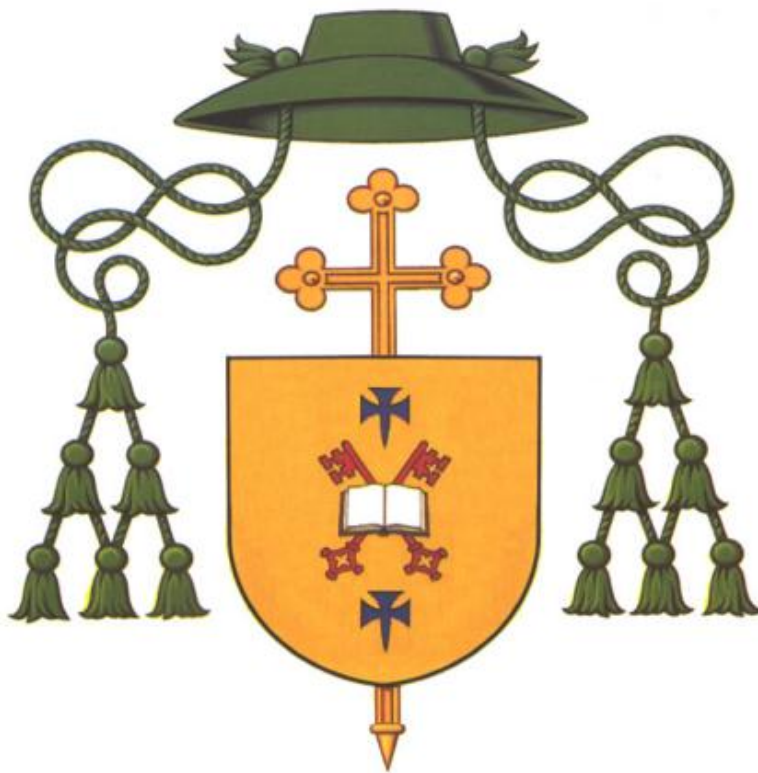


DIOCESE OF DROMORE

KEEPING ADULTS AND CHILDREN SAFE



INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR STAFF, CLERGY, RELIGIOUS & VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING PEOPLE DURING DIOCESAN & PARISH PILGRIMAGES

MARCH 2026

What is a Pilgrimage?

A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey to a holy site of religious significance, usually associated with Our Lady, the Saints or important events.

It is more than just a holiday or historical tour; rather it is an intentional Act of Faith, the intention being to deepen one's relationship with God while experiencing on a personal level the Divine. A pilgrimage is an opportunity to deepen one's spiritual life, renew our commitment to God by the experience, enabling us to transform our inner lives.

Safeguarding

Pilgrimages are made up of groups from diverse backgrounds and ages therefore, it is important to ensure, not just the spiritual wellbeing of people, but the psychological, physical and emotional safety of everyone attending all diocesan/parish lead activities. It is important that leaders/volunteers are mindful of this and that the pilgrim knows who s/he can turn to for help in these situations.

The guidance that follows has been developed to assist leaders in their safeguarding roles.

All staff, clergy, religious and volunteers supporting Diocesan/Parish pilgrimages must have completed the Safeguarding vetting procedure. On appointment to your role, leaders will have been asked to sign a Safeguarding Agreement, attend Safeguarding Training and adhere to the Diocesan Code of Behaviour.

This guide addresses the safeguarding needs of children and vulnerable adults.

All personnel involved with pilgrimages must recognise that abuse can occur and that all suspected or confirmed abuse must be reported.

In normal circumstances pilgrims should know that information about them is managed appropriately and everyone involved in assisting with Diocesan/Parish Pilgrimages respects and protects confidentiality. However, when Safeguarding concerns arise, pilgrimage personnel are duty bound to

report and share that information with the appointed pilgrimage Safeguarding Person.

Definition of a Vulnerable Adult

A vulnerable adult is generally defined as an adult who, due to age illness, disability or circumstances, is unable to protect themselves from or report instances of harm or exploitation.

Definition of a Child at Risk

A child at risk is anyone under the age of 18 years, who is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, or other forms of harm. This includes situations where a child's physical, emotional or psychological well-being is threatened and where their basic needs are not met.

A child may also be considered at risk if they are exposed to dangers that lack adequate supervision, or their parents or caregivers are unable or unwilling to meet their needs.

