

DIOCESE OF ACHONRY

**Safeguarding Children
Policy and Procedures**

MARCH 2012

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FOREWORD



St Matthew in his gospel tells us that when the disciples came to Jesus and asked him ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ Jesus called a little child, put the child in the middle of them, and said ‘Truly I tell you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me’. (*Mt.18:1-5*)

The child, therefore, is at the very heart of Jesus’ project and mission.

We are Christians, followers of Jesus. We have no choice but to listen to these words and to put them into action. An essential part of putting these words of Jesus into action for us today in the Diocese of Achonry is the development, promulgation and putting into practice of this Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

Considering all of this it is not surprising that the revelation of abuse by some ministers of God’s word has shocked our communities, and caused great anguish and anger in church and society over the past thirty years.

The lessons of the past three decades about safeguarding children in the Church have been hard earned; the learning at times very slow. This is true for all, in the church and in society as a whole. But for us in the Church that is established on the foundation stone of Jesus’ life and word, the work of ensuring the safety of all children and vulnerable people is not just a civil but even more, a divine imperative.

The policy here presented has been in development now for over two years. We are all deeply in the debt of our Achonry Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee who have worked hard and given long hours to the project, while at the same time keeping a watchful eye on establishing a safe environment for children on the ground throughout the parishes of the diocese.

The policy complies with civil standards and legislation in the documents ‘Children First’ (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011) and ‘Our Duty to Care’ (Department of Health & Children May 2004). It also seeks to incorporate fully the church guidelines as laid down in the 2008 document, ‘Safeguarding Children’, from the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.

The policy includes a Code of Conduct, Core Procedures and a Confidentiality Statement. It is the policy for all parishes and all church bodies in the diocese. As bishop of the Diocese, I have given my approval to this Policy and Procedures Document on January 18, 2012 for implementation in the diocese on publication.

The Safeguarding Children Policy applies to all church personnel, paid or voluntary, who work with children/young people (i.e. up to 18 years of age) or have children/young people in their care. Resources will be made available for the implementation of the Achonry Diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy, and it will be reviewed every three years.

On another occasion, St Mark tells us that people were bringing little children to Jesus and that the disciples “spoke sternly to them”, but “when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them ‘Let the little children come to me: do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs’... “And he took them in his arms, laid his hands on them and blessed them”. To ensure that this blessing is what every child involved in church activities or in the care of church personnel will experience, we must continue as a diocese to ensure that the very best safeguarding procedures and practice are in place. We welcome the participation of children and young people in church activities which contribute to their spiritual, social, emotional and general development. Their welfare is of paramount importance and the church is obliged to create a safe environment for them.

We are all indebted to the many people from all the parishes of the diocese who have taken training in this area, to our local parish representatives who have a role in monitoring and implementing the policy, as well as to the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee for their tireless work over the years. I am deeply grateful also for the help and support we have always received in this matter from the local Gardaí and various Health Service Officers and personnel.

Every time we say the ‘Our Father’, we pray “thy Kingdom come”. That Kingdom can come only where children are protected, cherished and safe. That’s what Jesus himself teaches and demands. It is a responsibility which we must all embrace with renewed vigour now, with the help of this ‘Achonry Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures’.



Brendan Kelly
Bishop of Achonry

30TH JANUARY 2012

1 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

- Each child shall be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.
- Everyone in the Church has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected.

These guiding principles inform this policy.

- The policy has been written to ensure that the Diocese of Achonry takes every possible measure to prevent child abuse.
- It aims to ensure that none of its personnel or volunteers engages in behaviour that could allow abuse to occur or actions that could be misinterpreted by children, their families or other adults as constituting, or leading to abuse.
- This document seeks to incorporate best practice as found in the civil document, 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' (2011).
- The policy seeks to comply with 'Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland' (2008).

This policy is binding on all parishes of the diocese, and on all personnel working for the diocese and the parishes of the diocese.

2 CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN

Safe practice starts with safe recruitment and selection procedures for employees and volunteers. It is important that all reasonable steps be taken to prevent unsuitable people working with children in Church organisations. While the vast majority of people who want to work with children are well-motivated, good recruitment and selection procedures will help screen out or deter those who are not suitable, and enhance the prospects of identifying the best person for the post.

2 (a) RECRUITMENT

- Always apply thorough selection procedures regardless of who the applicant is, and whether the position is full-time, part-time, permanent, paid or voluntary.
- Judge the suitability of applicants across a broad range of criteria, through interview.
- Ensure that interviews are conducted by more than one person and that at least one of those interviewing has established competence in interviewing and selection for posts involving work with children.
- Take all reasonable steps to exclude unsuitable candidates by insisting on and verifying references, qualification and previous records of employment.

(i) APPROPRIATE VETTING: CHOOSING A CANDIDATE

- All vacancies should be advertised
- Give a clear job description
- Application forms to be used for recruitment to all posts. (Appendix: SG01-ACH or SG05-ACH)
- Photo identity required (*unless the person is personally known to the selecting committee*) with the names of two referees; verbal contact must be made with referees
- Candidates must sign a Declaration Form confirming they are eligible for the position (Appendix: SG02-ACH)
- All appointments of those who work with children should be subject to Garda Vetting procedure. (Appendix: 8B)
- An interview panel must interview suitable applicants
- All personnel who work with children should take a nationally recognised Safeguarding programme.
- All personnel must sign the Commitment to Diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures (Appendix: SG04-ACH)
- Up to date records should be kept on all personnel who work with children.

(ii) RÉSUMÉ ON RECRUITMENT

Steps to be followed when Recruiting Volunteers. The Parish Recruitment and Selection Committee (PRSC) is responsible for these steps unless otherwise stated.

- Job/Function/Role Descriptions developed and clearly defined for Volunteers.
- Positions for Volunteers openly advertised, using Newsletter, Parish Bulletin, Local Newspapers etc.
- Names and addresses of prospective volunteer(s) submitted to PRSC.
- Cover Letter (See Template for New Volunteers SG00-ACH), and Adult Application Form (SG01-ACH) sent to prospective volunteer(s).
- Prospective volunteer returns completed Adult Application Form (SG01-ACH) to PRSC.
- Formal Meeting/Chat/Interview with prospective volunteer by PRSC.
- PRSC make contact with referees for written references, which should then be followed up by making verbal contact with referees over the phone or otherwise.
- On receipt of satisfactory references, an Adult Declaration Form (SG02-ACH) and a Garda Vetting Form (if applicable) and a request for submission of Photo ID in the form of a Valid Passport, or Valid Driving Licence or Valid Photo ID Card (EU Only) should be sent to the Volunteer for completion and submission to the PRSC. *(See Cover Letter Template for New Volunteers SG00-ACH)*
- Prospective Volunteer returns completed Adult Declaration Form (SG02-ACH), Garda Vetting Form and Valid Photo ID to PRSC.
- Parish Priest/Agency Manager, signs and forwards Garda Vetting Form to Western Province Diocesan Vetting Office, Galway, for processing.
- PRSC through Parish Priest/Agency Manager receives confirmation of Volunteer's satisfactory/unsatisfactory check and processes accordingly. *(Please refer to Policy and Procedures for Garda Vetting for details on handling information provided by the Garda Central Vetting Unit).*
- Once PRSC is satisfied that all the above steps have been completed satisfactorily the PRSC will decide whether or not the volunteer can begin work in the parish. As part of his/her induction the Volunteer should be informed about the contents of the Diocese of Achonry, Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures, which he/she should understand.
- Form SG04-ACH – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Commitment Form should then be completed by the Volunteer and returned to the parish office. The new volunteer should be enrolled with the Diocesan Office of Safeguarding Children so that he/she may be provided with Keeping Safe Training as soon as feasible.

- A Letter of Appointment (SG03-ACH) should ideally accompany the above, (see *Letter of Appointment Template in Appendix 8C*).

2 (b) HOW WE BEHAVE: CODES OF CONDUCT

Guiding principles:

Children should have access to good role models they can trust, who will respect and nurture their spiritual, physical and emotional development. They have a right to an environment free from abuse and neglect.

