



Diocese of Elphin

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Policy & Procedures



CONTENTS

Foreword

Acknowledgements

Introduction

1. Policy

- 1.1 Context
- 1.2 Policy Statement
- 1.3 Confidentiality Statement

2. What is Child Abuse?

- 2.1 Definition of Child Abuse

3. Procedures For Responding To & Reporting Child Protection Concerns, Allegations Or Disclosures

- 3.1 Some ways you may become aware that abuse is happening
- 3.2 If a child/adult begins to tell you about abuse
- 3.3 Reporting Child Protection Concerns, Allegations or Disclosures
- 3.4 Role of Designated Person
- 3.5 HSE Contact Numbers
- 3.6 An Garda Síochána Contact Numbers
- 3.7 Church Staff Personnel – Allegations Procedure

4. Codes of Behaviour

- 4.1 Code of behaviour for Staff and Volunteers
- 4.2 Code of behaviour for Children/Young People

5. Core Procedures – Prevention

- 5.1 Procedure to ensure Adequate Record Keeping
- 5.2 Recruitment Procedure
- 5.3 Induction Training and Support Procedures
- 5.4 Procedure to ensure Physical Safety of Children/Young People
- 5.5 Recommended Supervision Ratios
- 5.6 General Complaints Procedure
- 5.7 Procedure to be followed if a child/young person breaches the Code of Behaviour
- 5.8 Procedures to ensure best practice in Safeguarding Children
- 5.9 Procedure to ensure appropriate vetting of all Church Personnel – Staff & Volunteers
- 5.10 Procedure for trips away from home
- 5.11 Children/Young People with Disabilities
- 5.12 Policy on Appropriate Computer Use
- 5.13 Children / Young People Application Form and Parental Consent
- 5.14 Anti-Bullying Policy

CONTENTS

6. Resources

- 6.1 Safeguarding Children – Record-Keeping Policy
- 6.2 Altar Servers Guidelines
- 6.3 Safeguarding Children Services
- 6.4 Counselling Services
- 6.5 Protection for Persons Reporting Abuse
- 6.6 Insurance and Child Protection Policy - Guidelines for Outside Groups
- 6.7 Sacristy Registers - Guidelines
- 6.8 General Registers - Guidelines

7. Recruitment and Selection Pack

- 7.1 Introduction to Recruitment and Selection
- 7.2 Parish Recruitment and Selection Committees
- 7.3 Garda Vetting versus Declaration Form
- 7.4 Steps to be followed when Recruiting Volunteers
- 7.5 Cover Letter – New Parish Volunteer
- 7.6 Letter of Appointment – New Parish Volunteer
- 7.7 Church Roles for whom Garda Vetting/Keeping Safe Training is Mandatory

APPENDIX - FORMS

- SG-01 Accident Incident Report Form
- SG-02 Youth Ministry Application Form
- SG-03 Adult Volunteer Application Form
- SG-04 Adult Declaration Form
- SG-05 Parental consent Form
- SG-06 Parental consent Form - Special Activities
- SG-07 Child Protection Recording Form
- SG-08 General Complaints Form
- SG-09 Safeguarding Policy and Procedures – Signup Form

HSE – Standard Form For Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns.
Garda Vetting Application Form – Western Province

APPENDIX – OTHER

Policy and Procedures for Garda Vetting

This Policy and Forms can be downloaded from our Diocesan Website on
www.elphindiocese.ie/safeguarding-children

FOREWORD

Bishop Christopher Jones

Our children and young people are a gift of God and deserve our best care and protection. Safeguarding Children, in a Church context, is about valuing all children and valuing and supporting the adults who serve them. It is about ensuring that the settings children, young people and leaders occupy are respectful of the dignity of all, that they are safe, protective and holistically healthy. It is about valuing the welfare of all, especially children.

Our communities are blessed through the dedicated service of parents/guardians and other adults who give generously of themselves in fostering a culture of participation in ministry and appropriate service of community in our children and young people. In so doing they frequently contribute very positively to the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of children and young people and bring a welcome expression of their faith and goodness to our communal worship and service of God and each other.

