

Dromore Diocesan Policy Statement

The Diocese of Dromore values and encourages the participation of children, young people and vulnerable adults in all church activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. We recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults within our faith community and we are committed to their protection and support in a way that promotes their human dignity and integrity as children of God.

We undertake to do all in our power in the Diocese of Dromore to create safe environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We acknowledge that all involved in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults have a special duty of care towards them. We undertake to put in place, implement and sustain procedures and adequate resources through which this care is put into effect so that their rights as active participants in the life of the Church are upheld.

Aims:

- To raise awareness of best practice in relation to safeguarding children
- To become familiar with current Church and Diocesan safeguarding standards.

Objectives:

- To know what is meant by the term 'Safeguarding'.
- To be familiar with Church and Diocesan standards.
- To be aware of the practicalities of safeguarding at a parish level.
- To be familiar with Diocesan structures, personnel, resources and supports that are available.

Key Legislation

- Criminal Law Act 1967
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified 1991)
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

Safeguarding: A Gospel Imperative

Safeguarding children 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 sets before us as those to whom the 'kingdom of God belongs'.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means: creating safe environments for children and those who work with them.

‘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.’

A child or young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years ‘excluding a person who is or has been married.’

Whose responsibility is it?

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of everyone.

It is now well accepted that the protection of children from harm is a public civic responsibility and not simply the private responsibility of parents.

‘Everyone who has contact, directly or indirectly, with children has a responsibility to protect them from harm.’ (Source: The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church)

‘Society has a duty of care towards children and everyone should be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact with may be being abused or at risk of being injured.’ (Source: The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church)

In a Church context, Safeguarding Children is equally clear: **‘The safeguarding of children is the responsibility of everyone in the Church, whether clergy, religious or lay faithful.’** (Source: The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church)

Diocesan Structures and Personnel

- You.
- Children, Young People and Parents.
- Parish Staff and Volunteers.
- Local Safeguarding Representatives.
- Parish Priest.
- Safeguarding Trainers.
- Safeguarding Committee.
- Designated Person.
- Advisory Panel.
- Diocesan Bishop.
- Civil Authorities.

Responsibility of every adult: Every adult is a resource in Child Safeguarding. Your awareness and your safeguarding mindset will help ensure that the Church everywhere provides a safe environment for children and those who work with them.

Children and Young People: Need to be empowered to keep themselves safe.

Local/Parish Safeguarding Representatives: The people who are identified to promote the safeguarding of children within an area/parish- to act as a point of contact for parishioners and to liaise with the Designated Person.

Parish Priest: Responsible for the safeguarding of children in the parish.

Safeguarding Trainers: Responsible for delivering training on, and raising

awareness of, safeguarding in theory and practice.

Safeguarding Committee: Responsible at diocesan level for ensuring the developing and implementation of policies and procedures including the provision of training and the safe recruitment of volunteers/staff.

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Diocesan Designated Person: Responsible for managing the response to allegations of abuse and for liaising with the statutory authorities.

Diocesan Advisory Panel: Advises the Bishop on the management of cases.

Bishop: Has overall responsibility for ensuring that the relevant civil and church guidelines, policies and procedures are implemented.

Civil Authorities: Refers to the PSNI who are responsible for investigating allegations of abuse and the DHSSPS who have responsibility for the protection and welfare of children.

(1) Recognising (2) Responding and (3) Reporting**(1) Recognising Abuse**

Types of Abuse

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Bullying

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs likely to result in significant harm.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation and lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive.

Indicators of Neglect

Child neglect should be suspected in cases of:

- Abandonment or desertion.
- Children persistently being left alone without adequate care and supervision.
- Malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding.
- Lack of warmth or adequate clothing.
- Inattention to basic hygiene.
- Exploited, overworked.
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age.
- Persistent failure to attend school.
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also to emotional deprivation.
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical problems.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.

This may include: hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behavior.

Indicators of Physical Abuse

Unsatisfactory explanations, varying explanations, frequency and clustering for the following events are high indices for concern regarding physical abuse:

- bruises, fractures, swollen joints;
- burns/scalds;
- abrasions/lacerations;
- hemorrhages (retinal, subdural);
- damage to body organs;
- poisonings – repeated (prescribed drugs, alcohol);
- failure to thrive;
- coma/unconsciousness/death.