2 (b) (i) CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF, LEADERS & VOLUNTEERS

- Leaders who work with children/young people in church related activities should seek to create a safe and secure environment in which all children/young people in their care will flourish. It is important that leaders are aware of the very best principles of good practice.
- Children should be regularly made aware that if they are unhappy about how they are being treated they should immediately tell their parents or a responsible adult. The Code of Conduct will be in place for all church-related activities which involve children/young people.
- It will be made clear to children/young people that complaints can be made in confidence to leader or person in charge of a group.
- Children/young people will be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity.
- Leaders should avoid developing favouritism or becoming overly involved with any one child. Bullying of any form (verbal, psychological or physical) will not be tolerated.
- Use of information technology - such as mobile phones, email, digital cameras and the internet, should be carefully monitored.
- All computers in Church organisations and institutions, which are accessed by children/young people, should be monitored regularly to ensure that they are being used appropriately. Where there is suspicion or doubt, a person with specialist knowledge of computer hardware and software should be asked to assess the purposes for which the computer has been used.
- Leaders must obtain written Parent/Guardian Permission prior to use of computers/internet by children during parish/agency activities. Forms SG07-ACH and SG12-ACH (Special Activity, Parental/Guardian Consent) can be used for this purpose.
- For supervision there will be an adequate ratio of leaders to children/young people at all times.

(See *References Section 5 and Supervision Ratios p. 44 "Safeguarding Children"*)

- Mixed gender groups will have an appropriate number of male and female leaders. Leaders should avoid as far as possible working in isolation with children and/or young people. In instances where pastoral need may require privacy for a young person, working in isolation should be undertaken in a transparent and open manner. For example: leaving door open, notifying other leaders, or note and make record of situation.
- Physical contact between children/young people and leaders must be appropriate at all times. While physical contact is a valid way of comforting or reassuring a child it should take place in an open environment and in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult.
- Photographs of children/young people engaged in church related activities may only be taken and/or made public with parental consent. *(See form SG12-ACH)*
- The consent forms of children and their parents for use of images/photography will be recorded and filed.
- One-to-one photo sessions with children are supervised.

2(b) (ii) CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

The parish is a community of the followers of Jesus who witness to their relationship with Jesus and try to make the kingdom of God visible. Children and young people are to be welcomed into the life and activities of the parish in ways appropriate for their development and formation as Christians. Every person as a child of God deserves respect and to be treated with dignity and fairness.

It should be discussed with children/young people to whom it applies, so that they can understand it and take ownership for it.

It is important that children/young people know the limits and boundaries appropriate to their own behaviour and that leaders working with children/young people will be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity.

The following Code of Behaviour applies to all children/young people who are involved in church related activities in the parishes and in the diocese.

- Please respect yourself and everybody else
- Be fair always and do not cheat or lie.
- Play by the rules in competition; be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Do not use bad language.
- Never use violence against another person.
- Never bully, exclude or engage in name calling against others.
(See Anti-Bullying Policy Section 2(d))
- Tell an adult immediately if anyone is harming or trying to harm you.

- Do not use cigarettes, alcohol or drugs.
- Do not bring anything into the church activity, which might cause harm to yourself or others.
- Please respect the church, and all church property and the property of others and public property.
- Do not use your mobile while in church or during church or parish activities.
- If using information technology during a church activity, please do so only with the consent of your parent and the leader of the group.
(See Policy on Appropriate Computer and I.T. Use - Section 2(g))

2 (c) (i) DISABILITY: RIGHTS & PARTICIPATION

- Disability is defined as a substantial restriction in the capacity of a person to participate in economic, social, or cultural life on account of an enduring physical, sensory learning or emotional impairment. The types of disability include: physical disability, mental ill-health, autism, intellectual or learning disability, and sensory impairment such as hearing or visual impairment. *(Duty to Care: Department of Health & Children April 2002)*
- Assumptions should not be made about the effects of impairment on a person. These should be elicited as much as possible directly from the person even though communications may be difficult. Where there are communication difficulties, the care giver must become proficient in understanding the child.
- To ensure equality of treatment and opportunity for disabled persons, reasonable adjustments should be made to the physical environment such as access to accommodate their needs, membership and activities. Prejudice or disabling attitudes of others need to be addressed through education and information.
- Disabled people must be treated fairly avoiding direct discrimination on the basis of disability, victimisation and harassment. Children and young people with disabilities are children first, and they have the same, rights, hopes, fears and aspirations as other young people. They have additional needs that place additional responsibility on those who care and work for them.

2 (c) (ii) CODE OF PRACTICE FOR INTIMATE CARE OF DISABLED PERSONS

- Children/Young People with a disability may be more vulnerable and depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety.
- Appropriate care is to be given by carers/workers/staff/volunteers always respecting the child's/young person's dignity, privacy and choice of the child.

- Planning and agreements with the parents/children/young person in relation to how to support their inclusion in activities should be discussed when they are joining an activity, particularly around areas such as personal care and establishing communication.
- Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child/young person, this should be done with the full understanding and consent of parents or guardians. In carrying out such personal care tasks, sensitivity must be shown to the child and the tasks should be undertaken with the utmost discretion.
- Any care task of a personal nature, which a child or young person can do for themselves, should not be undertaken by the carer/worker/volunteer.
- In an emergency situation where this type of help is required, parents/guardians should be fully informed as soon as reasonably possible.
- Carers/workers/staff should be aware that vulnerable children may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.

2 (d) ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying will not be tolerated.

- All children/young people are entitled to participate in church and parish activities on an equal basis appropriate to their ability and stage of development. They are entitled to be safe and happy and be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect. Bullying can be very painful, cause long-term damage, destroy their self-esteem, and hinder the enjoyment and benefits of participation. Leaders will be made aware of the main types of bullying, the signs of bullying and ways of preventing it. They will follow procedures if instances occur and also know that it is usually subtle and hard to observe or detect.
- Bullying is repeated physical, verbal or psychological aggression directed by an individual or group against others. Bullying can occur at any age, in any environment, and can be long or short-term.
- Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can not be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.
- Bullying differs from bossiness, which is directed at all members of a group, whereas bullying is targeted at an individual or a few.
- Boisterous play may be dangerous but hurt caused is not deliberate where as bullying is always a wilful desire to hurt someone.
- Any child/young person can be a victim of, and/or a perpetrator of bullying.

2 (d) (i) Types: Bullying can be:

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, “messing” or any use of violence.
- Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic: Because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal: Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing and slugging.
- Cyber: All areas of Internet, such as email and web, chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

2 (d) (ii) Signs of Bullying:

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. The following are warning signs and cause of concern for adults/leaders that a child/young person may be getting bullied: -

- Does not want to attend youth group/school/club anymore.
- Has physical signs such as unexplained repeated bruises or scratches.
- Has poor or deteriorating schoolwork, inability to concentrate.
- Has a possession which is damaged or “gone missing”.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully).
- Continually "losing" money/belongings or having damaged belongings.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is reluctant to go out and has few friends.
- Have torn clothes, broken glasses, missing schoolbooks.
- Becomes withdrawn, depressed, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stammering or regresses in some way such as bed-wetting.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating.
- Is frightened to say what's wrong.
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone.
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received.

- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- Repeated signs of bruising and injuries.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

This list is not exhaustive and there are many other possible reasons for the above.

2 (d) (iii) PREVENTION

- Leaders and adults will make it clear that bullying is unacceptable and will be treated seriously. They will be aware of the possibility of bullying in the course of supervision and welcome information and respect confidentiality.
- Anti-Bullying policy with its sanctions takes its place with other policies and rules. All share the responsibility for making the place/activity safe and happy for all.
- The following methods may help children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:-

Include young people in discussions about what bullying is and why it can't be tolerated.

Encourage young people to take responsibility and report any incidents of bullying to leader.

Review this Anti-Bullying Policy with children/young people involved in our parochial/diocesan activities.

2 (d) (iv) PROCEDURES

- All incidents of bullying should be brought to the attention of the leader/person in charge of group.
- All incidents will be recorded on incident report forms and kept on file.
- Parents will be informed of any incidents of bullying and should meet with leader/person in charge to discuss the problem.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- This usually involves first talking to the victim, and finding out about the nature of the bullying, the name of the alleged bully, and how the victim felt.
- Talking to the alleged bully and also to bystanders and those who may have had a part in the incident, either initiation or joining in.
- Trying to bring about reconciliation and some 'circle time' for the group exploring feelings may help find solutions.

- Both the victim and bully should be supported and helped throughout the process and for as long as necessary. If necessary and appropriate, the Gardaí will be consulted.

2 (d) (v) OUTCOMES

- If possible the bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise and be reconciled.
- Other sanctions may be agreed upon, e.g. time-out of group activity etc.
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion from the programme/club will be considered, as a last resort.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- Some counselling may be necessary to build up self esteem in victim and or in bully.