Categories / Types of Abuse

Adults

Physical
Emotional, Psychological
Financial
Neglect or Self-Neglect
Acts of Omission
Sexual
Discriminatory
Institutional / Organisational
Online / social media

Children

Physical
Emotional
Sexual
Neglect
Exploitation
Online

The statement below helps us understand the different types of abuse and the need for our vigilance when safeguarding all pilgrims.

Abuse can be the physical, psychological, emotional, financial, or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a child or adult by another person. It can be a single act or repeated over a period of time. It may be one form of abuse or multiple forms. The lack of action towards someone in need can also be a form of abuse.

Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetrated by a person or persons, in breach of that trust. Abuse can be perpetrated by those who have influence over the life of a dependant, whether they be formal or informal carers, staff, religious, clergy, volunteers, family members or others. Abuse can also occur outside such a relationship and in different settings.

During pilgrimages, pilgrims may need our help to access and experience their Faith. Equally we hold the responsibility for their care and protection. Therefore, being alert and aware to potential harm is an essential part of our role.

The table overleaf provides examples and indicators regarding the different types of abuse; the list is not exhaustive. However, in the event you have concerns always consult the appointed Pilgrimage Safeguarding Person.

Types of Abuse	Examples/possible indicators
<p>Physical Hitting, slapping, suffocating, burning, scalding, poisoning Inappropriate use of medication Inappropriate use of restraint</p>	<p>Unexplained injuries fractures/ bruises/cuts/ burns. In pain. Appearing frightened/avoiding a particular person; asking not to be hurt.</p>
<p>Sexual Inappropriate touching Inappropriate sexual games innuendos Indecent exposure Showing pornography Taking inappropriate photographs/videos Digital exploitation interaction or exchange of sexual images occurring online or in a social media context</p>	<p>Not wanting to be touched Trauma to genitals, breast, rectum, thighs, buttocks, bite marks. Genital bleeding, itching or pain Sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy Changes in appearance behaviours sleep/incontinence/aggression/eating patterns/unusual, sexualised behaviour/ anxiety/self-harm/suicidal ideation</p>
<p>Emotional/Psychological Verbal abuse Humiliation Harassment Intimidation bullying Threatening insulting behaviour Exclusion/ignoring Shame</p>	<p>Being withdrawn Low self-esteem, tearfulness, self-abuse or self-destructive behaviour. Lack of concentration focus Unable to do things previously able to do Showing compulsive behaviour Too eager to please</p>
<p>Financial/Material Misusing or stealing property, money/ benefits or possessions Controlling or withholding access to money or possessions Pressure about wills property or inheritance</p>	<p>Lack of control over personal funds or bank accounts. Misappropriation of money, valuables or property. Lack of records or records incomplete regarding spending. Changes to wills; refusal to spend money; insufficient money for day-to-day expenses.</p>
<p>Institutional Mistreatment of people brought about by poor or inadequate care or support or systemic poor practices that affect a whole care setting. Inappropriate confinement/restraint Inappropriate use of rules custom and practice</p>	<p>High staff turnover, poor- quality staff training supervision and management, low staff morale. Poor record keeping and communication. No individual care plan No personal possessions or clothing. Repeated hospital admissions</p>

<p>Neglect Withdrawing not giving the appropriate and adequate care required. Lack of food or water Failure to access appropriate care Isolating Lack of heat light ventilation</p>	<p>Poor personal hygiene, dirty and dishevelled in appearance. Poor state of clothing; non-attendance at routine health appointments; socially isolated Being hungry thirsty Failing health, unmet medical needs</p>
<p>Discriminatory Unequal treatment, harassment or abuse of a person based on ethnic origin, age, disability, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, family status.</p>	<p>Being excluded inappropriately Refused access to services Critical or insulting remarks. Being made to dress, and treated differently to others Not receiving care and services as required</p>
<p>Coercive Control A pattern of behaviour used to make a person dependent in order to exploit them</p>	<p>Isolation, lack of independence, lack of control over choices</p>
<p>(Adapted from: Volunteer Now 2014 & Final Draft, HSE Adult Safeguarding Policy (2019))</p>	

Expected Behaviour & Conduct for Pilgrimage Staff, Religious & Volunteers

DO

- Remember your role and treat all pilgrims with dignity and respect. Be patient and listen- be aware of language or communication barriers. As far as possible promote independence and choice.
- Always maintain records of individuals' allowances and their expenditure.
- Consent for taking and sharing photographs or videos to be obtained as part of the pilgrimage group.
- Value each individual and adopt a person-centred approach.
- Should physical contact and intimate care be necessary, all intervention must be person centred, and part of the individual's agreed care plan. To be undertaken by the appropriate personnel.

