



# SAFE GUARDING

Best Practice in Safeguarding and Protecting  
Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults  
in the Archdiocese of Armagh

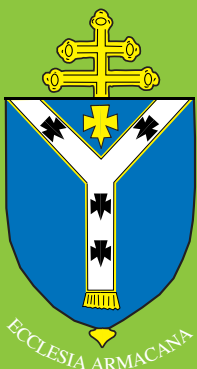
## Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

This policy has been approved by the Armagh Diocesan Safeguarding Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2012 and is based on the "Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland" published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC).

This document was ratified by Cardinal Sean Brady and Bishop Gerard Clifford on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

**Jesus said:** "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

(Matt 18:3)



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## Foreword +Seán Cardinal Brady

*Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" Mk 10:14*



The Archdiocese of Armagh upholds the right of everyone to be treated with dignity and respect and to be safeguarded from harm and the risk of harm. We are even more aware of this responsibility when we deal with children, young people and vulnerable members of society. The Archdiocese has committed itself to a continuous process of updating policies and procedures to ensure, as far as possible, that an environment exists where everyone is valued and safe.

In recent years, safeguarding awareness has been vastly improved throughout the Archdiocese. However, I recognise that this is a continuously evolving area and we all must strive together, clergy and laity, to ensure that our policies and procedures inform and support the very important work that is being taken forward by large numbers of dedicated people across the Archdiocese in the field of safeguarding. The tremendous contribution being made by individual people at parish level cannot be over-estimated.

Within parishes, we have many volunteers who provide training. This is a very challenging role that helps to enhance awareness of safeguarding responsibilities and strengthens safeguards for everyone. Others facilitate vetting of those who wish to work or volunteer with children, young people or vulnerable members of our parishes. All of this very important work is carried out in line with best practice and statutory policies and legislation both North and South.

I want to pay tribute and place on record my thanks to all those dedicated volunteers for their continuing resolve to ensure that the highest standard of help and care is provided for all. Through their endeavours, we are together helping children and young people realise their full potential and take their rightful place in society and strengthen safeguards for all members of our parishes, including those who are more vulnerable and have a right to live free from exploitation and abuse. I also want to commend the work of our Diocesan Safeguarding Committee and Diocesan Advisory Panel. Membership of these groups is drawn from willing volunteers, many from a professional background, who give freely of their time. I want to express my admiration and thanks for the dedication shown by such individuals who have supported the Archdiocese and myself over many years. I greatly value and appreciate the professional advice which they provide. This has been a great source of support for me personally.

As a Church, we deeply regret the fact that in the past we have sometimes failed, but we are determined to learn from the past. We need to value and properly esteem the dignity of all, but especially those who are more vulnerable and in need of our protection. I am confident that the measures that have been put in place will help achieve this, so that we can move forward, secure in the knowledge that the best interests of all are being supported and upheld.

*+ Seán Card. Brady*

**Archbishop of Armagh**

## Guiding Principles

- Safeguarding is everyone's business. The Archdiocese safeguarding policies and procedures apply to all Diocesan personnel but especially those who have opportunities for regular contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults have a fundamental right to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected from harm or the risk of harm. These basic rights are embedded in our Gospel values and within international and domestic laws;
- The rights of the child are paramount. Children and young people must be listened to and heard. Concerns and allegations, historical and current, must be taken seriously, swiftly reported, appropriately recorded and dealt with according to clear procedures and as required by law which is applicable within the jurisdiction North or South;
- Vulnerable adults have a right to expect to live a life free from exploitation and abuse and be protected from inhuman and degrading treatment. Concerns and allegations, historical and current, must be taken seriously, swiftly reported, appropriately recorded and dealt with according to clear procedures and as required by the law which is applicable within the jurisdiction North or South;
- Anyone who has suffered abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and be advised of the statutory organisations, both in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland, where they can report allegations of abuse. In addition, victims and survivors should be offered pastoral care to help rebuild their life;
- We should ensure that appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that all staff and volunteers for positions working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised in accordance with best practice guidelines and the legal and statutory provision of the jurisdiction in which they reside or work;
- Codes of conduct for adults and children are provided, setting out clear guidelines on what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. Guidance is provided on possible safety risks for children; proper supervision and appropriate use of information technology;
- Children and young people will be made aware of the importance of proper procedures and codes of conduct for adults as well as themselves in order to better manage their own safety;
- The Church's safeguarding message will be displayed, promoted and disseminated in all Churches and Church property within parishes;
- The Archdiocese's policy and procedures must be implemented across all Church organisations. All those within Church ministry have a special duty of care towards children, young people and vulnerable adults. A culture of collective responsibility is encouraged. Structures should be in place to monitor and review on-going effectiveness, implementation and accountability;



- Links should be established and maintained with other statutory, voluntary and community safeguarding agencies and organisations in order to better support personnel within the Church and help them avail of expertise and improve the effectiveness of policies and procedures;
- Groups wishing to use Church property/premises are required to complete the *Organisation/Club Audit Checklist* form and provide evidence of having appropriate liability insurance to the Parish Priest or Parish Administrator;
- The advice and guidance contained within this policy is based on the **“Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland”** ([www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie)) published in September 2008 by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland;
- This policy takes account of statutory policy both North and South – **“Cooperating to Safeguard Children: [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)”** (Northern Ireland) and **“Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children: [www.dcyia.ie](http://www.dcyia.ie)”** (Republic of Ireland);
- This is a living document and will be reviewed and amended as required, but at least every three years, to take account of any major changes including legislative or policy changes in safeguarding.

## Standard 1: Policy Statement

*Then people brought little children to him, for him to lay hands on them and pray. The disciples scolded them, but Jesus said, "Let the little children alone, and do not stop them from coming to me; for it is such as these that the Kingdom of heaven belongs." Then he laid his hands on them and went on his way. (Matt 19:13-15)*

The Archdiocese of Armagh recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring their safety and well-being. The Archdiocese values and encourages the participation of children, young people and vulnerable adults in all parish liturgies and in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

Above all, the Archdiocese recognises the need to protect all children and vulnerable members of society and aims to do this in a way that promotes their human dignity, integrity and worth as children of God.

The Archdiocese of Armagh recognises that while safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, all involved in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults have a special duty of care towards them. The Archdiocese has committed itself to have procedures in place which ensure that this ethos is put into effect.