2 (e) MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Procedures to be followed if a Child/Young person breaches Code of Conduct. If leaders are not satisfied with the behaviour of a child/young person in their care, efforts should be made to resolve the issue by:

- Discussion with the child
- Involvement of Parents/Guardians
- Agreed sanctions

2 (f) SUPERVISING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN INCLUDING OVERNIGHT TRIPS

- A full risk assessment must be made.
- A pre-check on accommodation and transport arrangements must be undertaken.
- Information session for all young people and their parents must be held.
- Children/Young people will not be permitted to consume alcohol or use illicit drugs while participating in church related activities.
- Adults working with children/young people will be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity.
- Leaders will not consume alcohol or use illicit drugs while having responsibility for or in the presence of children/young people.
- Individuals or organisations who supply a service, e.g. transport for trips or are involved in activities or events with children should state that they will abide by the expected standards of behaviour and comply with child protection policy.
(*Safeguarding Children 2008: Vetting for events/activities p.44*)

- The Parental Consent form for Special Occasions/Events Form (SG07-ACH) should be signed.
- Insurance, programme of events and provision for accidents and emergencies should be in place.

2 (g) POLICY STATEMENT RELATING TO USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Mobile phones and computers used by children during parish activities should be supervised at all times by the leaders/adults who are on duty.
- Parental/guardian permission should be obtained prior to the supervised use of the computer/internet during parish activities by children.
- Appropriate recording systems should be in place to record children's use of the internet.
- Unacceptable internet use and in particular the following is deemed unacceptable internet use or behaviour:
 - visiting internet sites that contain offensive, obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material
 - using the computer to perpetrate any form of fraud, or software, film or music piracy
 - using the internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users;
 - using obscene or racist language
 - hacking into unauthorised areas
 - publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about others on social networking sites
 - introducing any form of malicious software into the corporate network
 - intentional damage to computers, computer systems or computer networks

2 (h) CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

- The Diocese of Achonry is committed to keeping confidential all personal information about children and their families.
- The only exception will be when child protection concerns arise. In this situation information will be shared with the relevant authorities in the best interest of the child.
- Information must be shared on a need to know basis only. The sharing of such information is not a breach of confidentiality.
- No undertaking regarding secrecy can be given as there is a difference between secrecy and confidentiality.
- All confidential information about children and their families will be kept in a secure manner in accordance with Data Protection requirements.

2 (i) PROCEDURES TO ENSURE ADEQUATE RECORD KEEPING

General Records and Data Protection

Good record keeping is an integral part of safeguarding children and should not be considered an optional extra. Safeguarding children requires that there is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals. These will be stored securely so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.

Records should be legible, preferably typed, and entries should be signed, dated and timed. Records should be factual, and not include unnecessary abbreviations, jargon, opinion or speculation. Verifiable information should be recorded and what is observed or reported should be indicated. Copies should be made of letters sent and reports made to third party.

- An accurate record should be kept for **each** child and young person participating in activities. This would include attendance, programme details and medical information. This record should include a copy of the consent form or letter signed by the parent or guardian. It should also contain details of emergency contact numbers.
- Consent Forms for children and parents to be signed by parents/guardians and the child e.g. SG04-ACH, SG05-ACH, SG06-ACH, SG07-ACH, SG11-ACH, SG12-ACH. These should be filed and stored for 20 years.
- Attendance Record Files should be kept for each child and young person.
- A written record of all organisers, supervisors, employees and volunteers in attendance at events such as meetings, choir rehearsals and sports activities should be kept.
- An Incident/Accident Report Form (SG08-ACH) should be completed in the event of an accident or incident relating to a child.
- Training records and up to date files should be kept in respect of all personnel.
- Activity Reviews & Evaluations. Evaluation sheets should be made available after events and activities. These should be filled, collected and reviewed, and suggestions may lead to recommendations for future.
- All original records, including rough notes should be passed immediately to the Designated Person. Any Copies of records must be kept secure and confidential.
- For the purpose of a Review by the National Board access to documentation relating to the review will be made available to the Reviewers.
(See 'Safeguarding Children Standards and Guidance Document' p.79, note 10)
- For the purpose of Audits by the National Board, access to documentation deemed to be of assistance will be made available to the Auditors.
(See 'Safeguarding Children Standards and Guidance Document' p.82, notes 11 & 12).

2 (j) PROCEDURE TO ENSURE THE PHYSICAL SAFETY OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

- Adequate and appropriate supervision must be provided in relation to all events and activities organised for children and young people.
(see below for recommended ratios at end of this section)
- In places such as changing areas, toilets and showers separate provision must be made for boys and girls.
- There must be adequate and gender-appropriate supervision of boys and girls in changing areas.
- Make sure that a First Aid Kit is readily available. This should be regularly checked and replenished. It is advisable that First Aid training be provided for workers and volunteers.
- Access to a telephone at all times is essential in case of emergency.
- Adequate insurance must be obtained to cover all activities. In cases of uncertainty about the level of cover, check with the relevant insurance provider.
- Where the parish or parish activity is providing transport, make sure that drivers and vehicles meet legal requirements. Where transport is being hired, check with the service provider that drivers and vehicles conform to legal requirements. Always inform parents/guardians about transport being used and obtain appropriate consent.
- A clear policy should be agreed with parents and guardians regarding the taking of photographs and the making of video recordings of children or young people involved in parish-related activities or events. *(See Code of Conduct Section 2(b) (ii) above).*
- There should be up to date contact numbers for parents and staff.
- Ensure that an Accident/Incident report form is completed in the event of any accident or incident relating to a child/young person. *(See Form SG08-ACH in Appendix)*

SUPERVISION RATIOS: RECOMMENDED RATIOS

The recommended minimum adult to young person ratio in any group should be one adult per group of ten, plus one other adult, and allowing an additional adult for each group of ten 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 of staff to children be considerably higher.

Under 8 Years

0 - 2 years: one member of staff to 3 children

2 - 3 years: one member of staff to 4 children

3 - 7 years: one member of staff to 8 children (6 children for outdoor activity)

8 Years and Over

Two members of staff to 20 children (15 children for outdoor activity) There should be one additional staff member for every 10 children. (*Safeguarding Children p.44*)

2 (k) PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IF A PARENT/GUARDIAN HAS A COMPLAINT

All complaints except safeguarding complaints or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially.

Efforts will be made to resolve complaints quickly and informally through discussion with the parents and members of staff as appropriate.

Parents/young people will be made aware that there is a complaints procedure in operation and will receive a copy of the 'complaints form' as part of the Safeguarding Children policy.

If a parent/guardian young person/child is not satisfied with any aspect of the running of a particular activity or the behaviour of any individual involved in that activity they should first seek to resolve the issue informally by:

- Discussion with the person in charge of the activity/service or their immediate superior if appropriate.
- If the issue is unresolved or recurs the complaint should be put in writing to the Parish Priest/Chairperson of Pastoral Council
- A meeting may then be organised with the complainant (as appropriate) to try and resolve the issue.
- Written records of discussion and agreements made will be kept of this meeting and copies made available to parents (as appropriate).
- Most complaints are resolved at this stage. However if there are other or more serious issues arising from the complaint then both sides may agree the need for a third party to mediate in relation to the complaint

2 (l) PROCEDURES TO ENSURE BEST PRACTICE IN THE SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN

- Each parish will have a Local Safeguarding Representative
- The Local/Parish Representatives are the people who are identified to promote the safeguarding of children within a parish and to act as a point of contact for parishioners and to liaise with the Designated Person
- Parish Safeguarding Children Audit will be carried out by the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee every two years. The purpose of this Audit will be to ensure and maintain the highest possible standards and best practice in safeguarding children

- The role of the Parish Representatives is not to hear concerns or to investigate (*Training & Support Materials for Safeguarding Children 2010, p.29*)
- The Diocesan Policy Statement and contact details for the Designated Person are to be displayed in every church porch with the full policy document available on the diocesan website
- Links are to be maintained with statutory safeguarding children agencies to ensure good working relationships in order to keep children safe
- Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives. Professional support services shall be available to the victim
- A Support Person is to be made available to those who make an allegation or disclose abuse. This Support Person is not acting as a counsellor or therapist
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee will ensure that appropriate training and professional support and advice are provided for Local Safeguarding Representatives

2 (m) THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE

The role of the Parish Representative is to promote the safeguarding of children within the parish by:-

- Raising awareness of what is involved in safeguarding children;
- Disseminating information on the policy and procedures for safeguarding children;
- Ensuring that any activities run within the parish are provided for in a manner which ensures the safety and well-being of the children involved (*for example, appropriate level of supervision for the activity*);
- Ensuring that the contact details of the Designated Officer and Local/Parish Representatives are widely publicised;
- Ensuring that parishioners are asked about their views on policies and practices for keeping children safe.

