

## Franciscan Province of Ireland

### Child Safeguarding Statement

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the *Children First Act 2015* and is supported by *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* - National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, (NBSCCCI) and *Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*.

#### **Statement**

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All church personnel (including clergy, ordained and non-ordained, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children and young people through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

**Under the Child Care Act 1991, a child is someone under the age of 18 years who is not or has not been married.**

#### **Nature of Service**

The Franciscan Province of Ireland as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry with children and young people:

- Attendance by children and young people in church services usually, but not always, accompanied by their parents/carers and/or guardians.
- Participation by children and young people in various roles within churches and our communities including altar servers, choirs, Ministers of the Word, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist.
- Participation in youth groups/youth ministries.
- Participation in retreats, novenas and pilgrimage.

(Note this list is not exhaustive).

## Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

The Franciscan Province of Ireland endeavours to provide a welcoming, nurturing and safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

As outlined in the *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* and *Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017* we are committed to the following principles:

- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- We all have a role to play in safeguarding children, this includes creating safe environments for children, developing and maintaining a culture where children are heard, valued and protected, challenging poor practice and recognising and responding to child protection and welfare concerns.
- The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration. When making decisions and taking action the welfare of the child must be prioritised.
- Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and **involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives**

## Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in church activities in the Franciscan Province of Ireland and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse. See the '*Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*' and the safeguarding section on the Franciscan website for detailed procedures.

[www.franciscans.ie/safeguarding](http://www.franciscans.ie/safeguarding)

Harm as defined in the Children First Act 2015, means '*in relation to a child-*

a) *assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare,*

*or*

b) *sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise.*

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Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
<p>Risk of harm of a child/young person by church personnel.</p>	<p>Procedures for the recruitment and selection of church personnel to ensure their suitability to work directly/indirectly with children which includes Garda vetting.</p> <p>Code of behaviour for church personnel.</p> <p>A celebret will not be issued to any priest or deacon until Garda vetting is completed.</p> <p>Reporting Procedures in place.</p> <p>Procedures for dealing with the complainant and the respondent when a concern/allegation is made against church personnel, including a risk management plan.</p> <p>Training needs analysis and training strategy are in place to ensure that all church personnel have received the appropriate level of training to their role, responsibilities and the level of contact they have with children.</p> <p>Procedure for internet and social media safety.</p>
<p>Risk of harm to children/young people through peer abuse, including bullying.</p>	<p>Anti-bullying policy and procedure.</p> <p>A code of behaviour for children/young people is in place and implemented for all children's'/young people's activities.</p> <p>Code of behaviour for adults.</p> <p>Procedures for internet and social media safety.</p> <p>Complaints procedure.</p> <p>Anti-bullying policy.</p>

<p>Children/young people are not informed of the code of behaviour for adults and therefore not aware of appropriate boundaries</p>	<p>Code of behaviour for adults.</p> <p>Age appropriately, informing children and young people of safeguarding procedures and empowering them to report issues, concerns and worries.</p> <p>Communication and implementation procedure.</p>
<p>Allowing and/or maintaining an environment or culture that is harmful to children/young people.</p>	<p>Having a child-centred ethos as the basis of the code of behaviour.</p> <p>Whistle blowing procedures.</p> <p>Complaints procedure.</p>
<p>External groups who use church property could be a risk of harm to children/young people.</p>	<p>Procedures for external groups to use Franciscan church property.</p> <p>Licence agreement to be put in place.</p> <p>Reporting procedure.</p>
<p>Risk of harm to children from adults visiting and/or attending church/parish functions.</p>	<p>Ensuring appropriate supervision ratios are in place, depending on the needs, age of the children and activity involved in</p> <p>Ensuring appropriate codes of behaviour are in place for children/young people</p> <p>Implementing the safeguarding procedures.</p> <p>Recruitment and selection procedures</p>
<p>Risk of harm to a child/young people from church personnel or other adults during activities or trips away from home.</p>	<p>Code of behaviour for adults, specific to the trip is in place.</p> <p>Specific reference to adult to child ratios and supervision levels.</p> <p>Risk assessment and communication with personnel in the activity venue/residential centre.</p> <p>Code of behaviour for children/young people is in place.</p>

	<p>Information provision/meeting for parents in advance of trip.</p> <p>Consent and emergency contact details obtained for all children/young people.</p> <p>Implementation of safeguarding procedures with children/young people.</p>
Risk of harm through the misuse of digital media (photography, video and social media)	Procedures for internet and social media safety.
Church personnel fail to appropriately report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge	<p>Reporting Procedures in place.</p> <p>Training-needs analysis and training strategy are in place to ensure that all church personnel have received the appropriate level of training to their role, responsibilities and the level of contact they have with children.</p> <p>Disciplinary Procedure.</p>
Church personnel fail to take action during and following any investigation into allegations of abuse made against clerics and religious to ensure children/young people are protected from harm.	<p>Reporting procedures in place.</p> <p>Appointment of safeguarding personnel.</p> <p>Procedures for dealing with the complainant and the respondent when a concern/allegation is made against church personnel, including a risk management plan.</p> <p>Disciplinary Procedure.</p>
Church personnel fail to support those who are victims of abuse.	<p>Reporting procedures in place.</p> <p>Appointment of safeguarding personnel.</p> <p>Recording and storage of information procedure.</p> <p>Confidentiality statement.</p> <p>Appropriate support and pastoral care is offered to the complainant.</p>

Church personnel fail to understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding children/young people.	Training-needs analysis and training strategy are in place to ensure that all church personnel have received the appropriate level of training to their role, responsibilities and the level of contact they have with children/young people.
Children/young people and their parents/carers and/or guardians do not understand the church's policy, procedures and structure to safeguard children.	Information, advice and support are provided to children/young people and their parents/carers and/or guardians on keeping children safe.  Communication procedure is in place to ensure that safeguarding procedures are implemented.
Safeguarding procedures fail to be implemented.	Local biannual safeguarding audits are conducted.  Annual safeguarding report is produced by the Safeguarding Office.  A 3-year child safeguarding strategy is in place.  The Franciscan Order is audited by the NBSCCCI in relation to the seven safeguarding standards.
The church authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons.	Procedure for the appointment of a relevant person is in place.  Procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons is in place.
Mandated persons are not aware of their safeguarding role and responsibility.	Information leaflet, information sessions and training provided to all mandated persons.  Training strategy.

### Community Specific Risk Assessment

Each individual religious community must document any additional safeguarding risks and the procedures in place to minimise these risks. A similar format as above should be used and personnel in the safeguarding office named below are available to support this process.

## Procedures

All procedures outlined in the risk assessment above are available at [www.franciscans.ie](http://www.franciscans.ie). The following procedures are specified procedures under the Children First Act 2015 and are also referenced above:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against church personnel of a child availing of our service.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of church personnel to work with children.
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla, Child and Family Agency.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

## Implementation

The Franciscan Province of Ireland is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* and *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*.

This child safeguarding statement and our practice supports our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

Signed: Aidan McGrath ofm

Fr. Aidan McGrath, Minister Provincial.

Date: 12 March 2020.



For any queries relating to this statement please contact the **Relevant Person** under the Children First Act 2015: **Ms. Mary Tallon, Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**.

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**Review date: January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021**