

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS

Western Province Additional Guidance on Vetting

This piece of guidance should be read in addition to and not separate from the Vetting Guidance produced by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI), which is available to download from www.safeguarding.ie

The National Vetting Bureau Act 2012

The 2012 National Vetting Bureau Act 2012 sets out the circumstances that require vetting as:

*Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, **a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children and/or vulnerable adults.***

The Act also requires:

*Vetting in respect of any work or activity as a **minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of religious beliefs**, to children and vulnerable adults, unless such work or activity is **merely incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs** to persons who are not children or vulnerable adults.*

A person is also required to be vetted if their ministry, work, or activity, is deemed relevant to children or vulnerable adults. Relevant work includes the provision of: training; education; treatment; supervision; therapy; counselling; transporting or conveying; advice; guidance; or cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities.

Interpreting the Act for the Church Context

From the above extracted clauses, persons requiring vetting fall into three main categories:

Category 1

A person **must be vetted** who is a Minister, Priest or Other who engages in the advancement of religious beliefs to children and vulnerable adults.

Category 2

A person **must be vetted** if he/she has necessary and regular contact with children or vulnerable adults through his/her ministry, work or activity in the diocese/parish/school/diocesan agency/etc.

Category 3

Vetting is **also required** for those whose ministry, work or activity includes the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children or vulnerable adults. This applies regardless of whether this ministry, work, activity is occasional or regular and necessary.

Category 4

Vetting is **not required** if his/her ministry, work, activity, with children is merely incidental to his/her ministry, work, activity **with others** who **are not children or vulnerable adults**. In other words Church personnel who may come into contact but do not minister, work directly with children or vulnerable adults, excluding those who fall into **Category 3** above.

Examples of Roles that typically WILL require vetting:

- Clergy (Bishops, Priests, Deacons);
- Sacristans;
- Youth Group Leaders such as those responsible for youth choirs, parish run youth clubs, Pope John Paul II Award leaders, youth liturgy groups, etc.;
- Supervisors of altar servers;

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS

Western Province Additional Guidance on Vetting

- Ancillary staff in schools e.g. SNAs, caretakers, etc.;
- Communion Programme: “Do This In Memory of Me” leaders;
- Confirmation Programme: “You Shall Be My Witnesses” leaders;
- Pope John Paul 2 award;
- Eucharistic Ministers who have been commissioned to bring the Eucharist to homes, hospitals, care homes and other institutions where there are children and vulnerable adults present;
- All other roles that bring a person into direct contact with children or vulnerable adults through his/her ministry, work or activity.

Examples of Roles that typically WILL NOT require vetting:

- Parish secretaries;
- Collectors;
- Car park attendants;
- Those present in the sacristy who don’t have an official role with children or vulnerable adults. (Note: these adults should never be left unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults);
- Readers of the Word unless they have a dual role which directly involves contact with children or vulnerable adults;
- Eucharistic Ministers who only distribute the Eucharist within the main body of the church during public Mass or other liturgical celebrations;
- Other roles whose contact with children or vulnerable adults is merely incidental while they are carrying out their ministry, work, activities with those who are not children or vulnerable adults.

Implications for dioceses

Each diocese as a constituent part of the Catholic Church in Ireland is deemed to be a *Relevant Organisation* with regards to the Act and therefore it shall not permit any person to undertake relevant ministry, work or activities on its behalf unless it receives a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of that person.

Equally those, who under the Act do not require vetting should not be requested to apply for vetting, as to do so would be an undermining of their civil rights.

Proof of Identity

The Applicant, as part of their application for vetting, must provide documentation to validate their identity. This should typically include some form of photographic identity along with documentation which verifies their current address. Examples of acceptable forms of identification (both required):

- a) Passport or driving licence;
- b) Verification of current address, i.e. recent utility bill or bank statement.