There are many different forms of physical abuse, but skin, mouth and bone injuries are the most common.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.

Examples of sexual abuse may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways; sexual exploitation when a child is involved in the exhibition, modeling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording; inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- Overly affectionate behaviours
- Injuries to anal/genital area, STDs, pregnancy
- Sexualised drawings or play
- Having unexplained sums of money
- Changes in usual demeanour
- Depression, self-mutilation, running away
- Fear of changing clothes in public
- Regressed behaviour patterns, such as thumb sucking, recourse to old teddy bears etc.
- Promiscuity, provocative behaviours/acts
- Using sexualised language inappropriate to age

These indicators merit further consideration but it **should be noted that in itself, none of these is proof of sexual abuse and may have another cause.**

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.

Examples of emotional abuse may involve the imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming; conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on the child's behaviours or actions; emotional unavailability by the child's parent/carer; unresponsiveness, inconsistent, or inappropriate expectations of the child; premature imposition of responsibility on the child; unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control the child in a certain way; under or over protection of the child; failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for the child's cognitive and emotional development; use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures; exposure to domestic violence.

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse refers to the habitual verbal harassment of a child by disparagement, criticism, threat and ridicule, and verbal and non-verbal means of rejection and withdrawal are substituted for love.

Emotional abuse occurs when adults responsible for taking care of children are unable to be aware of and meet their children's emotional and development needs.

Bullying

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

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

Bullying is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools.

The main types of bullying are:

- emotional – isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of peer group excluding being unfriendly
- physical – hitting, kicking, theft
- racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- disablist – discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behavior arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others
- homophobic – commenting negatively and/or behaving negatively as a consequence of another's same sex sexual orientation
- cyber bullying – via mobile phones, email, websites or social networking sites
- bullying by adults – abuse of power by an adult

Dromore Diocese Bullying Policy

Childline Freephone 0800 1111

What is bullying?

Bullying is any form of aggressive behaviour, hurtful behaviour, which is persistent and unprovoked. It involves the abuse of power. It may take various forms including physical, verbal, non-verbal, emotional and/or cyber bullying.

Examples of Physical Bullying

- Hitting
- Punching
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Attacking
- Nipping

Examples of Verbal Bullying

- Name calling
- Shouting abuse
- Mocking
- Taunting
- Teasing

Examples of Non-Verbal Bullying

- Finger signs
- Writing nasty things

- Harassing phone/text messages

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Examples of Emotional Bullying

- Ignoring
- Excluding
- Not picking someone for a team game
- Talking behind someone's back

Examples of Cyber Bullying

- Unwelcome text messages or Facebook comments
- Picture/video clip bullying via cameras/computers
- Phone call/text bullying via mobile phones/ computers

Bullying – What to look for

There is no fool proof way of knowing that a child is being bullied. Physical injuries are rare.

Trust your instincts, as you will know when a child is happy or unhappy. A child may indicate by the following signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied.

Children may

- Be unwilling to attend Church activities
- Become withdrawn
- Have unexplained bruising, scratches or marks
- Refuse to say what is wrong
- Appear frightened to speak
- Be frightened of going to school
- Underachieve in school
- Become distressed/ stop eating

- Give improbable excuses to explain any of the above

However it should be noted that the above may be symptoms of other issues and may not necessarily indicate bullying.

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What should parents do if they are worried about their child?

- Discuss the situation with your child
- Listen carefully
- Stay calm
- Show concern
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Encourage the child to tell the leader of the church group

Note what your child has said and write down

- What happened
- What was said and done
- Who else saw it
- When it happened and where
- How it affected your child at the time or later.

Parents and volunteers should make contact with the leader and the matter should be investigated and resolved.

The key message to our children is that they are all special and that no one is allowed to hurt them. Emphasise that each child has feelings and has a right to feel safe and to stay safe while involved in Church activities.

