Vicini, SJ, Philip J. Landrigan, and Kurt Straif (2022).

Doing Theology and Theological Ethics in the Face of the Abuse Crisis, edited by Daniel J. Fleming, James F. Keenan, SJ, and Hans Zollner, SJ (2023)

A Prophet to the Peoples: Paul Farmer's Witness and Theological Ethics, edited by Jennie Weiss Block, M. Therese Lysaught, and Alexandre A. Martins (2023)



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND



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