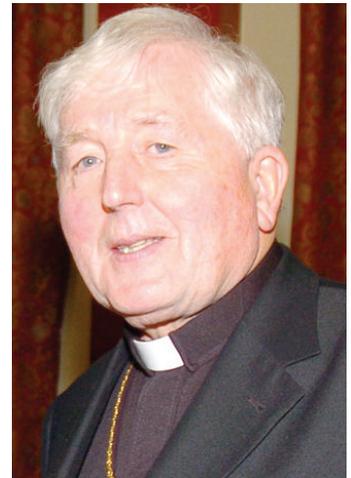
This revised Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures replaces our original Child Protection Policy published in October 2006. Its publication is in response to the request by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC) that every diocese would review their policy and procedures in order to align them with the Board's recently published *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2008)*. It also complies with *Children First (1999)* the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

My thanks to all who have contributed to this publication and to all who are part of our safeguarding structures at both diocesan and parish level. With this said it is important to stress that everyone has a duty and obligation to protect children. As a community of faith both the laity and clergy of our diocese are called to develop, sustain and promote a culture of safety for our children at all times.

I ask too that you join with me in praying that the culture of care and generosity that has led to this revised policy and procedures will extend to the continued implementation of best practice in every parish. Wishing you, your families, friends, fellow parishioners and circles of care every grace and blessing.

+ Christopher Jones.

**Most Rev. Christopher Jones DD,
Bishop of Elphin.
December 2009**



INTRODUCTION

The Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures of the Diocese of Elphin has been developed by the Office of Youth Ministry and Safeguarding Children in conjunction with the Elphin Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisory Committee, and is compliant with civil legislation (Children First 1999)¹ and Church guidelines (Safeguarding Children 2008)².

This Policy Document includes our Policy Statement, Confidentiality Statement, Codes of Behaviour, Core Procedures, supporting forms and resources. It is the policy for all parishes in the Diocese of Elphin and for all our diocesan agencies and has been approved by the Bishop of Elphin, Dr. Christopher Jones.

This Policy Document applies to all parishes of the diocese, all church personnel, paid or voluntary, who work with children/young people and also to the children/young people in their care. In this Policy ‘children/young people’ are defined as persons who have not reached eighteen years of age.

This Policy Document will be made known to the whole Church community including children/young people and will be subject to an annual review, with the printed policy being updated if deemed necessary.

All people, paid or voluntary, who through their ministry in the Catholic Church within the Diocese of Elphin have contact with children/young people, are obliged to sign-up to this policy document. **Form SG-09**, which is in the appendix, should be used for this purpose and returned to the relevant Parish/Agency/Diocesan Office.

For those in positions of responsibility for ensuring best practice in Safeguarding Children is being adhered to i.e. Diocesan Safeguarding Structures, Clergy, etc. this document should be read and understood in conjunction with **Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland**, copies available from the Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry and Safeguarding Children, see **Section 6.3** for contact details.

¹ *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection of Children, Dept of Health and Children, 1999*

² *Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland, National Office for Safeguarding Children, 2008.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Elphin Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry and Safeguarding Children in conjunction with the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Advisory Committee wishes to acknowledge the very helpful contribution made by the following and offer them our sincerest thanks and gratitude:

- **Fr. Tod Nolan and the Child Protection Committee of the Archdiocese of Tuam** for so generously sharing the fruit of their work in this area.
- **Sandra Claxton**, Information and Advice Officer - Children First, HSE - Roscommon/Mayo, for her untiring support and advice throughout the process of producing this new revision of our Safeguarding Children - Policy and Procedures.
- **The National Office of Safeguarding Children** for taking the time to ensure that this document was aligned with Church Guidelines and in particular 'Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland'.
- To the **clergy** of the diocese for their appraisal of the document.
- To the many **others** who have directly or indirectly supported its publication.

1

POLICY



1. POLICY

1.1 Context

As a faith community we the laity, the religious, the priests and the Bishop of the Diocese of Elphin, seek to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to make known the Good News of Christ more fully through worship, service and witness. In keeping with this aim, ministry with children and young people in the diocese is informed by the three Gospel principles of Truth, Justice and Love.