The overall responsibility for safeguarding children in any Church organisation remains with the relevant Church authority, i.e. the parish priest/congregational leader. (*Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2008 p.54*)

3 RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE

What is Child Abuse?

To maintain a safe and secure environment for all children and young people in their care, all Church personnel need to be fully aware of the main forms of abuse:- **Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Neglect** (cf. Pages 8 - 12, & 70 - 74 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection of Children')

Recognising Abuse

3 (a) (i) PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical is any form of non-accidental injury which results from failure to protect a child.

Examples of behaviours that cause physical injury include:

- shaking
- use of excessive force in handling
- deliberate poisoning
- suffocation
- fabricated/induced illness
- allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child

3 (a) (ii) EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is normally found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child, rather than in any specific pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it rarely manifests itself in terms of physical signs or symptoms.

Examples of emotional abuse of children include:

- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions
- Emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer
- Unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child
- Under- or over-protection of the child
- Failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for the child's cognitive and emotional development
- Use of over-harsh disciplinary measures
- Exposure to domestic violence

3 (a) (iii) SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for the gratification of others. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activity of a contact or non-contact nature whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Examples of child sexual abuse include:-

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, or those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person
(Cf. *Safeguarding Children: Standards etc. p. 74 & pps. 9 & 10 Children First*)

3 (a) (iv) NEGLECT

Neglect can be defined in terms of omission, where the child suffers harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults and/or medical care.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

3 (a) (v) BECOMING AWARE OF ABUSE

- Appropriate training in recognising neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse will be provided to all parish clergy, staff and volunteers, who will each be given a copy of the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy. This policy will also be available on the Diocesan Website www.achonrydiocese.org.
- If concerns are disclosed to parish staff or volunteers, it is our aim that they will feel comfortable about voicing these concerns in a safe, supportive, understanding and sensitive environment.

- All Church personnel must deal with concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse by bringing the information either to our parish Child Protection Representative, who will refer the matter to the Designated Person, or they may refer directly to the Diocesan Designated Person. (This does not apply to situations involving the Sacramental Seal, which is inviolable).
- **People may tell you about:-**
 - Abuse that is happening to them now at the present time
 - Abuse that happened to them some time ago – historical
 - Something they have been told by another person and they strongly believe to be true
- **You may also witness or others may tell you about:-**
 - Signs of abuse, such as physical injuries to a child;
 - Something such as the behaviour of an adult towards a child that made you feel uncomfortable.

3 (b) GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

Any person who has reason to believe that a child or young person is being abused while taking part in Church related activities or elsewhere, has a duty to report their concern to the appropriate authorities (i.e. Parish Representative or Diocesan Designated Person) so that the matter can be fully investigated.

If somebody tells you about abuse it is important that you:

- **Listen**
- **Record**
- **Report**

Responding

- Stay calm and listen. Give the individual time to say what he/she wants to say.
- Listen carefully and take the child/adult seriously.
- Reassure the child or adult that he/she is acting correctly.
- Record the disclosure as carefully as possible. Outline what the child or adult said in the language that was used.
- Explain that you will need to discuss this with someone else.
- Report all disclosures to the Diocesan Designated Person immediately.
- If there is a serious risk or danger to the child concerned, contact the HSE and/or the Gardaí immediately.
- Do not express any opinions about the individual or family members.

3 (c) PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CONCERNS, ALLEGATIONS OR DISCLOSURE

If concerns arise about the welfare or safety of a child or young person, the following procedures should be followed:

- All concerns, allegations and disclosures should be referred immediately to the Diocesan Designated Person who must report the matter to the civil authorities and the diocesan authorities without delay.
- The Diocese will respond effectively to all allegations by ensuring that any concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse are reported promptly to the civil authorities.
- In the case of a child making a disclosure, a written note or report should be drawn up as soon as possible afterwards.
- Where an adult makes a disclosure, it may be possible with the permission of the adult concerned to make notes during the course of the event; otherwise a written account should be drawn up as soon as possible afterwards, and in any case before the end of the day.
- Record the time, date and location, and the names of any others present at the time. The record should be dated and signed.
- Do not be selective. Record all detail – it may prove invaluable at a later date.
- All original records, including notes, should be passed immediately to the Diocesan Designated Person.
- Indicate to the child or person raising the concern what will happen next. Indicate who will receive the information.
- In cases of emergency, where the child or young person is at immediate or serious risk, an immediate report should be made to the HSE as well as the Diocesan Designated Person.
- Where appropriate HSE personnel are not available, An Garda Síochána should be contacted to ensure that under no circumstances is a child left in a dangerous situation pending HSE intervention.
- The details of any report or disclosure should not be discussed with anyone other than those detailed in the above procedure.

3 (d) THE ROLE OF A DESIGNATED PERSON

- To receive all concerns relating to the safeguarding of children, including any disclosure or allegation of abuse and to take responsibility for managing the response to that concern or disclosure, from start to finish. This may include referral to the HSE and the Gardaí.

- To report all instances of suspected or disclosed abuse, where there are 'reasonable grounds for concern' as indicated in Children First 2011, to the HSE, and/or An Garda Síochána, using the standard reporting form.
- Out of office hours and in the case of an emergency, where a child is at serious and immediate risk, to report the matter to An Garda Síochána without delay.
- To also refer all instances of suspected or disclosed abuse relating to parish personnel to the relevant Church authorities.
- To ensure that the person raising a concern, disclosing abuse, or making an allegation is informed about the progress of the inquiry process.
- To liaise with the Diocesan authorities and the National Safeguarding Office.
- To carefully record all steps undertaken as part of these procedures.
- To manage any internal Church investigation.
- In the event of a Diocesan Designated Person or the Deputy not being available or a child being at immediate risk, contact should be made with the local Health Service Executive Duty Social Worker or, during out of duty social work hours, with local Gardaí.

The Deputy Designated Person acts in the event that the Designated Person is not able to deal with a concern/allegation, where there may be a conflict of interest, or where s/he is unavailable due to absence or incapacity.

3 (e) SEAL OF CONFESSION

The Seal of Confession requires absolute confidentiality and allows no exceptions. If a disclosure is made in the context of Confession, the priest is obliged to invite the person making the disclosure to discuss the matter outside of the Confessional. Because of the obligations of the sacramental seal, no priest performing a function under the procedures for dealing with a child protection matter should celebrate the Sacrament of Penance with a respondent. (*The respondent is the person about whom a child protection concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation has been made*).