Anti-bullying posters are available from the Dromore Diocesan Child Safeguarding Office, 68 North Street, Lurgan. BT67 9AH

(2) Responding to Concerns

- Record and date all observations of worrying marks/behaviour.
- You have a supportive not an investigative role.
- Judgment about abuse must be left to the professionals.

(3) Reporting a Concern

If you are concerned that a child or young person you know is at risk, or you wish to raise a matter from the past, you are welcome to contact any of the following:

Dromore Designated Person: Patricia Carville – 07789917741

NSPCC Helpline – 0808 800 5000

N.I. Childline – 0800 1111

Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Access Service – 0800 783 7745

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Access Service – 0300 1000 300

The Role of the Diocesan Designated Person

The Designated Person will

- Provide staff, clergy, volunteers, parents and children with advice, guidance and assistance regarding a safeguarding issue
- Share with the statutory authorities any safeguarding concerns
- Be the link person between the diocese and statutory authorities
- Gather information regarding concerns, suspicions, allegations
- Seek advice and guidance from Social Services and PSNI and make a referral if necessary
- Record relevant factual information
- Report back to the referrer basic details of what has happened

The Seven Safeguarding Standards

Why Standards?

The intention of these Safeguarding Standards is to provide a practical mechanism by which everyone in the Church in Ireland can reach a uniform standard of best practice in safeguarding.

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.

Church Standards

- 1. A written Child Protection Policy**
- 2. Written procedures for responding to allegations, suspicions and concerns**
- 3. Policies and practices to prevent harm to children**
- 4. Training and education for Church personnel**
- 5. Clear process to communicate the Church's child safeguarding policy and procedures**
- 6. Access to advice and support for victims and perpetrators**
- 7. A plan to implement and monitor policies and procedures**

Standard 1

All Church organisations that work with children must have a written Child Protection Policy which:

- states that the Church is committed to keeping children safe

- makes clear to everyone that children must be protected
- helps to create a safe and positive environment for children
- shows that the Church is taking its duty of care seriously

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Standard 2

Church organisations must have a written procedure on how to respond to allegations and suspicions that:

- gives clear guidance on ensuring a prompt response to allegations, suspicions, and concerns about a child's safety or welfare
- states all concerns are to be reported promptly to the civil authorities
- highlights the guiding principle that safety of the child is always the most important consideration

Standard 3

Church organisations must develop a culture of safety that minimizes the risk of children and young people being abused by putting in place:

- Safe recruitment and vetting procedures
- Appropriate Codes of Behaviour for adults/children
- Safe activities for children
- Adequate supervision ratios of adults to children
- Parental Consent for participating
- Safe access to IT equipment
- Annual audit of practice against the Seven Standards

Standard 4

All Church personnel involved in any way with children must attend relevant training to:

- develop and maintain the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to keep children safe
- be aware of child protection issues
- know that everyone has a role to play in child protection and safeguarding

Standard 5

Communicating the Church's Safeguarding message in our own area of parish work can be through:

- publishing safeguarding policies, procedures and other relevant information in parish bulletins
- Church notice boards
- speaking directly to congregations at end of Masses
- publishing audit outcomes
- leaflets, posters and booklets

Standard 6

Complainant Support – those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care and counselling to rebuild their lives.

Respondent Support – those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing through supervision, pastoral care and counselling.

Personnel Support – Church personnel with special responsibilities for keeping children safe should have access to specialist advice, support and information on child protection through contact with national/local child protection/welfare agencies.

Standard 7

Each Church organisation must develop 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 Church organisations. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening

consistently.

Practicalities

- 1.** Recruitment and Training
- 2.** Code of Practice
- 3.** Supervision ratios
- 4.** Codes of Behaviour
- 5.** Trips away from home

Safeguarding: Practical Aspects ...

1. Procedures for Safe Recruitment & Selection for volunteers who require vetting

The following steps are necessary to ensure good practice:

Defining the role - this involves thinking through exactly what you consider the role of a new volunteer to be, and what skills will be required for them to perform effectively.

Application Form - this should be supplied together with appropriate information of what is expected of the volunteer i.e. clear role/job description and a Code of Conduct.