DO NOT

- Forget your role as a support person to provide each pilgrim with a safe, enjoyable spiritual experience.
- Do not form exclusive manipulative, controlling or inappropriate relationships that create dependency (on the part of the pilgrim).
- Do not engage in gossip about pilgrims or their carers.
- Never accept gifts or money from pilgrims.
- Most important do not forget the essential and critical role you play in the life of pilgrims, which is to enable and enhance their spiritual experience, free from abuse, neglect or risk of harm.
- Do not ignore a concern; if you are worried speak directly to the Pilgrimage Safeguarding Person.

Reporting Process

Presenting Safeguarding Concern

All Staff, Clergy, Religious, & Volunteers
must report to

Pilgrimage Safeguarding Person

Recording Concerns

The Pilgrimage Safeguarding Person will record:

- Date location & time of incident / concern.
- Name of person raising concern.
- Name of vulnerable adult / child at risk
- Detail of the incident / concern – Observations, Disclosure, Indicators, Third party information, Worries.
- Record clear information.
- Record any actions taken.
- Ensure all records are secure and confidential.

Appendix 1

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

When working with children and/or vulnerable adults it is important for all personnel to:

- Treat all children/vulnerable adults with respect and dignity.
- Treat all children/vulnerable adults equally.
- Model positive, appropriate behaviour to all children/vulnerable adults we come into contact with.
- Be aware of the Church's child and adult safeguarding policies.
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour.
- Develop a culture of openness, honesty and safety.
- Develop a culture where children/vulnerable adults have permission to tell and to talk about any concerns or worries that they may have.
- Respect each child's/vulnerable adult's boundaries and support them to develop their own understanding and sense of their rights.
- Be aware of their responsibility for the safety of all children/vulnerable adults in their care.
- Work in open environments.
- Help children/vulnerable adults to know what they can do if they have a problem.

Adults/Volunteers must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children/vulnerable adults.
- Develop sexual relationships with children/vulnerable adults.
- Develop relationships with children/vulnerable adults that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in any way that may be abusive or may place a children/vulnerable adult at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Do things for a child/vulnerable adult of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
- Condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in any way that is intended to intimidate, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Engage in discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation or political views.
- Consume alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs while having responsibility for or in the presence of children/vulnerable adults.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Take children/vulnerable adults away or to your own home, especially where they will be alone with you.
- Involve children/vulnerable adults in one-to-one contact; activities should usually be supervised by **at least two adults** and should also include a gender mix where possible.
However, there may be circumstances where this may not be possible:
 - i. In a **reactive** situation, for example when a child/vulnerable adult requests a one-to-one meeting with you without warning.
 - ii. Where you have concern for the welfare and safety of the child or vulnerable adult.

Appendix 2

ROLE OF THE SAFEGUARDING PERSON

Each Pilgrimage must have a trained Safeguarding person appointed who is part of, and travels with, the pilgrimage. This person should ideally be in a safeguarding role in the diocese (Director of Safeguarding /Diocesan Designated Liaison Person/ Trainer, Member of the safeguarding Committee, Parish Rep etc). The Safeguarding Person must have appropriate vetting (Garda/Access NI) completed and also their Safeguarding Training. The Safeguarding person will act as a link person with the Director of the Pilgrimage and the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person. Safeguarding persons must be identified for the area of youths and adults who might be vulnerable. If one is covering both areas this must be clarified before the trip. Contact details for the named Safeguarding person must be included in the information booklet.

Their main role is:

- To be the point of contact for any safeguarding concerns raised during the pilgrimage.
- Liaise with the Pilgrimage Director / Director for Youth and share any safeguarding concerns.
- Seek advice from and report to the Diocesan Director/ Diocesan Designated Liaison Person.
- Support and assist the pilgrimage in all matters relating to safeguarding before, during and after the pilgrimage.
- Establish arrangements for contacting the police and reporting any incidents in destination countries with different legal contexts.
- The Safeguarding Person should ensure that they make themselves known to the group prior to leaving.
- If there is a Safeguarding concern during the pilgrimage the Safeguarding Person should report this to the Pilgrimage Director and clearly document this as soon as it is practical to do so.
- On return to the Diocese any Safeguarding Concerns should be reported to the Diocesan Director/DLP.