

Newsletter

Latest News from the National Office for
Safeguarding Children in the Catholic
Church in Ireland

October 2022

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Click on any of the links below to
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ALERT BOX

This part of the Newsletter is designed to draw the attention of
Church authorities to important developments outlined below:

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Introduction

The leaves are starting to turn golden brown and autumn is on our doorstep. This beautiful season of mist and mellow fruitfulness, allows us to wave cheerio to summer and embrace the start of another new school year. Walking through Maynooth, it is a joy to hear children laughing and chatting on their way to school, full of life, full of hopes and dreams. Our work is all about ensuring that children are safeguarded so that they can fulfil their hopes and dreams. The National Board is currently engaged in a Review of *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*, and as we talk to children, and Church personnel we are reminded of the huge effort that has been expended over the past 10 years in ensuring that children are safe in Church ministry. We do not often get an opportunity to hear about the fruits of the labour, but it is rewarding when we do.

In August 2022, the retired Chair of the National Board attended a papal audience in Rome. He was also appointed a Knight Commander of St Gregory the Great in recognition of his significant contribution to making the Church a safer place for children.



The summer months have turned out to be busy as the National Board concluded consultations on developing a template adult safeguarding policy for the Catholic Church in Ireland, alongside the work on the children's policy.

Reviews of Safeguarding Practice

National Board Reviews of Church bodies' practice against *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016* are continuing. The National Board publishes Review Reports on its website once the Church body does so on its own website.

The National Board would like to complete Reviews of all 26 dioceses before the end of the first quarter of 2023. So far, all four Archdioceses have been reviewed. In addition to these, ten dioceses have had Reviews completed, with some of their reports still being written. There are a further nine diocesan Reviews being actively planned. The National Board would welcome communication from the bishops of the three remaining dioceses regarding their plans for commissioning a Review.

To date, the National Board has completed Reviews of six religious congregations.

Bishops, Provincials and Superiors who are interested in inviting the National Board to conduct a review of safeguarding practice in their Church body please contact teresa.devlin@safeguarding.ie, or call on 015053124.

Adult Safeguarding Policy Template and Associated Guidance

In Summer 2021, AMRI (Associations of Missionary and Religious Leaders in Ireland) and the IEC (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference) commissioned the National Board to carry out a one-year, time limited project on adult safeguarding. Specifically, the project had four objectives:

- **Objective A-** A paper examining existing strengths of safeguarding policy and practice in relation to vulnerable adults in the Church in Ireland and areas that require development.
- **Objective B-** A template best practice safeguarding adults' policy- to assist dioceses and orders to critique or develop policies including limited guidance.
- **Objective C-** A recommendation as to what structures will assist a consistent implementation of such policy at local level including the support mechanisms necessary in both guidance and training programmes.
- **Objective D-** A paper outlining the various issues that have been raised through the consultation and listening processes which need to be addressed but fall outside the scope of this project.

The four objectives have now been completed, and the associated papers sent to AMRI and the IEC. We would like to thank the following members of the steering committee for their invaluable help, support and guidance throughout the project:

- Mary May- Sisters of Mercy Northern Province
- Sr. Mary Healy- Carmelite Sisters of the Aged and Infirm
- Dr Maria Corrigan- St John of God Brothers
- Fr. Kieran Shorten- Capuchins
- Caroline Brogan- Down and Connor Diocese
- Maureen Walsh- Tuam Archdiocese
- Cleo Yates- Archdiocese of Cashel and Emlly, Dioceses of Cork and Ross and Killaloe
- Kathleen Sherry- Kildare and Leighlin and Ossory Dioceses.

This project has now concluded, but the National Board are ready to assist with any further action or assistance we can provide in relation to this important aspect of Church ministry.



Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for Catholic Church in Ireland (2016) Revision

The Steering group overseeing the revision of the Church's child safeguarding policy are: Garry Kehoe (Dublin Archdiocese), Mary Tallon (Safeguarding Co-Ordinator for OFM Franciscans; Dominican Fathers, MSC), Brendan Dineen (Redemptorists), Dame Joan Walsh (Meath Diocese), Saoirse Fox (Safeguarding Co-Ordinator Jesuits), Philip O Hara (Down and Connor Safeguarding Co-Ordinator), Archbishop Francis Duffy (Tuam Archdiocese) and Abbot Brendan Coffey (Benedictines Glenstal).

Consultation meetings have taken place with children, victims/survivors of abuse and respondents. Further consultation meetings with Church personnel involved in ministry with children will take place over zoom on:

- 04/11/2022- 5pm to 7pm- to book follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/listening-meeting-for-those-who-work-directly-with-children>
- 09/11/2022- 10am- 12pm- to book follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/listening-meeting-for-those-involved-in-ministry-with-children-day-2>
- 10/11/2022- 2pm- 4pm to book follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/listening-meeting-for-those-involved-in-ministry-with-children-day-3>

The aim of the consultation is to hear directly from those who are involved in ministry with children, about good practice, what works and to listen to suggestions for improvement to existing policy, guidance and practice.

In addition to the meetings listed above a meeting has been scheduled **specifically for trainers on the 10th of November 2022 between 10am and 12pm**. To book your place please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/listening-meeting-with-trainers-on-the-revision-of-the-child-safeguarding-policy> . If you want to get involved in other aspects of the revision of the policy, or offer your views and experiences please contact teresa.devlin@safeguarding.ie.

Ecclesiastical Provincial Area Meetings

It is that time of year again, when we are working with the four Archbishops to organise a meeting in each of the four ecclesiastical provincial areas. This is an opportunity for the National Board to share information with you on our work and in particular to seek your views on the revision of the 2016 child safeguarding policy.

As a change from the last two years, these meetings will not be facilitated online, but in person.

A letter of invitation will be sent to Church authorities (both diocesan and male and female religious) for Church bodies in the ecclesiastical area.

Three dates have been confirmed and are available to book, these are:

- 15/11/2022- Cashel Ecclesiastical Provincial Area Meeting-you can book your place by following this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/cashel-ecclesiastical-provincial-area-meeting-3>
- 1/12/2022- Tuam Ecclesiastical Provincial Area Meeting- you can book your place by following this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/tuam-ecclesiastical-provincial-area-meeting-3>
- 13/12/2022- Armagh Ecclesiastical Provincial Area Meeting- you can book your place by following this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/armagh-ecclesiastical-provincial-area>.

A date for the Dublin meeting has yet to be confirmed, but our hope is that this meeting will take place before the end of the year. For updates, please check <https://www.safeguarding.ie/news-events/events> .

Training

The following Training Events are now available for booking online:

- **8th November 2022- Recording Training-** This training day is for those involved in maintaining case management records. This training event will cover the following areas:
 - Understanding what to record and not to record.
 - Understanding why certain records need to be made.
 - Exploring best practice in how to record, including case file structure.
 - Discussing a process of review of case files by the Church authority and DLP.

To book a place please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/recording-training>.

- **19th November 2022 (and 5 additional dates)- Train the Trainer's Course-** This training course is only for those wishing to become registered as trainers for three years with the National Board. The training will be delivered over six days in the Knock House Hotel. **Please note that this training will only proceed if sufficient numbers register to complete the course.**

Due to the revision of the child safeguarding policy, we will not facilitate this course in 2023. If you require new trainers in your Church body, please book on this course before the 11th of October 2022. On this date, we will make a decision as to whether to cancel or continue to run the course.

To book your place before the 11th of October please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/train-the-trainers-course-4>.

- **14th December 2022- Training and Sharing Practice for Support People-** This training day is for support people involved in supporting complainants. The training event will cover the following areas:
 - Exploring how to provide a pastoral and caring response to complainants.
 - Understanding what to record and not to record as part of working with complainants.
 - Sharing experiences to enhance practice.

To book your place, please follow this link <https://www.safeguarding.ie/events/training-and-sharing-practice-for-support-persons>.