This policy applies to all Diocesan personnel, but especially to those who have substantial unsupervised access or the opportunity for regular contact with children and other vulnerable groups or individuals. All church personnel are required to comply with this guidance.

**The most recent version of the Armagh Diocesan Policy and Procedures and supporting materials for Safeguarding can be found on the Diocesan website at [www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding](http://www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding)**

## Standard 2: How to respond to allegations and suspicions of abuse

*This is what God asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have a right to be free from abuse as well as a right to be listened to and heard. The Catholic Church is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and protection of all and takes all concerns, allegations, suspicions and disclosures of abuse<sup>1</sup> very seriously. To support this commitment, the Archdiocese of Armagh has identified safeguarding personnel<sup>2</sup> as outlined in this Standard. These personnel are committed to ensuring that the following procedures are adhered to when a concern, allegation, suspicion or disclosure, either current or historical, is made that indicates that a member of the Church staff (current or former) has:

- harmed or placed at risk of harm a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- committed a criminal offence against a child, young person or vulnerable adult; or
- behaved towards a child, young person or vulnerable adult inappropriately, indicating that they are unsuitable to work with these groups.

### **Procedures apply to all Diocesan and parish personnel and volunteers:**

This policy applies to all Diocesan and parish personnel and volunteers, but especially to those who have substantial unsupervised access or the opportunity for regular contact with children and other vulnerable groups or individuals. All Diocesan and parish personnel and volunteers are required to comply with this guidance. The guidance applies to all aspects of Parish and Diocesan ministry in the Church whether within a church building, engaged in community work, on pilgrimages, trips or holidays. It is the responsibility of everyone in the Archdiocese of Armagh to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are not left at risk of abuse. Church organisations have a duty to promote the safety, welfare and safeguarding of all children, young people or vulnerable adults. In the Archdiocese of Armagh, all concerns, allegations, suspicions and disclosures of abuse<sup>1</sup> are taken seriously, reported within the Church and, according to the requirements of the relevant jurisdiction, to the civil authorities either in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland or both.

The Reporting Flow Chart overleaf outlines reporting procedures where there are any safeguarding concerns at Parish or Diocesan level.

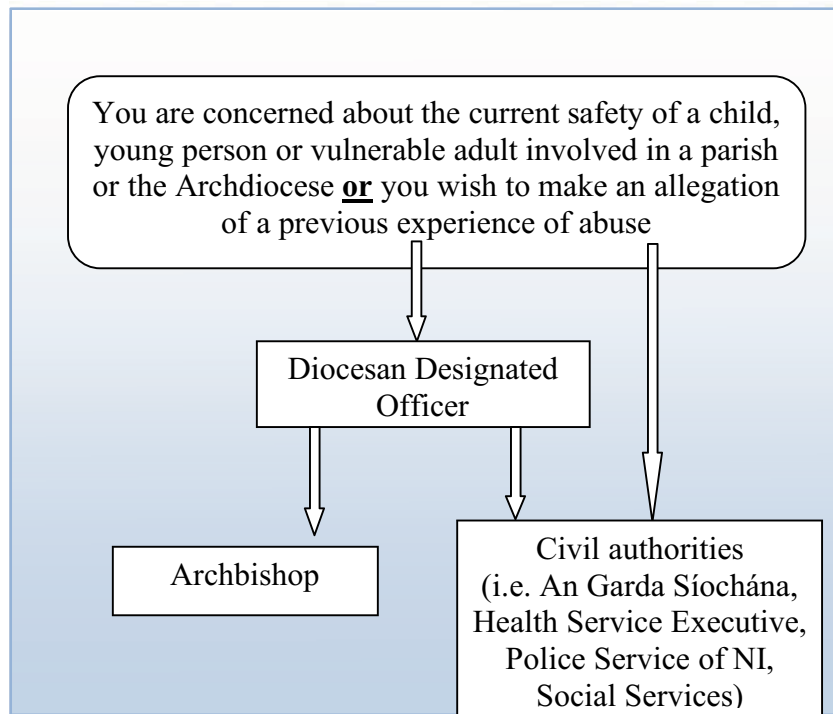
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<sup>1</sup> The definitions of abuse are outlined in Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> Contact information for the Diocesan Safeguarding Personnel is in Appendix 3 and also available on the Diocesan website [www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding](http://www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding).

**Reporting Procedure Flow Chart**

Preferred reporting procedure for  
Diocesan or Parish related disclosures or concerns



Please be aware that you always have the right to report any concerns or disclosures directly to the civil authorities who will make contact with the Diocesan Designated Officer and/or the Archbishop in due course. In such circumstances we would ask that you also contact the Diocesan Designated Officer at your earliest convenience.



## Reporting Procedures

If a concern arises about a child, young person or vulnerable adult or if a complaint is made about the behaviour of church personnel, the following reporting procedures<sup>3</sup> must be followed.

1. When a concern arises, the information is given **immediately** and directly to one of the Diocesan Designated Officers. If a Parish Safeguarding Representative receives a concern he/she must pass the information **immediately** to one of the Diocesan Designated Officers.
2. Details of the Diocesan Designated Officers are shown below. **Please note, these contact numbers are exclusively for reporting concerns or allegations in relation to safeguarding.**

### Pat McGlew

Armagh Diocesan Safeguarding Office  
Archdiocese of Armagh  
Cathedral Road  
Armagh  
Co Armagh  
BT61 7QY

Tel: Office 028 3752 5592 (NI)  
Tel: Office 048 3752 5592 (ROI)  
Tel: Mobile 07841101687 (NI)  
Tel: Mobile 0044 7841101687 (ROI)

### Eleanor Kelly

Armagh Diocesan Safeguarding Office  
Archdiocese of Armagh  
Cathedral Road  
Armagh  
Co Armagh  
BT61 7QY

Tel: Office 028 3752 5592 (NI)  
Tel: Office 048 3752 5592 (ROI)  
Tel: Mobile 07584323138 (NI)  
Tel: Mobile 0044 7584323138 (ROI)

3. The Diocesan Designated Officers will inform the civil authorities<sup>4</sup> and the Archbishop **without delay**. Contact information for the civil authorities can be found in Appendix 4.
4. In the event that the Diocesan Designated Officers are not available, or the circumstances of the complaint indicate that this action is not appropriate, the Parish Safeguarding Representative or other individual with a concern or allegation **must** contact **immediately** the civil authorities directly. In this eventuality, one of the Diocesan Designated Officers should be informed of the complaint as soon as practicable.
5. **The guiding principle is that the safety of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is always the most important consideration.** Any safeguarding allegation or concern should be treated seriously. For this reason, it is very important that anyone raising a concern strictly adheres to the Diocesan Reporting Procedure, using the Diocesan Child Protection Recording Form<sup>5</sup> to record the relevant information.

