

DIOCESE OF OSSORY
POLICY
ON
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

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DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The Diocese of Ossory values and encourages the participation of children and young people in parish liturgies and in activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. We recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children and young people and are committed to their protection and support in a way that promotes their human dignity and integrity as children of God.

In keeping with this we in the diocese undertake to do all in our power to create safe environments for children and young people and to ensure their protection from physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.

We recognise that all involved in working with children and young people have a special duty of care towards them and we are committed to putting procedures in place through which this care is put into effect so that the rights of children and young people to actively participate in the life of the Church are upheld.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING BEST PRACTICE

The Diocese of Ossory:

- promotes an ethos and approach which at all times give paramount consideration the welfare of the child/young person.
- values and encourages the active participation of children/young people in the life of the Church in ways that enhance their physical, emotional and spiritual growth within the safe, secure and welcoming environment of their Faith community. Each person should feel valued, encouraged and affirmed;
- recognises and upholds the fundamental right of the individual child/young person to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected. These rights are embedded both in our Gospel values and civil legislation;
- acknowledges and reaffirms its commitment to the care and protection of children/young people as 'children of God', with intrinsic dignity and irreducible worth;
- believes that Child Protection is everyone's responsibility but accepts that all those working with children/young people in Church ministries have a special duty of care towards them;
- is committed to 'Best Practice' in the area of Child Protection, including the development of effective structures for safeguarding children/young people, for responding to suspicions or allegations of child abuse and for providing pastoral support and training for all Church personnel;
- is engaging in a process of working towards a set of policies and procedures for those who have responsibility for the protection of children/young people in the life of the Church;
- is willing to listen to children/young people and involve them, where appropriate in decision-making, promotes an ethos and approach which at all times gives paramount consideration to the welfare of the child/young person.

DIOCESAN CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE BASIC PROCEDURES

In order to support the Diocesan Policy it is necessary that the following procedures are implemented:

- I. A clearly defined process for the recruitment and supervision of adults working with children/young people, which will include:
 - Volunteer/employment application forms
 - Declaration forms for all adult leaders
 - Garda Clearance checks [as available]
 - Induction and training records
 - Attendance records
2. A code of Conduct/Behaviour for Church personnel
3. A duty roster of adults to ensure adequate supervision of children/young people at all times
4. Appropriate supervision ratios of adults to children/young people at all times, ensuring no child/young person is left alone with an adult
5. Signed parental/guardian consent for all activities/participant forms
6. Contact information for parents/guardians
7. Information on events for children/young people and their parents/guardians
8. A clearly communicated Accident and Emergency plan
9. Attendance records
10. Incident/Accident report forms
11. A code of conduct for children/young people
12. Information sessions in best practice to be held regularly
13. Medical information and treatment permission for children/young people
14. For away trips and pilgrimages, the above procedures must be followed, and in addition a pre-check on accommodation and transport arrangements must be made
15. Named group leader/designated person who can be contacted in relation to the welfare and protection of children/young people.

DIOCESAN CODE OF CONDUCT BASICS

In order to support the diocesan policy and procedures it is necessary that the following Code of Conduct be applied as a minimum standard for all those who work with children and young people.

- Children/young people will be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity
- Leaders will always engage with children/young people in an open manner and care will be taken not to show favouritism
- There will be an adequate ratio of leaders to children/young people at all times. Leaders should not work alone with children/young people
- Care will be taken to ensure that when working with mixed gender groups leaders of mixed gender will work in pairs
- Leaders will not consume alcohol or smoke while having responsibility for or in the presence of young people who are in their care
- The use of drugs or illegal substances by leaders is strictly prohibited . Under no circumstances should Church personnel give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children/young people
- Leaders will not be permitted to use inappropriate language or make sexually suggestive comments, either to each other or to children/young people
- Physical contact between children, young people, will be of an appropriate nature at all times. Leaders will not engage in rough play with each other or with children/young people
- Leaders will not undertake any task of a personal nature with children, young people except in the case of medical necessity when the welfare of the children, young people depends on it
- Leaders will not give their personal details to children, young people
- Personal details of children/young people will be held only by the named leader/designated person
- The right to privacy of children/young people will be respected at all times
- Where a Church activity involves the use of computers, an email and internet policy will be put in place
- Permission will be sought from parents/guardians for the taking and use of photographs
- There will be clearly designated leaders within each group with whom the children/young people can speak about their experience and raise any concerns
- The Diocese will have a designated person assigned to whose immediate attention all concerns and or/complaints can be brought
- The designated person will respond promptly to all child protection concerns and liaise with the required civil and Church authorities
- All concerns, complaints will be followed through in a timely and efficient manner in accordance with guidelines
- The diocese will have a specific code of conduct for all away trips including pilgrimages, day trips and incentive events. This code of conduct will be made known to the children/young people as well as to leaders, parents, guardians/carers
- A code of conduct including an anti-bullying policy specific to children/young people will be drawn up in direct consultation with children and young people