References - two referees should be obtained from people who are not family members. References must be taken up in writing and maybe followed up orally if further clarification is necessary.

Interviews - the group leader and/or the Parish Priest should meet the person. This is also the opportunity to explain the Child Safeguarding Policy and ensure that the person has the ability and commitment required to put the policy into practice.

Declaration - all volunteers will be asked to declare any past criminal convictions, and cases pending against them, or any investigation of a complaint that is unresolved. The Registered Person holds this information confidentially.

Identification - the volunteer will complete the Catholic Church Identity Verification Form providing the appropriate original identity documents as required for the Access N.I. check. The Deanery Representative will confirm the identity of the person.

Access N. I. - the volunteer will complete the 'Access N.I. Form' to enable the Registered Person to obtain the background criminal record.

Letter of Appointment – to be forwarded to the volunteer on the satisfactory completion of the process.

Agreement - the volunteer should agree in writing to adhere to the Diocesan Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and to attend an information session raising awareness of Child Safeguarding issues. This will provide individuals with knowledge and skills and so increase their confidence to perform their role.

2. Code of Practice

Describes the practices to be followed in order to carry out the intentions and requirements of your policy to help keep your organisation and its members safe.

Basic Procedures:

In our activities we will work to have the following in place:

- * Signed parental consent for each person
- * Appropriate supervision ratios of adults to young people while maintaining the practice of ensuring that no young person is left alone with an adult. This will apply to both parish based activities or away trips.
- * A duty roster of leaders to ensure adequate supervision of young people at all times.
- * A Code of Behaviour for all adult leaders and young people.
- * Adequate record keeping processes including
 - Participant Forms
 - Incident/Accident Report forms
 - Volunteer Application forms
 - Declaration Forms for all adult leaders
 - Medical information and treatment permission as appropriate for all young people
 - Dietary requirements
 - Programme /Attendance records

- Training Records

- * Contact information for parents/guardians
- * Procedures for recruitment and overseeing adult leaders working with young people

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- * A clearly communicated Accident/Emergency plan
- * Any buildings being used are safe and meet required safety standards
- * For away trips a pre-check on accommodation and transport arrangements
- * Procedures concerning photography ensuring parental consent is received prior to photograph being taken and also protecting the identity of the child in the event of the photographs being taken for programme purposes
- * Information session for all young people and their parents prior to trips away from home

Parental Responsibility

In law the natural mother has parental responsibility. The natural father gains parental responsibility:

- * If he is married to the mother at the time of birth
- * If he subsequently marries her
- * Through a formal written agreement with the mother witnessed by a solicitor
- * Through being granted a Parental Responsibility Order
- * From April 2002, by joint registration of the birth

In cases where a child has been adopted or has been placed in the care of Social Services then the adoptive parents or Social Services have responsibility.

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Safeguarding: Practical Aspects ...

3. Appropriate supervision ratios:

- Think about how many adults are needed to supervise the activity
- Recommended ratio of adults to children
- Adults who are not yet vetted , also need to be supervised

Supervision of children

Having clearly defined supervision arrangements minimises accidents occurring and also protects children from intentional harm. When planning activities for children and young people, the Diocese of Dromore advises the following supervision ratios in line with NBSCCC recommendations.

Children under 8 years

- 0 to 2 years = one adult supervisor for every 3 children
- 2 to 3 years = one adult supervisor for every 4 children
- 3 to 7 years = one adult supervisor for every 8 children (6 children for outdoor activity, 4 for pilgrimages / residential)

It is good practice that there should be at least two adults present at all times

8 years and over

- Two adult supervisors for every 20 children (15 children for outdoor activity).

- There should be one additional adult supervisor for every extra 10 children.
- For residential and pilgrimages this ratio is to be decreased to one adult for every 5 children. This is to allow for adequate free time for all leaders.

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Safeguarding: Practical Aspects ...

4. Codes of Behaviour:

A Code of Behaviour is a clear and concise guide to what is and is not acceptable behavior and practice when working with children. It is an essential element of any child safeguarding policy. When implemented properly, a code of behavior should reduce/limit the risk of child abuse recurring.