<sup>3</sup> The relevant contact information for reporting concerns can be found in Appendix 3 and on the Diocesan website.

<sup>4</sup> In Northern Ireland the relevant civil authorities are the PSNI and the Health and Social Care Trust. In the Republic of Ireland the relevant civil authorities are An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

<sup>5</sup> A copy of the recording form can be found in Resource 16 on page 89 of the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church* and is available on the diocesan website or in the additional forms accompanying this publication.

Particular care should be taken with regard to confidentiality and the sharing of information with appropriate people.

6. It is important to remember that the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be the paramount consideration in any investigation and such vulnerable individuals or groups should never be put at further risk of harm by delay or inaction. The Church has a responsibility and will pass on safeguarding concerns to the civil authorities even when it does not concern church personnel directly.

### Initial Contact Procedure

All those involved in dealing with a safeguarding allegation or suspicion, are required to record their conversations and actions. This includes the Diocesan Designated Officers and, if reporting on behalf of a complainant, the person who reported the abuse or concern to the Diocesan Designated Officer. Below is the action that should be taken on receipt of a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse.

**Remember - It is not your role to investigate!**

1. If you receive a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse, you must act **immediately** and refer the matter to one of your Diocesan Designated Officers as soon as possible. The Diocesan Designated Officer will refer the complaint<sup>6</sup> to the relevant Health and Social Care Trust/Health Service Executive/An Garda Síochána/PSNI and will also inform the Archbishop or Auxiliary Bishop.

**In cases of emergency, where a child, young person or vulnerable adult appears to be at immediate risk, an immediate report should be made** to the Health and Social Care Trust (NI) or the Health Service Executive (RoI) as well as the Diocesan Designated Officer. Where the Child Care Team (RoI) is not available, An Garda Síochána should be contacted to ensure **that under no circumstances is a child, young person or vulnerable adult left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention**. Consideration should, in all cases, also be given to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of potential evidence or forensic evidence. Contact details of relevant agencies are in Appendix 4.

2. Whenever a concern is raised and it is possible and practical, take notes during the conversation. Always ask permission to do this and explain the importance of recording all information. Where it is not appropriate to make notes at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards and in any case before the end of the day.
3. Explain to the child/person raising the concern what will happen next. Indicate who will be made aware of the information given by them. Leave contact details of the Diocesan Designated Officer in case the referrer needs to ask questions later.

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<sup>6</sup> It is a legal requirement in the Republic of Ireland to report any concerns to An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive (HSE). Within Northern Ireland, all safeguarding concerns must be reported to either the PSNI or the relevant Health and Social Care Trust.

4. Details of your conversations and actions should be recorded on the *Diocesan Child Protection Recording Form*<sup>7</sup>. This initial recording will form the first entry in a file of information about the case which will be retained securely by the relevant Diocesan Designated Officer in line with Church guidance. It should be signed and dated by you. An Additional Recording Page has been added to the end of this Form which would normally include:
- a. as much information as possible about the circumstances that led to the concern/allegation being raised and why the person is worried about the welfare and safety of the individual(s);
  - b. any explanation offered to account for the risk, injury or concern;
  - c. details of any action already taken about the incident/concern/allegation;
  - d. any views expressed by the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) or the individual or their carer(s) about the matter;
  - e. do not be selective. Include detail which, to you, may seem irrelevant. It may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation;
  - f. all original records, *including rough notes*, must be passed immediately to the relevant Diocesan Designated Officer. Any copies of records retained must be kept secure and confidential.

Not all persons raising a concern may wish to go through the process described herein. Nonetheless, information about the existence of a potential allegation **must** always be communicated to the Diocesan Designated Officer. **It is important not to discuss the incident/concern with anyone other than those detailed in these procedures.**

### **Giving children and other vulnerable people the confidence to speak out**

For many complex reasons children and other vulnerable individuals, who are abused, often hide their experience and do not tell even the adults they know and trust. One of the reasons may be that the child or the vulnerable person has experienced abuse in which someone has exercised control and power over them. Such a perpetrator may also have used threats to harm them or their family if they do tell, or in the case of children, manipulated the child to believe they are at fault in some way, or are the cause of the abuse or that they are complicit and should be ashamed. Different children respond to different experiences, in different ways, but many children do not speak out about being abused.

In order for our Diocese to promote a safe culture and environment, in all activities, we must be sure that children and the vulnerable know that they can speak out and that they will be listened to. It is important to remember that very young children, those with a disability or those whose first language is not English may need extra help to understand the same messages as others.

A positive approach to protecting children and other vulnerable individuals is to establish a good, open relationship with them, through talking about their activities, hopes and worries. Talking with and listening carefully is the best prevention. A safe relationship with children and other vulnerable individuals is one in which secrets are hard to keep; where someone who is being abused or who is worried about his/her behaviour, is able to tell someone that they trust. It is very important that contact details of Church

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<sup>7</sup> A copy of the recording form can be found in Resource 16 on page 89 of the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church* and is available on the diocesan website or in the additional forms accompanying this publication.

safeguarding personnel are made prominently available so that children and other vulnerable individuals can contact them if they have concerns.

Contact details of other organisations such as the NSPCC, ISPCC, Barnardos etc. should also be prominently displayed so children and other vulnerable individuals can contact these agencies if they have concerns.

### **Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse**

Children will occasionally tell an adult that they are being abused if they feel they can trust this person. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is that they are telling that person in the hope that he/she will act to stop the abuse happening, even if they ask the individual not to do anything with that information. Find an opportunity to explain that it is likely that this information will need to be shared with others and at the end of the discussion tell them what you plan to do next and with whom this information will be shared. If a child begins to tell you about abuse it is important that you:

#### **Do** ✓

- stay calm;
- listen carefully and take the child seriously;
- only ask questions for clarification if you are unclear what the child is saying;
- allow the child to continue at his/her own pace;
- reassure the child that, in disclosing the abuse, he/she has done the right thing;
- tell the child that he/she is not to blame for the abuse;
- assure him/her of help and support;
- report the child's disclosure to the leader-in-charge and the Diocesan Designated Officer immediately<sup>8</sup>.