Head to Heart

The Head to Heart formation programme has begun again for seminarians in St Patrick's College Maynooth, Redemptoris Mater and the Irish College (Rome). One module will be delivered in November with a further two modules delivered in 2023.

The programme has now been adapted to include those in formation to become permanent deacons; and the first session will be delivered to them in October with a further input scheduled for 2023.

We are currently in discussions with staff from St Patrick's College, Maynooth to explore whether a version of *Head to Heart* could be adapted and delivered to those students studying courses in pastoral theology and youth ministry.

Data Protection

The National Board has received provisional senior counsel opinion, but further information needs to be provided to him before a definitive opinion can be offered. We will keep you informed if there is any change to existing MOU and data processing deeds.

Resources

The Catholic Project has been established at the Catholic University of America, and its website can be accessed at <https://catholicproject.catholic.edu/clergy-sexual-abuse/>. The project was established as a forum in which clergy and laity could come together to address the current crisis facing the Catholic Church, which it describes in the following terms:

The most recent crisis in the Catholic Church exposed grievous sin and failings at the highest levels. Revelations of sexual abuse and coercion, cover-ups, spiritual abuse, financial malfeasance, and other sinful activities have led to a crisis of credibility—a breach of trust between the faithful and the clergy. This trust cannot be restored without taking seriously the proper role of the laity in both advising and leading the Church in secular matters.

Clerical child sexual abuse is the focus of some of the Catholic Project's deliberations, and some of the resources it has developed can be accessed at <https://catholicproject.catholic.edu/resources/>. These are grouped under the headings Faith-Based Resources, Native American Resources, Catholic-specific resources, and Information on Non-Contact Offenses.

The Catholic Project works closely with the Spirit Fire organization, '...a Christian Restorative Justice Initiative which promotes healing and new life for individuals, families, parishes, clergy, religious, and communities wounded by the abuse of children or vulnerable adults in settings of faith'.

Have a look at <https://catholicproject.catholic.edu/survivors/spirit-fire/> to see how these two bodies approach the task of healing.





THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND



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Practice Issues- Dealing with Anxiety in Safeguarding Children

Managing your own anxiety is a key to good child safeguarding. It is when we are in the grip of strong emotion that we are most likely to stop breathing, stop thinking and start making mistakes.

Nobody wants to think about another person being avoidably hurt or abused, especially if she / he is a vulnerable child or adolescent. If we observe such things happening, or if we have reason for concern that they may have happened or are likely to happen, we become affected – our natural empathy and compassion kicks in, and we worry. To ensure that we respond effectively rather than react unthinkingly, we need to keep our feelings in check.

If we have a responsibility to do something, and child protection is everyone's responsibility, we will likely feel stressed. According to the Six Seconds Organisation when we feel stress, '...we are biologically programmed to be less creative, less compassionate, less visionary'. Joshua Freedman CEO of the Six Seconds organisation has identified what he calls the vicious spiral of stress:

Uncertainty - In the face of uncertainty, we feel vulnerable, stress kicks in.

Narrow - We become less creative and collaborative and focus on the short-term, urgent.

Isolate - This makes us more isolated, less open to risk, so we don't change or get help.

Overwhelm - The lack of progress and support leaves us overwhelmed and more stressed.'

We can however follow some simple steps:

- Speak in confidence with a trusted adult colleague or friend. Ask them to listen and to hold off giving you advice until you have spoken about what is concerning you. It also helps to realise that you do not have to feel isolated and alone in dealing with a difficult situation.
- Use their attention to support your thinking aloud; this helps you to develop and retain focus.
- Feel your feelings and name these, to them and to yourself. This makes them less threatening.
- Check that you are breathing as deeply as you can.
- Make an initial positive plan for your response.

Thankfully, most child safeguarding situations that we encounter are not emergencies, so there is generally time to figure out what we are dealing with and what we need to do about it.

It is also important to have regular supervision so that you can reflect on your practice and its impact on you personally.