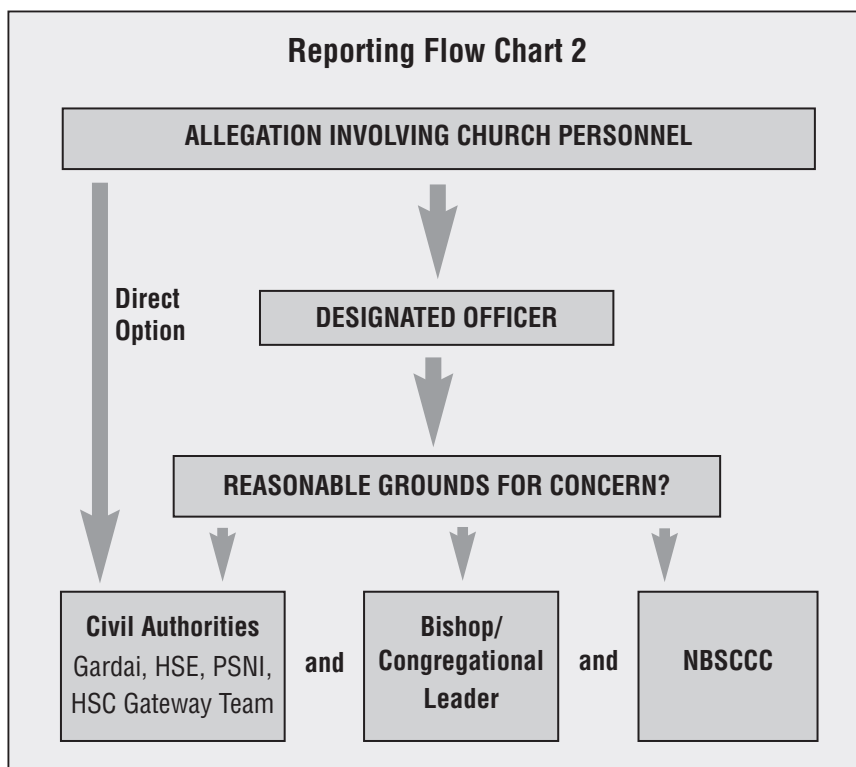
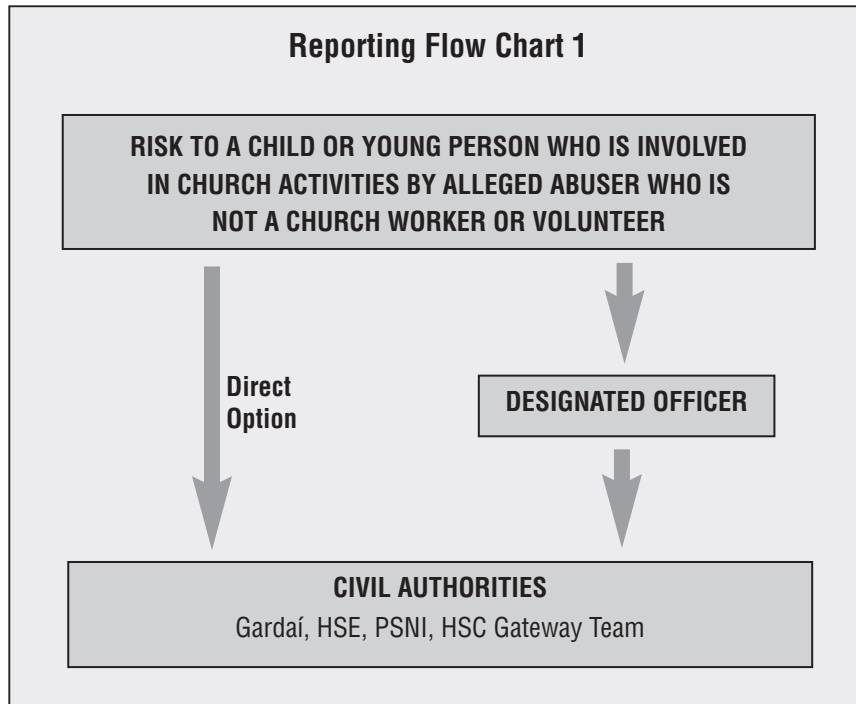
3 (f) RETROSPECTIVE DISCLOSURES BY ADULT

When a retrospective disclosure is made by an adult that he/she were abused in the past, serious consideration must be given to the current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser. If the alleged abuser is known to have contact with children, advice and clarification should be sought from the local Duty Social Worker. The adult will be advised of their right to report the abuse to An Garda Síochána. All staff etc in the Diocese of Achonry will follow the procedures outlined in 'Children First (2011)', (section 3 : 6, p.16; 'Retrospective Disclosures by Adults', 7 : 16 : 7 p.52) in relation to disclosures by adults and consult with the Designated Person as per the Reporting procedure.

It is important to acknowledge the impact that pain and trauma can have on a person's ability to access help, which may present itself as challenging and difficult behaviour.

3 (g) COMPLAINTS ABOUT MANAGEMENT OF CONCERNS OR REPORTS Etc.

If a person is dissatisfied with the management by the diocese of a concern, suspicion, report or allegation he/she may contact the HSE directly at the above numbers and/or the National Office for Safeguarding Children, New House, St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Telephone 01-5053124.



4 TRAINING

- Everyone in the Church who comes into contact with children has a role to play in their protection. To carry out this role confidently and effectively they need to be aware of child protection issues and to have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe.
- All Church personnel who work with children are inducted into the Church's policy and procedures on child protection when they begin working within Church organisations.
- Identified Church personnel are provided with appropriate training for keeping children safe with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge.
- Training is provided to those with additional responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk, acting as designated person.
- Training programmes are approved by National Board for Safeguarding Children and updated in line with current legislation, guidance and best practice.
- Mandatory training appropriate to roles will be provided by the diocese for all personnel.

5 COMMUNICATION

There are clear processes in place to disseminate the Church's child protection policy and procedures to personnel, parishioners and external agencies.

- The child protection policy is openly displayed and available to everyone.
- Children are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and whom to speak to if they have concerns.
- Everyone in the Church organisation knows who the Designated Person is and how to contact him or her.
- Church personnel are provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as Health and Social Care Trusts/Health Service Executive, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, telephone helplines and the designated person.
- Church organisations establish links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.
- Church organisations at diocesan and religious order level have an established communications policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.
- Local Representatives have an important role in raising awareness about all aspects concerning Safeguarding Children. They also have a role in communicating the views of parishioners on these matters.
- Details on how and to whom concerns or allegations are reported.
- Contact details are displayed on church notice boards and published in parish newsletters periodically and on the diocesan website.

6 ADVICE & SUPPORT

How those who need help or advice can access this

Anyone who has perpetrated abuse should be assisted and supported in seeking help. Whether an allegation concerns current or historical abuse it is important that the support or advice offered does not compromise any future inquiries or put children at further risk. (*Safeguarding Children p.20 and p.58*)

6 (i) ROLE OF ADVISER TO THE RESPONDENT

Following a credible allegation the Bishop will appoint an Adviser to the Respondent who will:-

- Represent the needs of the respondent to the Church Authority.
- Assist, where appropriate, with the care of the respondent.
- Assist with communication between the respondent, the designated officer and the church authority.
- The Adviser will accompany, if requested, and be available after the respondent's meeting with the church authority and the designated officer.
- Inform the respondent of his/her right to obtain advice in both civil and canon law.
- Identify any therapeutic or other needs of the respondent and suggest how these might be met.

6. (ii) ROLE OF SUPPORT PERSON

The Bishop or Religious Leader will appoint a Support Person to be available to those who make an allegation/disclosure of abuse:-

- To assist, where appropriate, with communication between the complainant and the Designated Officer
- To assist in gaining access to information and help
- To represent their concerns during enquiry process
- Consider any wishes expressed by complainant in regard to a pastoral response by the church to his or her family
- Be available throughout the process to the complainant
- Ensure the complainant is kept informed of developments in relation to him/her
- Represent the wishes and any therapeutic needs expressed to the Designated Person
- Arrange, if considered helpful, a meeting between the complainant and the Church Authority (Bishop or Congregational Leader)

6 (iii) COUNSELLING

Throughout his ministry, Jesus reached out to those who were hurt or wounded in any way. The church is called to continue this vital ministry of healing and reconciliation.

Aware of the impact that pain and trauma can have on a person's ability to access help, which may present itself as challenging and difficult behaviour, the diocese will try to ensure that all those who are affected by child abuse in the Church are supported on their journey through the provision of a comprehensive range of human, practical, professional and spiritual supports. The wishes of those who are offered support will be respected.

6 (iv) CONTACTS, HELPLINES, SUPPORT AND REFERRALS

Health Service Executive (HSE) contact Numbers:

County Mayo

Castlebar	094 90 22333
Swinford	094 9251900
Ballina	096 21511

County Sligo

Markievicz House Sligo	071 9155133 & 071 9155136
Tubbercurry	071 9120454/ 071 9120062
Duty Social Worker	087 9299666 (Mon – Fri 9.15 – 5.15 pm)

County Roscommon

Boyle	071 9662087
Castlerea	094 9621155
Roscommon	090 6637528

County Leitrim

Carrick-on-Shannon	071 9620308
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An Garda Siochana

Garda Confidential Line	1800 666 111
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Investigation Unit	1800-250-025
Ballaghaderreen	094 9860002
Ballina	096 20560
Ballymote	071 9189500
Boyle	071 9664620
Claremorris	094 9372080
Sligo	071 9157000
Swinford	094 9252990

Any local Garda Station

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS) provides free professional Counselling/therapy for any adult who experienced abuse or neglect while they were a child. The service encourages people, where possible to self refer by calling the FREEPHONE NUMBER 1800 235 1114 during weekday office hours.