CODE OF CONDUCT BASICS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important that children/young people know the limits and boundaries appropriate to their own behaviour and that of others. Therefore a code of conduct specific to children and young people must be drawn up in direct consultation with children and young people. Age-appropriate language should be used. It is important that each group of children and young people directly contributes to the formation of their code of conduct.

Key Elements:

- Children, young people will be aware of the code of conduct that leaders have to adhere to
- The code should reflect the dignity and rights of each child/young person and it should encourage respectful behaviour
- Children/young people will respect the fact that leaders will not work alone with them
- Children, young people will treat each other and their leaders with courtesy, respect and dignity
- Children and young people will not be permitted to consume alcohol or smoke while participating in activities in keeping with civil law
- Inappropriate language or sexually suggestive comments will not be permitted
- Physical contact will be of an appropriate nature at all times
- Rough play will not be permitted at any time

Children/young people are to be consulted about drawing up an all inclusive anti-bullying policy

The following whilst not exhaustive is a list of some examples of bullying

- Name calling
- Fighting/kicking/punching
- Making suggestive/sarcastic comments / Intimidation
- Threatening
- Ignoring/excluding
- Damaging property
- Spreading rumours
- Sending abusive text message

APPENDIX 1

The following information should be displayed in a prominent place in each Church in the Diocese

DIOCESE OF OSSORY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN INFORMATION

DIOCESAN POLICY STATEMENT

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In keeping with this we in the Diocese undertake to do all in our power to create safe environments for children/young people and to ensure their protection from physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.

We recognise that all involved in working with children/young people have a special duty of care towards them and we are committed to putting procedures in place through which this care is put into effect so that the rights of children/young people to actively participate in the life of the Church are upheld.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN: CONTACT DETAILS

1. If you or anyone you know has a child protection concern or wishes to report an allegation of child abuse in relation to any member of Church personnel, directly to Church authorities please contact either of the diocesan delegated persons.

Father Daniel Bollard: 056 7724279 or Father Daniel Cavanagh: 051 421515

2. If you or anyone you know has a child protection concern or wishes to report an allegation directly to the statutory authorities please contact:

Kilkenny	Gardai	056 7775042
	HSE Social Work Department	056 7784532/7784600
Laois/Offaly	Gardai	057 8674100
	HSE Social Work Department	057 9370700
Waterford	Gardai	051 305300
	HSE Social Work Department	051 842800

APPENDIX 2

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

We understand child abuse to be the ill treatment or neglect of a child/young person that leads to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm.

1. Signs and Symptoms of Child Neglect

- Abandonment or desertion.
- Children persistently left alone without adequate care and supervision.
- Malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding.
- Lack of warmth.
- Lack of adequate clothing.
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age.
- Persistent failure to attend school.
- Non-organic failure to thrive, that is, a child not gaining weight, not alone due to malnutrition but also due to emotional deprivation.
- Failure to provide adequate care for a child's medical problems.
- Exploited, overworked.

2. Signs and Symptoms of Emotional Child Abuse

- Rejection.
- Lack of praise and encouragement.
- Lack of comfort and love.
- Lack of attachment.
- Lack of proper stimulation (for example, fun and play).
- Lack of continuity of care (for example, frequent moves).
- Serious over-protectiveness.
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (for example, locking in bedrooms).
- Persistent exposure to family conflicts
- Exposure to violence
- Inappropriate expectations of a child's behavior - relative to his or her age and stage of development.
- Every child who is abused sexually or physically or who is neglected is also emotionally abused.