As soon as possible, write down everything that you were told by the child, using his/her own words to describe the abuse<sup>9</sup>. Use the Diocesan Child Protection Recording Form to do this. Sign and date this record and pass it onto the Diocesan Designated Officer immediately.

#### **Do not X**

- dismiss the concerns;
- panic;
- probe for more information/ask other questions;
- 'promise not to tell anyone' or say 'you'll keep it a secret';
- make comments about the accused person;
- make assumptions or speculate;
- disclose details of the allegation to anyone else other than those stated in this document.

<sup>8</sup> In the absence of the Diocesan Designated Officer refer the complaint to the relevant statutory agency - Health and Social Care Trust/Health Service Executive/An Garda Síochána/PSNI.

<sup>9</sup> For guidance on recording see Initial Contact Procedure on page 10.

**The one thing you MUST NOT do is NOTHING – Lord Laming**

1. Listen      2. Record      3. Consult

**Remember: The person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional safeguarding agencies following a referral to them of the concerns.**

**Responding to an adult making an allegation**

Allegations of abuse may be received from adults as well as children. However, the circumstance of the two disclosures may differ. You may be told about many different situations, such as:

- abuse happening to them now – current abuse;
- abuse that happened to them some time ago – historical abuse;
- something they've been told by someone else whom they believe;
- seeing signs of abuse, such as physical injuries to a child;
- worrying behaviour that a person may have witnessed by an adult towards a child.

It is often very difficult for adults to talk about abuse, so it is important to make sure that you are patient, listen carefully and attentively, and create a safe environment in which they feel able to tell you as much as they can remember. This will help those people whose responsibility it is to investigate the incident(s) do so as thoroughly as possible.

***Where information is given in person, consider the following:***

- stay calm;
- listen carefully;
- take what is said seriously;
- reassure the person who is disclosing;
- do not ask intrusive or leading questions;
- allow the person to tell their story at their own pace;
- ensure that you have understood what has been said. Use their words, not yours;
- make no promise of secrecy, but listen carefully to what is being said;
- explain these procedures and the referral procedures to the person;
- offer to accompany the person to the Support Person<sup>10</sup>;
- make no comment about the alleged perpetrator;
- do not make assumptions nor speculate on the possible outcome;
- be aware that the person's ability to communicate the concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, nationality, fluency and if there is a speech or language impairment;
- adopt a compassionate, calm and reassuring listening style;
- do not allow your own feelings of shock, disgust or distress to show because it could discourage the person from continuing with their story;
- do not make any comments about your own feelings or belief or otherwise on what has been disclosed;

<sup>10</sup> The various Diocesan Safeguarding roles are outlined in Appendix 5.

- do not question the person beyond checking what has been said. It is the job of the Health and Social Care Trust/Health Service Executive/An Garda Síochána/PSNI to investigate;
- do not probe for details beyond what is freely given.

Listening in these situations means allowing the person to freely recall events without interruption. Some facts are only ever told once and this information must be fully and accurately recorded. This detail should be given directly to a professional from one of the Health and Social Care Trust/Health Service Executive/An Garda Síochána/PSNI to allow proper procedures to be observed and to avoid the distress of having to repeat the account given.

### **Anonymous allegations or concerns**

Anonymous complaints are to be treated carefully. Anxiety and fear may prevent some people from revealing their identity. It can be difficult to act on information within these procedures unless at some point the name of the person raising the concern/making an allegation is known. The person raising the concern should be informed that anonymity might restrict the ability of professionals to access information if a child is at risk or to intervene to protect a child. Openness should be encouraged as far as possible.

### **Listening to a person who admits abusing a child**

A person who admits an offence against a child or young person must always be told that *such information cannot be kept confidential*. If such an admission is made, even where the admission relates to something which happened a long time ago, the person to whom it is disclosed **must** refer the matter to the Diocesan Designated Officer as soon as possible. This must be done regardless of the length of time since the incident took place. The Diocesan Designated Officer will follow the procedures for referral to the Health and Social Care Trust/Health Service Executive/An Garda Síochána/PSNI. They will also inform the Archbishop.

### **Guidance on the Seal of Confession**

Within the Sacrament of Confession, practices need to be considered that ensure the safety of all those involved while providing the required privacy for the person receiving the sacrament. A priest must be clear about the status of any conversation relating to an allegation of abuse and make sure there is no misunderstanding about whether the seal of confession applies. Due to the obligations of the sacramental seal, no priest (currently or actively) exercising a function under child protection procedures will celebrate the Sacrament of Penance with any person involved in any way in a child abuse complaints procedure.

A paper on “*How to safeguard children in the sacrament of penance*” was distributed to all clergy ministering to the Archdiocese in 2009. Extracts from this paper have been included on the diocesan website and copies of the entire paper are available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

### **Guidance for a Complainant who is dissatisfied with the way in which the Church has dealt with a Concern**

Anyone dissatisfied with the way in which their concern/allegation has been dealt with by the Archdiocese should follow the procedures set out in Appendix 15 of this policy.





## Standard 3: Preventing harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults

*Jesus said, 'I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to keep them from the evil one'. (John 17:15)*

In order to prevent harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults, the Archdiocese has in place (a) recruitment and selection procedures for all personnel; (b) a code of behaviour for all those ministering to children (i.e. those under 18 years of age); and (c) recommendations for operating safe activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

### a) Recruitment and Selection

Appropriate recruitment and selection procedures help identify those suitable to fill a particular position. In recognition of this, and in order to comply with legislative requirements in both jurisdictions, the Archdiocese has introduced the recruitment procedures outlined below. All church personnel should undergo the required recruitment procedure for the jurisdiction in which they are resident and, if different, the jurisdiction in which they are working. Anyone unsure as to whether a person should undergo the recruitment procedure should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

**All church personnel including clergy, lay employees and volunteers, working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in parish and diocesan groups must undergo the Recruitment and Selection Procedure before taking up post, they should:**

- Receive a Role Description;
- Complete an Application Form (where necessary confirmation of qualifications should be sought);
- Attend for Interview;
- Supply the name of two references<sup>11</sup>;
- Complete a Declaration Form;
- Produce evidence to verify identification as outlined in the diocesan application pack;
- Complete an AccessNI/Garda Vetting Form; and
- Sign a staff/volunteer agreement to undergo training and adhere to the Diocesan Code of Conduct.

