



Diocese of Clogher



Child Safeguarding Statement for the Diocese of Clogher

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 in the Republic of Ireland and is derived from Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. The policy of the Catholic Church in Ireland is based on standards of practice which contain indicators that assist in reaching these standards. These indicators can be used in assessing and managing risk.

Diocese of Clogher

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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, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

The Diocese of Clogher 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, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016:

- Youth Choirs, Altar Servers, Children's Liturgy Groups, Clogher don Óige, Sacramental Preparation Groups, John Paul 11 Award Groups, Youth Readers
- Any work or service undertaken by Church Personnel with children which is under the authority of the Diocese of Clogher
- Any work or service undertaken by Church Personnel (lay, vowed and ordained) within Church property which is under the authority of the Diocese of Clogher
- All priests and deacons in active ministry under the authority of the Diocese of Clogher are to be considered as having active ministry with children

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland we are committed to the following principles:

- **Mandatory reporting.**

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:

- Physically
- emotionally
- sexually
- through neglect

Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of Church Personnel, but they can also relate to incidents in the child's family, elsewhere in the community.

- **Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them.**

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children that prevent abuse and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training support, communications and quality assurance.

- **Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegation.**

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All Church personnel have a responsibility to report suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. The Designated Liaison Person can assist with this process. These reports will be made irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child.

Respondents belong to families and diocesan or religious communities. The Church authority will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities in the Diocese of Clogher and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse. Risk Identified Procedure in place to manage risk identified.

Risk Identified	Procedure in Place to Manage Risk Identified
Risk of Harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a Child by Church Personnel or visitors to Church premises.	Procedures for the safe recruitment and creating and maintaining a safe environment are available on the Diocesan Website.
Risk of Harm through Bullying (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a Child by Church Personnel or Peers.	Guidance on the Codes of Behaviour for Adults is in place on the Diocesan Website Guidance on developing a Code of Behaviour for Children is in place on the Diocesan Website. Guidance on Anti Bullying is in place on the Diocesan Website.
The environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to protect them from harm	Guidance on creating and maintaining safe environments including localised hazard assessments are available on the Diocesan Website
Risk of harm to children involved with external groups who use church property are unsafe to do so.	Guidance on external groups who use church property is in place in the Diocese and is available on the Diocesan Website.
Risk of harm to children during outings or trips away (including overnight trips) from home from peers, Church personnel or strangers.	Guidance on complaints and whistleblowing is in place in the diocese. Guidance on trips away for young people is available on the Diocesan website
Risk of harm through the use of digital media including photography, video and social media.	Guidance on the safe use of technology, including social media, is in place in the Diocese.
Church personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately.	Procedures, and personnel to implement them, are in place in the Diocese to ensure suspicions, concerns, knowledge or the allegations of the abuse of a child are reported to the appropriate statutory agencies.
Church personnel fail to take action during and following any allegations against clerics and religious to ensure children are protected from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015)	Procedures are in place in the Diocese of Clogher to ensure appropriate action is taken to ensure children are protected from harm during and following an investigation into allegation of abuse against clerics.
Church personnel fail to support those who are victims of abuse.	Guidance and appropriate personnel are in place in the Diocese of Clogher to support those who are victims of abuse.
Church personnel fail to understand their responsibilities to protect children.	Training for all church personnel in the Diocesan Policy and Procedures is provided in line with National Board requirements and guidance.
Children and their parents do not understand the Church's policy, procedures and structures	Procedures and structures to develop communications, training and support for all

to Safeguard children and protect them from harm.	who participate in the activities of the church are in place to Diocese.
The procedures for safeguarding children fail to be implemented.	The diocese conducts an annual self-audit and monitors compliance through the activities of the Diocesan Safeguarding Office overseen by the Safeguarding Committee.
The Church Authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons.	The Diocese has appointed a Director of Safeguarding and maintains a list of Mandated persons.
Risk of harm of a child being disclosed during the sacrament of Reconciliation.	Procedures in place in relation to Sacrament of Reconciliation available on Diocesan website.

Risk Assessment (Risks identified for each parish/religious community)

Alongside the risks inserted in the table above, all parishes/religious communities of Clogher Diocese individually risk their activities with children and put in place procedures to manage these risks.

Risk Identified	Procedure in Place to Manage Risk
Local activity with children is risk assessed in each location in which the activity takes place as part of Indicator 1.8 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016	For full details of localised risks and the procedures in place to manage these please refer to the hazard assessment template 1.8 in Guidance for Parishes on Diocesan Safeguarding Website

Procedures

All procedures outlined in the Risk Assessment above are available on request at the Diocesan Safeguarding Office and on the Diocesan website at clogherdiocese.ie/safeguarding. The procedures listed above include the following:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/ volunteers of a child availing of our service.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers 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.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

Implementation

The Diocese of Clogher is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. 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: 

(Church Authority)

Larry Duffy, Bishop of Clogher

Date: 2nd March 2022

For any queries relating to this statement please contact Mrs Martha Smyth, Safeguarding Director

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