3. Signs and Symptoms of Physical Abuse

- Bruises.
- Fractures.
- Swollen joints.
- Burns or scalds.
- Abrasions or lacerations.
- Haemorrhages (retinal, subdural).
- Damage to body organs.
- Poisonings - repeated (by, for example, prescribed drugs or alcohol).
- Failure to thrive.
- Coma or unconsciousness.
- Death.

4. Signs and Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse

Non-Contact Sexual Abuse

- Offensive sexual remarks, including statements the offender makes with regard to the child's sexual attributes, what he or she would like to do to the child and other sexual comments.
- Obscene phone calls.
- Independent 'exposure' involving the offender showing the victim his or her private parts and/or masturbating in front of the victim.
- 'Voyeurism' involving instances when the offender observes the victim in a state of undress or in activities that provide the offender with sexual gratification. These may include activities that others do not regard as even remotely sexually stimulating.

Sexual Contact

- Any touching of the intimate body parts - offender fondling or masturbating the victim and/or get the victim to fondle and/or masturbate them. Fondling can be either outside or inside clothes. Also includes 'frottage', that is where the offender gains sexual gratification from rubbing his or her genitals against the victim's body or clothing.

Oral-Genital Sexual Abuse

- Involves the offender licking, kissing, sucking or biting on the child's genitals or inducing the child to do the same to them.

Interfemoral Sexual Abuse

- Sometimes referred to as 'dry sex' or 'vulvar intercourse', involves the offender placing his penis between the child's thighs.

Penetrative Sexual Abuse

- 'Digital penetration' involving putting fingers in the vagina or anus, or both. Usually the victim is penetrated by the offender, but sometimes the offender gets the child to penetrate them.
- 'Penetration with objects' involving penetration of the vagina, anus or occasionally mouth with an object.
- 'Genital penetration' involving the penis entering the vagina, sometimes partially.
- 'Anal penetration' involving the penis penetrating the anus.

Sexual Exploitation

- Involves situations of sexual victimisation where the person who is responsible for the exploitation may not have direct sexual contact with the child. Two types of this abuse are child pornography and child prostitution.
- 'Child pornography' includes still photography, videos and movies and, more recently, computer-generated pornography.
- 'Child prostitution' for the most part involves children of latency age in adolescence. However, children as young as four and five are known to be abused in this way.

Sexual Abuse In Combination With Other Abuse

- The sexual abuses described above may be found in combination with other abuses, such as physical abuse and urination and defecation on the victim. In some cases, physical abuse is an integral part of the sexual abuse; in others, drugs and alcohol may be given to the victim.

Carers and professionals should be alert to the following physical and behavioural signs that may indicate sexual abuse:

- Bleeding from the vagina or anus.
- Difficulty or pain in passing urine or faeces.
- An infection may occur secondary to sexual abuse, which may or may not be a definitive sexually transmitted disease. Professionals should be informed if a child has a persistent vaginal discharge or has warts or a rash in the genital area.
- Noticeable and uncharacteristic change of behaviour.
- Hints about sexual activity.
- Age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour.
- Inappropriate seductive behaviour.
- Sexually aggressive behaviour with others. Uncharacteristic sexual play with peers or with toys. . Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities which involve undressing, for example, games or swimming.

Particular behavioural signs and emotional problems suggestive of child abuse in young children (0-10):

- Mood change, for example acting out or the child becomes fearful or withdrawn.
- Lack of concentration (change in school performance).
- Bed wetting, soiling.
- Psychosomatic complaints: pains, headaches.
- Skin disorders.
- Nightmares, changes in sleep patterns.
- School refusal.
- Separation anxiety.
- Loss of appetite.
- Isolation.

Particular behavioural signs and emotional problems suggestive of child abuse in older children (over 10):

- Mood change, for example, depression, failure to communicate.
- Running away.
- Drug, alcohol, or solvent abuse.
- Self-mutilation.
- Suicide attempts.
- Delinquency.
- Truancy.
- Eating disorders.
- Isolation.

* Adapted from *Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*,

Dublin: Stationery Office, 1999, pp. 125-131.