It is recommended that all staff and volunteers undergo an interview and complete a six month probationary period. The detail of the interview should reflect the level of responsibility required. Parishes and groups should assign two people to meet with new applicants to explore information included in their application. Resource 5 of the National Board for Safeguarding Children's Standards and Guidance Document<sup>12</sup> gives examples of child safeguarding questions that could be included in a formal or informal interview. Appendix 10 provides a checklist for safe recruitment and selection. Appendix 11 outlines procedures for the recruitment and selection of clergy including visiting and relief clergy

<sup>11</sup> While two references are required these can be from the Cardinal and Auxiliary Bishop in the case of Diocesan clergy. In the case of all visiting and relief clergy, their Diocesan Bishop or Provincial of their Order is required to supply written confirmation of their suitability for ministry with young people and vulnerable adults in the Archdiocese.

<sup>12</sup> Copies of the Standards and Guidance Document are available on <http://www.safeguarding.ie/downloads-1>



**In order to facilitate the Recruitment and Selection Procedures all parish/diocesan groups will need to have the following in place:**

- good cooperation between the priests of the parish and the Parish Safeguarding Representative(s);
- at least two Parish Safeguarding Representatives trained by the Diocesan Training Facilitators to carry out the recruitment role; and
- a secure processing and storage system within parish/diocesan premises. All record keeping must be data protection compliant and stored securely in a secure locked cabinet in the parish office.

Further guidance regarding the storage of identifying personal information can be found under 'record keeping guidance' on the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church website at [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie).

**The Diocese will support the area of Recruitment and Selection by:**

- providing appropriate training for all Parish Safeguarding Representatives and clergy;
- ensuring regular updated information and changes in legislation are given to all those involved in the Recruitment and Selection Procedure;
- offering ongoing advice to Parish Safeguarding Representatives; and
- having personnel in place who can assess the suitability of applicants who have a query in relation to their references or Access NI/Garda Vetting Form.

#### **b) Codes of Behaviour**

Codes of behaviour are provided to personnel by the Archdiocese of Armagh outlining clearly what is and what is not the standard of good practice expected from all adults when working or volunteering with children, young people and vulnerable adults in any liturgy, ministry or activity. These are in place to help Church organisations develop a culture of safety that minimises risk. Training is provided for all Parish Safeguarding Representatives and copies of the Diocesan codes of behaviour are distributed and explained to all adults working at parish level as well as being made available to parents and guardians.

The codes of behaviour are for use by parish groups and other Church related groups using parish premises. They should be given to staff/volunteers on completion of the Recruitment and Selection Procedure and to parish groups and others using parish premises. Lists are not exhaustive. It is important that:

- All children, young people and vulnerable adults participating in any Church activity are made aware of the standards of behavior expected of them. An anti-bullying environment is promoted and everyone, including children, are required to behave appropriately towards each other, see Appendices 7 and 16;
- Church personnel understand clearly the procedures for raising concerns or suspicions of unacceptable behaviour towards children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church organisation and comply with Diocesan safeguarding reporting procedures. This may be done confidentially if necessary;





- Unacceptable behaviour will be managed in a positive manner that encourages everyone to achieve self-control. It does not involve physical punishment of any kind, humiliation or degrading treatment;
- The Archdiocese provides guidance stating that discriminatory language or behavior directed at those of a different race, culture, age, gender, disability, religious persuasion, sexual orientation or political view is not acceptable; and
- Guidelines set out standards for the intimate/personal care of very young children or those with a disability including appropriate and inappropriate touch, see Appendix 9.

## General Code of Conduct

### Adults Should:

- Operate within Church guidelines and at all times act in the best interests of the child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- Keep attendance records, accident report forms, consent forms and complaints or grievance records in a secure system;
- Always work openly - be visible to others whenever possible, especially when working with children;
- Ensure changing room supervision is gender appropriate and always in pairs;
- Have male and female supervisors of mixed groups on trips away from home;
- Report all allegations and concerns of abuse to the statutory authorities;
- Treat everyone with courtesy, dignity and respect;
- Provide good example and conduct themselves as positive role models;
- Provide an open culture where no one, including children, is afraid to bring up issues in an appropriate manner;
- Be aware of and challenge bullying;
- Take care not to discriminate nor to use language that could be interpreted as discriminating against those of a different race, culture, age, gender, disability, religious persuasion, sexual orientation or political view;
- Advise children, young people and vulnerable adults of their right to be safe;
- Operate a positive approach to managing behaviour;
- Actively encourage children, young people and vulnerable adults to become involved in drawing up procedures when planning services;
- Give everyone, including children, young people and vulnerable adults a voice and listen to what they have to say;
- Respect each person's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.



**Adults should only:**

- Have physical contact with a child in response to the needs of the child at the time and this must be at all times appropriate given the age, gender and development stage of the child. Those working with children and young people need to be mindful that all physical contact may be open to scrutiny;
- Have regular physical contact with a child who has additional needs if this has been agreed and sanctioned by the parents or carers of the child;

**Adults should never:**

- Spend time alone with children;
- Leave children, in their care, unattended;
- Take children alone on a car journey, however short;
- Take children to the adult's home;
- Show favouritism;
- Physically punish anyone;
- Cause anyone to suffer humiliating or degrading treatment;
- Engage in sexually provocative games;
- Develop sexual relationships with children;
- Sleep in the same room or be in the same bed as a child with whom they are working;
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Give their personal details to children unless absolutely necessary;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place anyone at risk of abuse;
- Consume alcohol or smoke in the presence of children for whom they have responsibility;
- Use illegal substances in the presence of children for whom they have responsibility;
- Engage in rough physical games or horseplay apart from structured sports activities;
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Allow anyone, including children, to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments to or about anyone;
- Ask a child to keep secrets;
- Let allegations go unrecorded or unreported;
- Do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do themselves. (Occasionally, it may be necessary to help a child in this matter if the child is very young or has a disability but only with the full permission of the parents or carers. At all times, these tasks must be undertaken with the utmost discretion and sensitivity. In an emergency, parents/carers should be fully informed as soon as possible.);
- Take or use images or photographs of children without first consulting Diocesan guidance and also seeking the permission of parents, carers and the child if he/she is of an age to give informed consent;
- Participate in or condone the behaviour of anyone which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- Allow any form of dangerous behaviour or activity which could put anyone at risk.



