



Child Safeguarding and the Use of Technology

The NBSCCCI has created this document with the
support of the Diocese of Elphin Safeguarding Team.





Aims



Safe use of phones, email, messaging apps, and social media



Photos, Video and Livestreaming



Parish/Religious website and digital communications



Responding to concerns involving technology



Practical procedures and checklists



Why This Training Matters

A child's safety and dignity come first.

Technology brings benefits and risks.

Parishes & Religious communities must never compromise

1. A child's privacy
2. A child's right to be safe
3. A child's ability to participate without pressure.

Adults hold responsibility to create safe systems!



Core Principles

Safeguarding and Technology

- Best interests of the child are paramount
- Transparency and accountability
- No private or one-to-one contact with children.
- Parental awareness and consent
- Respect for privacy and dignity
- Clear professional boundaries



Technology is part of everyday safeguarding and parish administration. When we use it well, it strengthens communication, accountability, and the safety of everyone we serve.





Common Technologies in Parishes and Religious communities

- CCTV systems
- Livestreaming cameras
- Parish/Religious community websites & social media
- Email & digital communication
- Cloud storage
- Digital records





Risks & Vulnerabilities

- Capturing children or vulnerable adults without consent
- and or
- Misuse of images





Benefits

- Transparency in safeguarding
- Inclusion of housebound parishioners
- Communication and evangelisation





CCTV





What CCTV should be for

- Supporting safeguarding when used appropriately
- Protection of parish/Religious community property
- Safety of parishioners/congregants





Requirements

Transparency with clear signage at entrances to alert all to the presence of CCTV.



Photos, Video and Livestreaming





Photos, Video and Livestreaming

- **Written parental consent** is required for:
 - ❖ Photos or videos of children used online or in publications
- Consent records must be stored securely
- Livestream cameras should:
 - ❖ Focus on the sanctuary or wider congregation
 - ❖ Avoid close-ups of children

No images may be shared that could:

- Embarrass or endanger a child
- Reveal sensitive personal information



Parish/Religious Websites and Social Media





Parish/Religious Websites and Social Media

Protection of Children's Identity and Privacy

- Children must never be identified by full name on parish websites or social media.
- No personal details (school, address, contact information, schedules) relating to a child may be published.
- Care must be taken that background details in images or videos do not inadvertently identify a child.



Parish/Religious Websites and Social Media

Images, Video and Livestreaming

- Written parental consent is required before using photographs or videos of children online.
- Consent forms must specify how and where images may be used and must be securely stored.
- Livestreaming of liturgies or events should avoid close-ups of children, especially altar servers or choirs.
- Images must be respectful, appropriate and dignified at all times



Parish/Religious Websites and Social Media

Online Communication with Children

- Parish social media platforms must not facilitate private one-to-one communication with children.
- Direct messaging with children is not permitted; communication should be:
 - via parents/guardians, or
 - through group messages with parental visibility.
- Parish communications must be pastoral or organisational only.



Parish/Religious Websites and Social Media

Data Protection and Security

- Any child-related information collected through parish websites (e.g. forms, registrations) must comply with GDPR.
- Access to digital records must be restricted to authorised personnel only.
- Personal devices should not be used to store parish-related safeguarding data.



Parish/Religious Websites and Social Media

Governance and Oversight

- All parish websites and social media accounts must be formally authorised by the parish priest (or Church authority).
- A minimum of two adult administrators must manage each platform to ensure accountability and transparency.
- All administrators must have completed safeguarding training appropriate to their role.



Email and Digital Communication





Email and Digital communication

Use official parish or community email addresses for all ministry-related communication

- ✓ Direct messaging with children is not permitted; communication should be:
 - ✓ via parents/guardians, or
 - ✓ through group messages.

- ✓ Keep communication clear, respectful, and pastoral.



Cloud Storage and Digital Records





Cloud Storage and Digital Records

Digital records—whether safeguarding files, volunteer information, require the same level of care as traditional paper records.

When stored or shared through cloud services, the risks and responsibilities change shape, but the safeguarding principles remain constant:

- confidentiality,
- integrity,
- accountability,



Practical Procedures and Checklists

For checklists, check the NBSCCCI website at www.safeguarding.ie

Requirement	Tick as Appropriate
1. A completed and signed SG:04 Consent Form, including the media/webcam section for all children/young people taking part.	☐
2. Webcam / Church Broadcast notices clearly visible at all Church entrances and exits.	☐
3. CCTV signage clearly displayed.	☐
4. Consent forms reviewed regularly to ensure ongoing compliance with NBSCCCI requirements.	☐
5. The Priest explicitly refers to the webcam broadcast during the welcome (e.g., "welcome to those joining us online").	☐
6. Where a child or young person steps in at short notice and a signed SG:04 Consent Form is not available, verbal consent is obtained from the parent/guardian after they are informed of the broadcast. (<i>Exception only.</i>)	☐
7. A Data Protection Notice clearly displayed.	☐
8. Procedures are in place to ensure that the webcam is switched off immediately should an issue arise during the broadcast.	☐



Consent and Concerns





When Consent is needed

- Altar servers
- Choir members
- Readers
- Other children's groups

Consent Must Be

- Informed
- Specific
- Freely given
- Recorded
- Withdrawable



Responding to Online Safeguarding Concerns

- Any safeguarding concern arising online must be reported **immediately** to the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**.
- No individual should attempt to investigate online concerns themselves.
- Where an immediate risk to a child or another person exists, report **An Garda Síochána and/or Tusla** in line with Children First guidance.



Reference Guidance

S7. B Guidance on Conducting Ministry with Children Using Digital Media.

S7.A Guidance on Use of Technology

S7.D Guidance on Use of Photography

S7.E Guidance on Use of CCTV and Webcams

[Creating Safe Environments - National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland](#)



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