APPENDIX 3

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The Diocese of Ossory recognises the importance of ensuring peoples right to confidentiality is committed to keeping confidential all personal information about children and their families. The only exception may be when child protection or welfare concerns arise in relation to a child. In this situation information will be shared on a need to know basis in the best interest of the child as follows:

- Information will only be forwarded on a “need to know” basis in order to safeguard the child or young person
-
- Giving information to appropriately designated persons and/or statutory authorities for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality
- Primary carers have a right to know if personal information is being shared and a report is being made to the HSE unless doing so could out the child at further risk.

APPENDIX 4

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

The procedures of recruiting personnel will include:

1. To ensure that no person who would be deemed to constitute a “risk” will be given a post of responsibility. Applicants will be required to complete the following forms.
 - Application Form
 - Declaration Form
 - Garda Vetting Form
2. Applicants will provide proof of identification i.e. photo I.D.
3. Applicants will submit names of two referees who can provide references (not family members). All references will be received in writing and followed up on.
4. An interview will take place – at least two interviewers present – (gender balance)

Please note that training support and all relevant forms are provided in the course of the parish representative training programme offered through the diocesan child protection trainers

APPENDIX 5

Recommended Supervision Ratios

In the Republic of Ireland, the Childcare (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997 have the following requirements for adult: child ratios:

Service	Age	Adult: Child Ratio
Full Day Care	0 - 1 years	1:3
	1 - 3 years	1:6
	3 - 6 years	1:8
Sessional	0 - 6 years	1:10
Drop - in Centre	1 - 6 years	1:8
	under 12 months	1:3

The *Code of Practice - Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector* recommends the following:

The minimum adult: young person ratio should ideally be one adult per group of eight plus one other adult, and allowing an additional adult for each group of eight thereafter. Local circumstances, the ages of the children, the experience of the volunteers and the staff should be taken into consideration. Safety, ability / disability of young people and the nature of the activities being undertaken may require that these ratios be considerably lower.

In Northern Ireland, *Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People* recommends the following ratios:

Age	Staff: Child Ratio
0 - 2 years	1 member of staff to 3 children
2 - 3 years	1 member of staff to 4 children
3 - 7 years	1 member of staff to 8 children
8 years and over	2 members of staff (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 Children

There should be one additional staff member for every ten extra children. The ratio of staff and volunteers to children with disabilities is dependant on the needs of the individual child. on behalf of the Committee:

APPENDIX 6

DIOCESE OF OSSORY COMMITTEE FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Chairperson: Very Rev. Daniel Bollard, P.P., Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny.
 Secretary: Ms. Frances Lennon, Diocesan Office, Sion Road, Kilkenny.

Members: Most Rev. Séamus Freeman, SAC., Mr. Tony Canny, Bamford, Co. Kilkenny, Mr. Martin Crotty, 6, Patrick Street, Kilkenny, Ms. Margaret Digby, Lennaught, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, Ms. Una McHale, Furzehouse Lane, Kilfera, Co. Kilkenny, Ms. Mary Mescal, Ossory Youth, Kilkenny, Very Rev. Thomas Murphy, P.P., Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny.

DIOCESE OF OSSORY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN TRAINERS

Ms. Brigid Corcoran, "Rose Cottage", Danesfort, Co. Kilkenny.

Mr. Michael Melia, Callan, Co. Kilkenny.

DIOCESE OF OSSORY DELEGATES

Very Rev. Daniel Bollard, P.P.,
 Thomastown,
 Co. Kilkenny.
 Tel. 056 7724279

Very Rev. Daniel Cavanagh, P.P.,
 Rosbercon,
 New Ross,
 Co. Wexford.
 Tel. 051 421515

This document will be updated regularly in adherence with the publication on 24th February 2009, of the *Safeguarding Children Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, National Board for Safeguarding Children.

This document was ratified by the Ossory Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee on the 24th day of February 2009.

Signed: _____
Very Rev. Daniel Bollard, Chairperson.

Date: _____

Document presented to and approved by the Bishop of Ossory:

Signed: _____
Most Rev. Séamus Freeman, SAC.
Bishop of Ossory.

Date: _____

This document will be reviewed every two years.

Document review date: February 2011