## 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 person;
- Respect the property of others. Do not take things without asking. Take care of equipment and the building. Put litter in the bins. Always be prepared and be willing to make appropriate suggestions to make things better or safer when services are being planned;
- If anyone is harming or trying to harm you, tell an adult immediately.

### (c) Operating safe activities for children

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. To minimise opportunities for children to suffer harm, the Archdiocese of Armagh recognises that safeguarding is the responsibility of all adults involved in activities where children are included. In all activities, adequate age appropriate supervision ratios must be maintained to protect children and young people from harm. All use of information technology (including mobile phones, email, digital cameras, websites and the internet) must be in accordance with guidelines to prevent children being exploited, abused or endangered, see Appendix 6. This is not just the responsibility of the leader in charge but of every worker including the Parish Safeguarding Representative and the Priests of the parish. All church personnel should be aware of the following guidelines when preparing safe activities for children. Following Diocesan guidelines is not only in the best interests of children but is also in the best interests of staff and volunteers.

## Guidelines for Practice

### Planning

- Staff and volunteers are appointed after proper recruitment procedures and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities;
- There is a clearly designated group leader for all activities;
- All activities must be planned and managed to minimise risk;
- Encourage children and young people to become involved in drawing up procedures when planning services;
- Children wishing to join a parish group complete a registration form;
- Parents complete a consent form including relevant medical details, any special needs and emergency contact numbers;
- Leaders should be aware of children’s (and any other vulnerable individuals who are members of the party) relevant medical conditions, including allergies;
- Prescribed medication may only be administered to a child with the written consent of a doctor and strictly following a medication schedule;



- Non-prescription medication, topical creams, lotions or adhesive dressings may not be administered to a child;
- All medicines are to be stored securely;
- All personal data on individuals is confidential and is to be stored securely;
- All children are checked in to an activity on a registration form;
- Diocesan accident and incident report forms are kept on the premises being used and always completed whenever an incident occurs;
- Accident and incident report forms are to be used by all groups/organisations using parish premises. Forms are available on the diocesan website and as part of the additional forms accompanying this publication and completed forms are to be filed and stored securely;
- Leaders working with a mixed group must be drawn from both genders;
- Health and safety policies are adopted and include stated standards for premises including sanitation, fire safety, heating, ventilation, access to telephone, emergency numbers, equipment safety, provision of a first aid kit, and a person qualified in first aid;
- An initial safety check for hazards should be done on each occasion before premises are used;
- Be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that they are not obstructed. Occasional fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all children, other vulnerable individuals and church personnel know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire. Know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located. Remember, in the event of a fire, evacuating the building and saving life is much more important than fighting a fire;
- Know where the nearest accessible telephone is especially when on outings, residential or pilgrimage. A telephone should, where possible, be installed on the premises for safety purposes. Do not rely on mobiles in more remote areas;
- Games and icebreakers should be structured to take into consideration the risk of physical injury and personal space issues;
- Adults must ensure proper safety standards and, if appropriate, extra insurance cover for occasional activities e.g. “bouncy castles, trampolining”. When using special equipment for your programme, ensure there is adequate supervision by trained workers. Be aware of the physical environment and remove/avoid items which may cause injury during the activity. If the organisation is undertaking what is deemed to be high risk activities the leaders/helpers must seek written permission from parents/guardians in advance;
- Risk assessment must be carried out for all physical activities and written permission from parents/carers must be sought;
- Areas where maintenance work is being carried out should never be used for activities with children; and
- Ensure adequate insurance coverage for children, other vulnerable individuals, parish personnel and third parties is provided.



## 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 Archdiocese of Armagh advises the following supervision ratios which have been recommended by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church. In all activities, adequate age appropriate supervision ratios must be maintained at all times to protect children and young people from harm with at least two adult supervisors at all times. Recommended ratios are:

### Children Under 8 years

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

### Children 8 years and over

Two adult supervisors to 20 children (15 children for outdoor activity).  
There should be one additional adult supervisor for every 10 children.  
For *residential events and pilgrimages* this ratio should be decreased to one member of staff for every five children. This is to allow for adequate time off for all leaders.

## Additional Good Practice Guidelines for pilgrimage or residential programmes

The pilgrimage/residential nature of some activities require particular consideration with regard to safeguarding. Parents/carers are entrusting their children to the care of church personnel at this time and it is imperative that those adults on residential/pilgrimages follow good practice guidelines to ensure the children's health and safety and behave in a manner that presents a good role model to the children in their care. The programme leader should have overall responsibility for the planning, supervision and conduct of the event. Particular care should be taken to support Church personnel in this ministry role. Preparation is essential and, after discussion and consultation with other team members, the programme leader is responsible for ensuring that all reasonable preparations have been made for the event. Particular care should be taken to support Church personnel in this ministry role. In addition to the good practice guidelines already set out, the following list is provided specifically for pilgrimages and residential programmes:

- Appropriate approval is to be obtained from the leader of the organisation;
- Health and safety needs to be considered and followed;
- Risk assessments to be carried out;
- The venue ought to be visited in advance to check suitability and to be aware of potential problems;
- Ensure that the venue has both a current building certificate and fire certificate;
- Check the venue's own policies to ensure that they can be adhered to;
- Organise transport and insurance. Check that they are suitable. Insurance should include public liability and personal accident/injury;
- Timetable the travel, activities and supervision on the trip;
- Check that all leaders and volunteers have been vetted. All adults on the trip are to have a specific role and be accountable to the programme leader;
- An event co-leader from the opposite gender to be appointed for mixed trips;



- If specialised activities are to be undertaken, check that the person in charge is properly qualified to lead the activity;
- All leaders are to be properly briefed before the trip regarding their roles and responsibilities;
- The leader is to ensure that all adults are aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures and codes of behavior;
- At least two leaders are to be qualified in First Aid. It is their responsibility to be familiar with the locations of and transport to hospitals, doctors, nurses and local medical facilities including contact numbers;
- Guidance and training on intimate care should be provided where appropriate;
- Supervision rotas are to be drawn up according to the advice given in this document;
- All participating children have consent forms completed by a person with parental responsibility which agree to the various planned activities during the event including photographs. Medical information is also stated on this form and contact details in case of an emergency. Children must also fill out their own consent forms. These forms must be taken with the group to the event;
- All parents and carers have a copy of the schedule including dates, times and a contact number for the venue. This is particularly important for return journey, arrival home and pick up times;
- Children are to be briefed prior to the event. They are to be given a list of items they must bring and must not bring. A summary of the activities planned is to be provided. Expectations of conduct on the trip will be discussed and the children involved as much as possible in setting standards of behaviour;
- Be aware that mobile phones may not always be reliable due to signal coverage. Take this into account when assessing risk;
- On arrival at venue, any hazards and especially fire exits are to be pointed out and fire drill explained. Check that signs are in place;
- All children on the trip are told where to contact an adult in an emergency;
- Have an evaluation meeting soon after the event. Write a report making recommendations to aid the planning of future trips;
- It is recommended that a visit to the accommodation and activities area happens prior to the pilgrimage/residential. During this time a Risk Assessment should be carried out into the premises and activities the children will be involved in; and
- A meeting should be held with parents/guardians in advance of the departure date and all information regarding travel details, programme content and emergency contact information should be supplied to them.