HELPLINES FOR ADULTS

Towards Healing: (Faoiseamh) A Counselling and Support Service for survivors of abuse by clergy. Freefone: 1800 303 416

National Counselling Helpline: 1800 477477

HSE Adult Counselling Service: 1800 235234 www.hse-ncs.ie

SAMARITANS: The Samaritans are available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress and despair, including those which may lead to suicide. Tel: 1850 609090

One in Four: Offers a voice to and support to men and women who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence. They are an appointment only service. Tel: 01 6624070, Mon to Fri 9.30 to 5.30pm or Email: info@oneinfour.org

National Counselling Service: Tel: 1800 234 119 West 1800 234114
Website: www.hse-ncs.ie

Crime Victims Helpline: Is a National Helpline which offers support to victims of crime in Ireland. Free phone: 116 006 Text: 0851 33 77 11

CARI: Provide professional, child centred therapy and counselling service to children, families and groups who have been affected by child sexual abuse. Helpline No. 1890 924567, email: info@cari.ie

SPECIALIST SERVICES

National Association National Support Helpline (Northern Ireland) for people abused in childhood. Tel: 0800 085 3330 Website: www.napac.org.uk

HELPLINES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

CHILDLINE: Free 24 hour helpline Tel: 1800 666 666
Website: www.childline.org.uk

ISPCC: Tel: 1800 666666/1850 504050 Website: www.ispcc.ie
Mayo Branch 094 9025254

Barnardos: Counselling for Children (province wide).
Tel: 1850 222 300 Website: www.barnardos.ie

Please note that only services which you can contact yourself are included. GPs, community nurses or social workers may be able to refer you to other services such as clinical psychology which are not listed here.

National Office for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland
New House, Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare
Phone no: 01 505 3124 Fax: 01 505 3026 Website: www.safeguarding.ie

7 IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING

How are we going to check that everything is working?

Implementation and monitoring will be undertaken by Diocesan Safeguarding Committee. This will include a regular audit from the Parishes and church bodies of the Diocese:

- A review of local records e.g. Sacristy Book for Mass Servers by local representatives
- On-going communication with HSE
- On-going communication with National Office in Maynooth.
- Annual Report from designated Person
- Policy and procedures to be compliant with National Office and HSE
- Reporting to HSE and National Office when required
- Records to be stored safely and securely

DIOCESE OF ACHONRY SAFEGUARDING PERSONNEL

Diocesan Safeguarding Committee

Chairperson:	Mrs Anne Leonard, Tourlestrane, Co. Sligo.
Secretary:	Mr. Brian Cahill, Cashel South, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo.
Diocesan Designated Person:	Fr. Joseph Gavigan PP, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. Tel. 094-9860011
Deputy Designated Person:	Mrs Teresa Curley, Edmondstown, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. Tel. 094-9860797, Mobile 087-2208242
Support Persons:	Sr. Ethna O'Grady, Circular Road, Swinford, Co. Mayo. Tel. 087-6168984
	Mrs Kathryn Collins, Garraglas, Sandyhill, Charlestown, Co. Sligo.

Advisory Panels: The Bishop will consult with the National Office in Maynooth and will draw on the skills and personnel of Advisory Panels of the neighbouring dioceses of Tuam and Elphin who are available to assist should an investigative process be required.

8 APPENDICES

8 (1) ALTAR SERVER GUIDELINES

Some Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Q. Should altar servers fill in an application form?

A. YES

Q. Do you need parental consent for altar servers?

A. YES

Q. Should every sacristy have a 'sign in' book?

A. YES

Q. Who should sign in?

A. EVERYBODY present who is assisting in/with the Liturgy.

Q. What is the correct procedure to follow when altar servers are needed for liturgies outside of Sunday Mass and other Holy Day ceremonies?

A. Schools must have received written parental/guardian consent in order to release children to serve during school time. As schools can only release a child to the care of a parent or someone who has been nominated by a parent to collect them, it is essential that the written permission outlines who will collect the child in question and escort them to and from the church. A parent may also give permission for a child to make his/her own way to and from the church. It is also important to note that altar servers who leave school to serve Mass are covered under the Parish insurance and not that of the school.

Points to Note:-

- All Sacristies to have a fully stocked First Aid Kit in case of accidents. .
- Incident report form to be filled out in the event of any accidents that occur.
- All adults to maintain appropriate boundaries when dealing with children/young people.
- Adults to avoid being alone with a child/young person – if you cannot avoid being alone with a child/young person please do so in an open and transparent manner. Please inform another adult of your situation if necessary.

8 (2) GARDA VETTING

Garda Vetting and Training for Safeguarding Children

Church Roles for which Garda Vetting/National Board/Office Training is Mandatory

Any Person whether Full-time, Part-time or Voluntary who through his/her ministry in the name of the Church has contact with children, has an inherent obligation to submit themselves for Garda Vetting.

In general a person who has substantial contact with children and unsupervised access to children requires vetting.

The following provides an outline of the typical roles performed by such people who may require training and vetting. It is not exhaustive. It is the responsibility of the Parish Priest in each parish to contact the Office of Safeguarding Children and enrol all new and existing Staff and Volunteers on the Keeping Safe Training List so that Training can be made available as soon as possible.

Vetting Requirement for the following:-

Clergy and Religious

Bishops and Congregation Leaders
All Diocesan Clergy
Religious who work on behalf of the Diocese
Candidates for priesthood and religious life

Pastoral and Social Support

Home or hospital visitors who work on behalf of the Church
Organisers of Parish & Diocesan Pilgrimages
Adults with access to children while on Pilgrimage

Support Staff

Parish Secretaries
Caretakers/Sacristans
Counsellors: Rainbow (Bereavement) Personnel
Clergy Housekeepers

Apostolic Groups

Vincent De Paul
Legion of Mary
Pioneer (P.T.A.A.)
Diocesan Advisors (Schools)

Safeguarding Children Committee

Members of Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Committee
Diocesan Keeping Safe Trainers
Safeguarding Children Parish Representatives

Liturgical Preparation and Celebration

Sacramental Programme Workers/Volunteers

Choir Leaders for children and Folk Groups
Trainers for Altar Servers
Eucharistic Ministers
Parish Youth Club Leaders

Vetting Forms and correspondence to be sent to

Ms. Ita O'Mahony, Secretary,
The Western Province Diocesan Vetting Office,
Newtownsmith, Galway.
Phone 091-575051. Email wpvs@eircom.net.

8. (3) RESOURCES & STANDARD FORMS

Cover Letter with Application Forms	SG00-ACH
Adult Volunteer Application Form	SG01-ACH
Declaration Form	SG02-ACH
Letter of Appointment of Volunteer	SG03-ACH
Volunteer Commitment (sign up) Form	SG04-ACH
Youth Ministry Application Forms	SG05-ACH
Parental Consent Form - General Enrolment Form	SG06-ACH
Parental Consent for Special Occasions	SG07-ACH
Accident/Incident Report Form	SG08-ACH
General Complaints Form	SG09-ACH
Recording Form for Concerns or Disclosures	SG10-ACH
Altar Server Application & Consent Form	SG11-ACH
Parents' & Children's Media Permission Form	SG12-ACH
HSE Standard Report Form to be completed by Designated Person	
Garda Vetting Application Form (Standard)	

REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Achonry Diocesan Child Safeguarding Committee wishes to thank sincerely and acknowledge the advice, assistance and publications of the following:-

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2011).

Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church
in Ireland (2008).

Archdiocese of Tuam: Child Protection Policy (2010)

Diocese of Elphin: Safeguarding Children (Policy & Procedures)

Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy & Procedures for the Archdiocese of
Dublin (2011)

Diocese of Meath: Safeguarding Children Policy;

Raphoe Diocesan Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children (2011)

‘Our Duty to Care’ Department of Health & Children (Reprinted May 2004)

Code of Ethics Good Practice for Children’s Sport (Reprinted 2003)
(The Irish Sports Council & Sports Council Northern Ireland)

Western Inter-Diocesan Support Group (Sec. Fr. Tod Nolan)

Policy & Procedures for Garda Vetting The Western Province Diocesan Vetting
Service (2009)

Keeping Safe: A manual to support good child protection practice Volunteer
Development Agency (2004)

Helpful suggestions received from:-

Ms. Sandra Claxton, Information and Advice Officer, Children First
Mayo/Roscommon, HSE West

Ms. Teresa Devlin, Director of Safeguarding, National Office for Safeguarding
Children, New House, Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Ms. Ita O’Mahony, Western Province Diocesan Vetting Service, Galway Diocesan
Pastoral Centre

National Board for Safeguarding Children: Standards & Guidance Document for the
Catholic Church in Ireland (2008)

Covering Letter to Accompany Adult Application Form for New Parish Volunteers

SG00-ACH

(Template to be modified according to circumstances)

Parochial House
Parish Townland
Postal Town
County XX

Dear (Parish Volunteer).