Code of Behaviour for Adults, Staff and Volunteers

Child Safeguarding is regarded as central to the wellbeing of children and young people as they play their part in the life of the Catholic Church, within which 'Best Practice' promotes an ethos and provides a set of practical policies and procedures to support their development in ways which will promote their security, confidence and independence.

It is necessary that the following Code of Behaviour be applied as a minimum standard in order to support the Diocesan Policy and Procedures in the area of the protection of children and young people.

In relation to children and young people, volunteers and church personnel:

- will treat these individuals and each other with courtesy, dignity and respect.

- will take care to treat each individual with equal respect, avoiding all favouritism.
- will always engage with children and young people in an open manner.
- will not spend a disproportionate amount of time with any particular individual or group of individuals.

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- will not use physical punishment under any circumstances.
- will not verbally abuse any individual.
- will not engage in, or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying or abusive.
- will avoid inappropriate language and/or sexually suggestive comments, including telling jokes of a sexual nature, either towards these individuals or among themselves.
- will use age-appropriate language, media materials and activities and never any sexually explicit or pornographic material.
- will develop appropriate guidelines in relation to the use of computers, videos, the Internet, cameras and camera phones.
- will ensure an appropriate and adequate ratio of adults to children and young people.
- will avoid being alone with an individual e.g. in the context of travel, meetings, home visits, remaining in Churches or parish property, where two adults should be present.
- will maintain adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for males and females.
- will not give alcohol, tobacco, drugs or other illegal substances to individuals under any circumstances.

- will not consume alcohol or tobacco while having responsibility for, or in the presence of, those in their care.
- will not use drugs or other illegal substances under any circumstances.
- will respect their physical integrity of children and young people at all times.

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- will not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind – including tough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling)
- will respect children’s/young people’s right to privacy at all times.
- will always act with particular care regarding privacy in locations such as toilets, changing areas etc.
- will not perform tasks of a personal nature for individuals while they are in changing areas (e.g. in the locker room).
- will seek permission from parents / guardians for the taking / use of photographs, the generating of computer images and the making / showing of video recordings of events.
- will not give their personal details to individuals and only the named leader will hold personal details of individuals.
- will only contact children/young people via their parents / guardians.
- will carry out tasks of a personal nature (and only in the presence of another vetted person) ...
 - *for very young children or children with disabilities
 - *with the full understanding and consent of parents
 - *in an emergency with parents/guardians being fully informed
 - *all tasks of a personal nature are to be undertaken with the utmost discretion
- touching should ...

- *be in response to the need of the child and not the adult
- *be with the child or young person's permission and resistance from the child or young person should be respected
- *avoid breasts, buttocks and groin
- *be open and not secretive
- *be governed by the age and development stage of the child or young person
- *do not hit or strike

Code of Behaviour for Children and Young People involved in Church liturgies and activities

- Respect yourself. Be mannerly. Take care of your own safety. Do not use cigarettes, alcohol or drugs. Always do your best in any activity and always choose to do “the right thing”.
- Respect others. Never bully, exclude or engage in name calling against others. Do not use foul or abusive language. Remember that other people have feelings too so do not hurt them. Never use violence against another.
- Respect the property of others. Do not take things without asking. Take care of equipment and the building. Put litter in the bins.
- If anyone is harming or trying to harm you, tell an adult immediately.

Safeguarding: Practical Aspects ...

5. Procedure for Trips away from Home

Consider:

- Involvement of parents/guardians
- Age range and ability level of the children involved
- Number of adult supervisors required
- Anticipate and assess risks
- Develop a strategy to deal with risks

Issues Specific To Trips Away From Home

Outdoor Pursuits ...

- * Qualifications
- * Insurance
- * Emergency procedures
- * Safety of equipment
- * Water based activities
- * Proper ratio

Travelling abroad ...

- * Information sharing
- * Insurance
- * Medical requirements
- * Dietary requirements

Cross-Cultural ...

- * Programme planning
- * Venue
- * Information sharing
- * Training

Host Families ...

- * Exchange of information
- * Specific requirements
- * Child protection concerns
- * Police record check

- * Travel
- * Cultural issues
- * Activities
- * Seek advice

* References