**In order to ensure a safe environment for children at home and abroad all parish/diocesan groups need to:**

- Adhere to guidelines;
- Keep all groups/organisations up to date on the recommendations and required forms for reporting;
- Report any concern regarding the suitability of a building for use by children and any other vulnerable individuals; and
- Respond promptly to any concerns reported and review suitability of premises or practice.



**The Diocese will support parishes and diocesan groups to ensure a safe environment by:**

- Providing necessary updates regarding recommended supervision ratios;
- Supplying incidents and accident report forms to Parish Safeguarding Representatives and all clergy;
- Offering support to individuals or groups in the implementation of good practice;
- Responding promptly to any concerns reported; and
- Reviewing practice and the content of the Code of Conduct regularly.



## Standard 4: Training and education for ensuring safety

*'The fully trained disciple will always be like his teacher.'* Luke 6:40

The Archdiocese of Armagh is committed to best practice in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. All diocesan and parish employees and volunteers, but especially those who come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults have a role to play in their protection. To carry out this role confidently and effectively, personnel need training in safeguarding issues that will also provide them with knowledge and skills to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe. Training provides individuals with the knowledge and skills and confidence to perform their roles. A training session also provides a forum where individuals are able to seek clarification on a wide range of issues.

- All church personnel in the Archdiocese of Armagh who come into substantial unsupervised contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults are obliged to undertake training in safeguarding to maintain high standards and good practice. Training is adapted to both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland legislation;
- The Archdiocese has a National Board registered, accredited Trainer who is committed to keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe and who regularly attends relevant courses, workshops and conferences;
- Safeguarding training for new Parish Safeguarding Representatives and Diocesan Training Facilitators will be provided annually and/or when required. Attendance records of these meetings are taken and evaluation forms completed to ensure quality control;
- All those in the Archdiocese of Armagh who have additional responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk and acting as Designated Officer will have extra training provided;
- The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church will provide registered training on a regular basis for the Diocesan Training Coordinator and other safeguarding trainers. Information about this training will be through the diocesan website, the Diocesan Safeguarding Office in Armagh (Training Coordinator), the ad clerum (information circulars to clergy), parish bulletins and letters to priests and Parish Safeguarding Representatives;
- The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church will train accredited trainers who are committed to keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe. The trainers will be obliged to keep themselves informed about issues related to safeguarding. They will do this by attending courses, workshops and conferences. Relevant information will then be shared with Parish Safeguarding Representatives and priests;





- Those who come into substantial unsupervised contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults will have completed Parish Information Sessions on safeguarding. These sessions will be delivered by Diocesan Safeguarding Facilitators at Pastoral Area and Diocesan level. Parish Safeguarding Representatives will receive safeguarding training which will be delivered by the Diocesan Training Coordinator. Individuals should not engage in work with children, young people and vulnerable adults until they have completed basic awareness training on safeguarding procedures;
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will receive regular updates and feedback regarding this training from the Safeguarding Training Coordinator;
- Developing guidance material in relation to the use of internet, e-mail, mobile phone and photography. Due to the ever-changing nature of new technology these guidelines have been included in Appendix 6 rather than being included in the main body of the Diocesan Policy and Procedures;
- The Archdiocese of Armagh is committed to best practice in safeguarding. Therefore, everyone in the Church who comes into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults has a role to play in their protection. Fundamental to the development and maintenance of a safe environment is the training and education of personnel;
- On behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee, the training team will actively participate in national training networks and liaise with the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in order to ensure that the Archdiocese of Armagh is implementing appropriate programmes consistent with legislation;
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will ensure that there is ongoing training and pastoral care of Safeguarding Representatives and priests in keeping children, young people and vulnerable adults safe. The committee will organise meetings of representatives and priests either collectively or in their Pastoral Areas;
- A training programme is in place for all parish personnel who will come into contact with children and vulnerable adults. This programme takes the form of a parish information session. The Diocesan Training Coordinator will keep the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee apprised of all training developments;
- On behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee, the Training Coordinator and/or representatives of the Training Team will participate in national Church training networks. We will also adhere to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church programme in order to ensure that the Archdiocese is implementing an appropriate and up to date training regime.



## Standard 5: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

*Jesus said, 'I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God.' (Luke 4:43)*

In order to create and support an environment within the Church which safeguards and prevents harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults, the Archdiocese has developed Safeguarding Policies and Procedures along with Codes of Conduct. The Archdiocese recognises the importance of disseminating our safeguarding message to the wider public, to personnel, parishioners, parents/carers and children. Our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures are also available to external agencies via the Diocesan website at [www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding](http://www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding).

- The Safeguarding Policy Statement is prominently and permanently displayed in all churches and church premises;
- The full Safeguarding Policy is kept in all parish offices and is available to parishioners on request;
- All clergy, Safeguarding Committee and Advisory Panel members and Parish Safeguarding Representatives have a working knowledge of Diocesan Policy, Procedures and Codes of Conduct;
- All parents and carers know what is contained in the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and codes of conduct. Children, young people and vulnerable adults are informed that, for their wellbeing, that Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are in operation;
- Special notices designed to be easily read and comprehended by children, young people and vulnerable adults are on display in churches and church premises advising these groups of their right to be safe as well as giving details of a person to contact if they have concerns or worries;
- Everyone in the church organisation understands the ethos and content of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and Codes of Conduct. They also know who the Diocesan Designated Officers are, what their role entails as well as their contact details;
- All church personnel are issued with details of local Child Safeguarding Services (statutory and voluntary), helpline numbers and PSNI/An Gardaí Síochána contact details. This information is also displayed along with church notices;
- All use is made of notices, leaflets, newsletters, parish bulletins and pastoral letters to further communicate the safeguarding message;
- Links and good working relationships are developed by church organisations with statutory agencies (PSNI/Social Services in Northern Ireland and An Gardaí Síochána/Heath Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland) in order to keep children and other vulnerable individuals safe;
- Church organisations and Religious Orders have communications policies which reflects commitment to transparency and openness; and
- Updates on changes to legislation are quickly circulated.