Thank you for your interest in volunteering within the parish.

As part of the Diocesan Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children, it is a requirement that all new volunteers complete the attached

Adult Volunteer Application Form SG01-ACH, and
Declaration Form SG02-ACH.

Once completed the application form should be returned to the Parish Office or Parochial House. The Parish Recruitment and Selection Committee (PRSC), on behalf of the parish will then meet with you to discuss the role and make verbal contact with two referees named on your form.

Following the receipt of satisfactory references, and selection you will be provided with other necessary forms as follows, which you should complete and return to the parish office:

1. Garda Vetting Form
2. You will also be required to submit a valid Photo ID in the form of a Valid Passport, or Valid Driving Licence or Valid Photo ID Card (EU Only).

We are very aware of the confidential nature of the information shared and wish to assure you that it will be treated in the utmost confidence and handled strictly in accordance with the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Record Keeping Policy.

Thank you for your co-operation and interest in volunteering for the parish.

Yours sincerely,

Adult Volunteer Application Form

SG01-ACH

CONFIDENTIAL

*(See Relevant Sections of Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures:
Creating a safe environment Section 2 p.4 – p.14)*

Ministry: _____

Parish/Centre: _____

Surname: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Telephone No.(s) _____

email: _____

Are you (please tick)

Employed

Unemployed

Student

Homemaker

Retired

Other

Current & Previous Work Experience _____

Have you previously been involved in voluntary work or Church ministry? Yes No

If Yes, please give details _____

Why do you want to get involved in this ministry? _____

Have you previously received any training for working with children/young people? Yes No

If Yes, please give details. _____

Adult Volunteer Application Form *(Continued)*

Have you previously received any Child Protection training? Yes No

If Yes, please give details _____

Is there any medical or other reason why you may not be deemed suited to carry out this work?

Yes No

If Yes, please give details. _____

Any other relevant information? _____

Please provide the names and addresses of two people whom the diocese/parish/centre can contact for a reference (not relatives).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ email: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ email: _____

I declare that the information is true and that I am fit to serve as a

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Diocesan/Parish/Centre Use Only

Date Form Received: _____ Date Ref. Forms Sent: _____

Date Ref. 1 Received: _____ Date Ref. 2 Received: _____

References Received By: _____

Status of Application: _____ Invited to take up ministry: Yes / No *(please circle)*

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Declaration Form

SG02-ACH

For all persons working as employees or volunteers with children and young people

(See relevant Sections of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures:

Creating a safe environment Section 2 p.4 – p.14)

CONFIDENTIAL

Legislation in both jurisdictions in Ireland, have at their core, the principle that the welfare of children and young people must be the paramount consideration. Church organisations therefore ask that everyone working or volunteering for the Church, who will come into contact with children or personal details of children, adhere to good practice by completing and signing this declaration:

Do you have any prosecutions pending or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order? (please tick)

Yes No

If Yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

Date of offence(s): _____

Nature of offence: _____

Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards a child? *(Please tick)*

Yes No

If Yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offences(s) _____

Full name (print): _____

Any surname previously known by: _____

Address: _____

Date of birth: _____ Place of birth: _____

Declaration: I understand that, if it is found that I have withheld information or included any false or misleading information above, I may be removed from my post whether paid or voluntary, without notice. I understand that the information will be kept securely by the Church organisation.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Letter of Appointment for new Parish Volunteer

SG03-ACH

(Template to be modified according to circumstances)

Diocese of Achonry

Parish of _____

Telephone _____

Parochial House
Parish/Townland
Postal Town
County

Date: _____

Letter of Appointment

for _____
(Name of person and Volunteering Role)

Dear (Parish Volunteer),

I am writing to confirm that you are now in a position to take up your volunteering role and to thank you for your patience and co-operation.

Enclosed are:

- A copy of the Safeguarding Children, Policy and Procedures, of the Diocese of Achonry, which you should read and understand.
- Form SG04-ACH Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Commitment Form. This should be completed and returned to the parish office once you have read and understood the above policy and procedures.

If you have any further questions or wish to discuss a situation arising from your voluntary role, please contact either your group leader or your Parish Priest.

May I take this opportunity to welcome you and thank you for your commitment to the parish.

Yours sincerely,

Child Protection Commitment Form

SG04-ACH

*(See Relevant Sections of Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures:
Creating a safe environment Section 2 p.4 – p.14)*

CONFIDENTIAL

Parish/Church area: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

I hereby certify that I have read and understand the information contained in the document entitled:

‘Diocese of Achonry – Safeguarding Children, Policy and Procedures’

and agree to abide by the standards, procedures, codes and policies contained therein as part of my ministry, volunteered or paid, for the Catholic Church within the Diocese of Achonry.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Youth Ministry Application Form

SG05-ACH

(See Sections 2(b) (i) & 2(b) (ii) of Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures)

CONFIDENTIAL

Parish/Church area: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

I wish to apply to serve as (name ministry here)

I understand that becoming a member of the parish _____ group is very important and I accept that I must follow the rules as have been explained to me.

I understand that if I fail to keep these rules my participation may be withdrawn.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Parental/Guardian Consent Form

SG06-ACH

For ministries and activities normally conducted in parish setting

(See relevant Sections of Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures:

Creating a safe environment Section 2 p.4 – p.14)

CONFIDENTIAL

Parish/Church area:

Name of child/young person:

Ministry/ministries/activity child/young person wishes to engage in:

Name of parent/guardian:

Address:

Contact Phone Numbers:

I consent to (name of child) _____ engaging in this ministry/
these ministries/activities.

Other relevant information (e.g. medical conditions, special needs, dietary requirements etc.)

I understand that their involvement will require compliance with diocesan child protection policies and procedures of which I have been informed.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Medical note: If your child/young person in your care requires medical care, suffers specific allergies or requires certain dietary requirements please state so here:

Note: Activities conducted outside of normal parish group activities will require separate consent forms.

Special Activity Parental/Guardian Consent Form

SG07-ACH

For ministries and activities normally conducted outside parish setting

(See relevant sections of Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures:

Creating a safe environment Section 2 p.4 – p.14 and in particular 2(f) and 2(j))

CONFIDENTIAL

Parish/Church area: _____

Name of child/young person: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Ministry/Ministries: _____

Special Activity: _____

Name of Co-ordinator: _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Address: _____

Day Time Phone No: _____ Home Phone No: _____

Mobile Tel. No.: _____ email: _____

Other relevant information (e.g. medical conditions, special needs, dietary requirements etc.)

I have read and I understand the activity outlined accompanying this permission slip. I am satisfied that I have been sufficiently informed about the activity and I agree to allow the young person named above to take part in the outlined activity.

Signature of parent or guardian: _____

Relationship to young person: _____ Date: _____

Incident/Accident Reporting Form

SG08-ACH

Safeguarding Children Diocese of Achonry

1. Name of Church organisation: _____

Venue/Activity/Group/Event: _____

Date/Time: _____

Name of Group Leader/person responsible: _____

Names of others present: _____

2. Location of Incident: _____

Nature of Incident: _____

Name of Child/Young Persons involved: _____

Contact details of parents/guardians: _____

Telephone No: _____

Date(s) of Birth: _____

Give details of Incident/Accident:

3. Action taken both during and following incident:

4. Date and time of people contacted:

5. Other relevant information:

6. Signed: _____ 7. Dated: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Any Follow-up Action required? _____

Signed _____ Dated: _____

General Complaints Form

SG09-ACH

*(See Relevant Section of Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures:
Creating a safe environment Section 2 p.4 – p.14 and in particular 2(k))*

CONFIDENTIAL

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.(s): _____ email: _____

Complaint Details: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Office Use/Parish Use

Form Received by: _____

Date: _____

Actions taken to resolve the problem:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Result of Action Taken _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Child Protection Recording Form

SG10-ACH

For use by anyone recording a disclosure or concern

CONFIDENTIAL

Note: this form is not to be used by the Designated Person when making a formal report to the HSE. Please refer to Appendix for HSE Reporting Form.