**The Archdiocese is currently working on developing Methods of communication to include:**

- Regular update of the diocesan website;
- Bi-annual meeting of Parish Safeguarding Representatives;
- Regular updates at clergy conferences;
- Support of Parish Safeguarding Representatives and clergy by members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.

**The procedures to be followed where anyone has concerns or wishes to disclose allegations of abuse are outlined in Standard 2 of this policy.**

### **The Diocesan Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding**

The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee has a responsibility to review the Diocesan Policy and Procedures in line with the recommendations of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church and to ensure that all Parish Safeguarding Representatives and clergy are familiar with the policy and are aware of any updates.

The Parish Safeguarding Representatives have a responsibility to ensure that all those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in their parish are familiar with and adhere to the Diocesan Policy and Procedures. A copy of the Diocesan Policy and Procedures can be downloaded from the Diocesan website at [www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding](http://www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding).

### **Updates on developments in relation to civil law, procedures and diocesan progress in safeguarding**

This is the responsibility of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee through the trainers and Designated Officers. The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will be responsible for communicating these changes to the Parish Safeguarding Representatives/Committees who will in turn be responsible for communicating it to all personnel in the parish or diocesan group.

### **The contact information of relevant personnel in the area of safeguarding**

Contact details for the Diocesan Designated Officers, the Training Coordinator and the Chairperson of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee are listed in Appendix 3 and should be widely distributed throughout the Archdiocese. Posters have been designed by the Archdiocese containing contact details of the Diocesan Designated Officers and forwarded to all parishes. It is the responsibility of the priests of the parish and the Parish Safeguarding Representatives to ensure that they are clearly visible in all parish (and where applicable diocesan) premises. Contact details for the Diocesan Designated Officers and other personnel are available on the diocesan website at [www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding](http://www.armagharchdiocese.org/safeguarding) and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church website. Contact information for the chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee and Training Coordinator are available on the diocesan website.

Information for Parish Safeguarding Representatives is displayed on the diocesan website under the information for each parish and in poster form in the parishes. Parish Safeguarding Representatives should update the relevant Diocesan Safeguarding personnel of any changes

so that the diocesan website can be updated. It is the responsibility of the Parish Safeguarding Representatives and the priests of the parish to ensure that the posters are displayed on parish premises and that the information is accurate

**The passing of information between the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC)**

The NBSCCC and the Archdiocese will communicate through the Bishops' Conference, the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee, the Diocesan Designated Officer and the training team. This information will be fed through to the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee and shape any developments in Diocesan Policy or Procedures. The regular meetings of Parish Safeguarding Representatives will provide an opportunity to share experiences and identify common issues.

## Standard 6: Access to advice and support

*'If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its strength, for each separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up, in love.'* (Eph 4:16)

The Archdiocese of Armagh is committed to ensuring that those who have suffered abuse receive a compassionate and just response and are offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives. Those who have harmed others are to be assisted to face the reality of their abusive behaviour and facilitated to seek healing. Training advice and pastoral support is available to help church personnel and volunteers play their part in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. Mindful of our duty to ensure that advice and support is available, the Archdiocese has the following arrangements in place:

- Anyone who participates in church activities will be advised that there is support and advice available to those who may have been abused;
- Churches should display clear information indicating where advice and support can be obtained by victims and their families;
- The Diocesan Designated Officers will provide information about where and how to get specific help and advice whether the abused person is a child or an adult and whether the abuse is current or historical;
- Appropriate pastoral support is offered whether an allegation relates to current or historical abuse. Pastoral support offered must not compromise any future enquiries nor put children, young people or vulnerable adults at further risk;
- Those who are accused of abuse will have pastoral support and advice offered by an appointed Advisor as they go through reporting and investigation;
- Standard 2 of this policy outlines how the Archdiocese responds to allegations and suspicions of abuse. Accordingly, the Archdiocese recommends strongly that all perpetrators seek appropriate remedial and therapeutic help to enable them to confront the gravity of abuse and reduce their risk of reoffending. The Archdiocese also recommends that healing should be promoted in a manner which does not compromise anyone's safety.

All members of the safeguarding team have access to specialist advice, support and information on issues relating to the provision of a safe environment through maintaining strong links with statutory and voluntary agencies as well as other Diocesan teams, working parties and regular contact with the National Office for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.



## Standard 7: Implementing and monitoring the Standards

*'We do nothing that people might object to, so as not to bring discredit on our function as God's servants.'* (2Cor 6:3)

All Policies, Procedures and Codes of Behaviour adopted by the Archdiocese of Armagh are designed to provide a safe environment for everyone. The Archdiocese of Armagh recognises that the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is a living document and, as such, it will be reviewed and updated as required to take account of changes to safeguarding policy and legislation but at least every three years. The document has been designed to guide and support those involved in ministry to children, young people and vulnerable adults. In order to ensure its effectiveness, the policy and procedures need to be implemented across all church organisations consistently and need to be checked regularly. The following details the actions being taken to help ensure the on-going implementation of these guidelines:

- Financial and human resources are in place for the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- The Archdiocese reviews the implementation of its Policies and Procedures as and when required but at least every three years to take account of changes in legislation and guidance;
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee and Diocesan Advisory Panel makes provision to ensure that all complaints received are dealt with by the Designated Officers and all related records are stored compliant with data handling legislation;
- A summary of training events attended by or conducted by the Diocesan Training Facilitators (including a register of attendance) is recorded and kept on file;
- Processes are in place to allow parents, carers and children to see the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures;
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee obtains information of who manages recruitment and vetting at parish level, where records are stored and how recruitment is monitored;
- Parish Safeguarding Representatives will provide the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee with annual statistics on the number of staff and volunteers in each parish who have been recruited and vetted;
- All incidents, allegations and suspicions of abuse in the Archdiocese are recorded and stored securely, in line with data safeguarding legislation.