(See relevant sections of Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures: in particular 2(c))

1. ABOUT THE DISCLOSURE/CONCERN

Date of disclosure/concern _____

Time of disclosure/concern _____

How was information received? (attach any written information to this form)

Telephone Letter Email In person

2. DETAILS OF PERSON MAKING DISCLOSURE/RAISING CONCERN

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No.: _____ Mobile: _____

email: _____

Relationship to child or alleged victim: _____

3. DETAILS OF CHILD OR ALLEGED VICTIM

Name: _____ D.O.B. _____

Address: _____

Tel No.: _____ Mobile: _____

Ethnic origin: _____

Language (Is interpreter/signer needed?): _____

Disability: _____

Special needs: _____

Parish/Order/Congregation/organisation (if applicable): _____

4. PARENT/CARER DETAILS (*where appropriate*)

Name: _____

Address (if different from above): _____

Tel No.: _____ Mobile: _____

Are they aware of the allegation, suspicion or complaint? Yes No

5. DETAILS OF ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No.: _____ Mobile: _____

Relationship to child/victim (parent/priest/teacher/volunteer etc): _____

Position in Church/Order: _____

Address at time of incident(s): _____

Current contact with children if known (e.g. Board of Management of school, who runs youth activities etc):

Any additional information _____

6. DETAILS OF CONCERN, ALLEGATION OR COMPLAINT

7. REPORTING (If you are not the Diocesan Designated Person please complete section 7)

Have you reported this matter to your Diocesan Designated Person/Diocesan Delegate?

Yes No If Yes, give details of Designated Person you reported to:

Name: _____ Position: _____

Address: _____

Tel. No.: _____ Mobile _____ email: _____

If No explain why:

If No, has the matter been reported to civil authorities? Yes No

Have you reported the matter to any other member of the Church? Yes No

If Yes Date: _____ Time: _____

If Yes explain why:

Who was it referred to?

Name: _____ Position/Parish _____

Address: _____

Tel No.: _____ email: _____

8. DIOCESAN DESIGNATED PERSON *(If you are a Diocesan Designated Person please complete section 8)*

Has the matter been referred to civil authorities? Yes No

How was the referral made?

Date: _____

What actions were agreed and by whom when the matter was referred onto Civil/Church authorities?

Are there any immediate Child Protection concerns?

If so what are they and what actions were taken in order to address them ?

9. DETAILS OF PERSON COMPLETING THE FORM

Name: _____

Tel No.: _____ Mobile: _____ email: _____

Position: _____ Parish/Order: _____

Form Completed

Date: _____ Time: _____

Signed: _____

Note: This form must be sent to the designated officer

Altar Server Application & Parental Consent Form

SG11-ACH

Parish/Church of _____ Server's Application 20____ to 20 ____

Name _____

Address _____

Date of Birth _____

I wish to apply to be a Server for Mass and other Liturgies in Parish/Church of _____ for the coming year.

I understand that becoming a member of the Serving Group is very important.

I promise to be on time for ceremonies and also to get some one to take my place whenever I am not available myself.

I will try to be dignified, reverent and prayerful whenever I am in or around the church as is befitting and proper for servers.

While I am on the rota /roster for serving I undertake to be faithful.

Signed _____ Date _____

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Servers in Parish/Church of _____ 20 ____ to 20 ____

Name of child _____ Name of parent _____

Address: _____

Contact Phone Numbers _____

We/I consent to the involvement of _____ (name of child) as a server.

We/I understand this requires compliance with diocesan child protection policy.

We/I give relevant information of any medical condition or special needs or allergies below.

Signed _____ Signed _____ Date _____

Medical Note etc. If your child has any medical condition or special needs or allergies please state so here:

Standard Reporting Form - Guidance Notes

Health Service Executive have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Boards therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Service Executive Personnel
- Professional and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health boards.
- **Designated person in a voluntary or community agency**
- Any professional individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Service Executive personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager. This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Health Service Executive aim to work in partnership with parents. If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Service Executive cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1994, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her.

In case of emergency or outside Health Service Executive hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochána.

A separate form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

Duty Social Work office and referral intake points for the Health Service Executive.

Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan Community Care Area

Markievicz House Duty Social Worker	071-9155133
Carrick-on-Shannon Duty Social Worker	071-9650324
Tubbercurry Duty Social Worker	071-9120062

Completed Forms to:

Ms. Ann Kelly,
Principal Social Worker,
Markievicz House,
Sligo.
071-9155136

Donegal Community Care Area

Millennium Court, Letterkenny

Duty Social Worker	074-9123770
Buncrana, Co. Donegal Duty Social worker	074-9361044
Donegal Town Duty Social Worker	074-9721074

Completed Form to:

Mr. Michael Gallagher,
Principal Social Worker,
Garden Centre Complex,
St. Conal's Hospital,
Letterkenny.
074-9122322

HSE Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

DETAILS OF CHILD

Name _____ Male Female

Address _____ D.O.B _____

_____ School _____

PARENTS

Name of Mother _____ Name of Father _____

Address (if different to Child) _____ Address (if different to Child) _____

Phone _____ Phone _____

Care and custody arrangements for child if known _____

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional information (eg. School/Occupation etc)

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.
Details of concern(s) allegations(s,) or incidents(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parents' view(s), child's view(s) if known (Use additional sheet if necessary)
Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child

Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child

Name _____ Male Female
Address _____ Relationship to Child _____

Occupation _____

Name and address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child

Social Workers _____

School _____
Public Health Nurse _____
Gardaí _____
General Practitioner _____
Pre-school/Crèche/Youth Club _____
Hospital _____
Other: Special e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs etc. _____

Are Parent or Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department? Yes No

If Yes what is their attitude? _____

Details of person reporting concerns: (See Notes regarding limitations of confidentiality)

Name _____ Occupation _____
Address _____ Phone _____

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family _____

Details of Person completing form

Name _____ Signed _____
Occupation _____ Date _____



Achnary Diocese

An Garda Síochána
GARDA VETTING APPLICATION FORM
The Western Province Diocesan Vetting Service

An Garda Síochána

Reference No:

Our Ref No:

Our Batch No:

NOTE TO APPLICANT

- The Enquiry Form must be completed in full using BLOCK CAPITALS
(Please state N/A if details are not applicable)
- Writing must be clear and legible
- Return the completed form to your **Employer** who will forward it on the **The Western Province Diocesan Vetting Service, Galway Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Newtownsmith, Galway City**
- **Do not** send this form to The Garda Central Vetting Unit or to any Garda Station

To be completed by the Applicant

SURNAME :	PREVIOUS NAME (if any):	
FORENAME:	ALIAS:	CONTACT TEL:
DATE OF BIRTH:	PLACE/CITY OF ORIGIN:	
HAVE YOU EVER CHANGED YOUR NAME:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
IF YES PLEASE STATE FORMER NAME:		

PLEASE STATE ALL ADDRESSES FROM YEAR OF BIRTH TO PRESENT DATE

House no.	Street	Town	County	Post Code	Country	Year From	Year To

Please continue overleaf- If more space is required for addresses please continue on a separate sheet.

Have you ever been convicted of an offence in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere?

No

Yes

Date	Court	Offence	Court Outcome

DECLARATION OF APPLICANT

I, the undersigned who have applied for a position as a _____ hereby authorise An Garda Síochána to furnish to **The Western Province Diocesan Vetting Service**, a statement that there are no convictions recorded against me in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere or a statement of all convictions and / or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in the State or elsewhere as the case may be.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

PLEASE PRINT ALSO: (_____) Date _____

To be completed by Parish/ School/ Diocesan Agency

Name of Parish Priest/ Chairperson of the Board of Management / Agency Manager:

Name of Employer (i.e. Parish/ School / Diocesan Agency): _____

Full Address _____

_____ **Tel Number** _____

Signature _____ **School Roll Number** _____

To be completed by The Western Province Diocesan Vetting Service

Authorised Signatory: _____ (Western Province Diocesan Vetting Service)

PLEASE PRINT ALSO (_____)

Registration Number: _____ **Date:** _____

To be completed by the Garda Central Vetting Unit

According to Garda records there are no previous convictions recorded against the above named applicant

OR the attached convictions appear on Garda Records

OR the attached prosecutions are pending

NOTE: Checks were carried out by this office based on the information supplied.

The convictions supplied may apply to the subject of your enquiry.

Please verify information disclosed with the applicant

Signed: _____ Member I/C

C.V.U