We value and encourage the participation of children and young people in all Church liturgies and parish activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. We appreciate the generous service of the adults who facilitate such participation and respect their integrity.

1.2 Policy Statement

Each child/young person is a gift from God and has an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which must be respected, nurtured and protected by all.

We recognize the dignity and rights of every child/young person and are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being. The welfare of the child must always be paramount³.

We acknowledge that all who work with children/young people have a special duty of care towards them. Leaders must create a safe environment for children/young people in order to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the life of the Church.

1.3 Confidentiality Statement

The Diocese 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. The sharing of such information is not a breach of confidentiality.

All confidential information about children and their families will be kept in a secure manner in accordance with Data Protection requirements.

³ *Child Care Act 1991 & UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Ratified by Ireland 1992)*

2

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?



2. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

2.1 Definition of Child Abuse

In order to create and maintain a safe and secure environment for the children/young people in their care it is important that everyone is aware of what is meant by abuse. The abuse of children generally involves one or more of four main forms of abuse⁴:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the *relationship* between a caregiver and child rather than in a specific event or 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 is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. The *threshold of significant harm* is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become *typical* of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an *omission*, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, 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 his/her health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

⁴ See Pages 31-33, *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection of Children*, Dept of Health and Children, 1999

3

PROCEDURES - REPORTING



3. PROCEDURES for responding to & reporting child protection concerns, allegations or disclosures

3.1 Some ways you may become aware that abuse is happening

People may tell you about:

- Abuse that is happening to them now – current.
- Abuse that happened to them some time ago – historical.
- Something they've been told by someone else and that they strongly believe is true.

You may witness or people may tell you about:

- Signs of abuse, such as physical injuries to a child.
- Something such as, the behaviour of an adult to a child that made you/them feel uncomfortable.

3.2 If someone, child or adult begins to tell you about abuse

- Children may tell an adult they are being abused if they feel they can trust this person. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is that if they do tell, they are doing so in the hope that the abuse will be stopped. This is true even if the child asks that nothing be done with the information.
- An adult may disclose past abuse or someone else may tell you about a concern he/she may have about a child.

If someone tells you about abuse it is important that you: **Listen, Record and Report.**

Do:

- Stay calm and listen - give the child/adult time to say what he/she wants to say.
- Listen carefully and attentively; take the child/adult seriously.
- Reassure the child/adult that he/she is doing the right thing.
- Explain that you will need to discuss this with someone else.
- Record the disclosure as carefully as possible; outline what the child/adult said, in the language that he/she used.
- Report all disclosures to the Diocesan Designated Person immediately.
- If there is a serious risk or danger for the child concerned please contact the HSE and/or An Gardaí immediately.

Do Not:

- Panic.
- Ask leading questions or make suggestions.
- Stop the child/adult recalling significant events.
- Ask probing questions or make the child/adult repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Promise to keep it a secret.
- Express opinions about the child/adult or members of his/her family.

Important:

As soon as is practicable write down everything that you were told by the child/adult, using as far as is possible his/her own words to describe the abuse. Sign and date this record and pass it on to the Designated Person. Please refer to Child Protection Recording **FORM SG-07** in the appendix as an aid to recording the various types of information.

3.3 Reporting Child Protection Concerns, Allegations or Disclosures

If there is any concern/allegations/disclosures about the welfare or safety of a child/young person in their home, in the community or in a church related activity the following procedure should be followed:

- All concerns, suspicions, disclosures or allegations of abuse must be referred immediately to a **Diocesan Designated Person**. See Section 3.4 below for role and contact details.
- In the case of a child making a disclosure, make a written note/report as soon as possible afterwards.
- In the case of an adult making a disclosure it may be possible without interrupting the flow of conversation to take notes during the conversation. However permission should be sought from the adult in question to do this.
- Where it is not appropriate to make notes at the time or where an adult is not comfortable with note taking during the conversation, then a written record should be completed as soon as possible afterwards and in any case before the end of the day. Use **FORM SG-07** in appendix - Child Protection Recording Form.
- Record the time, date, location (or if the matter has been communicated by letter or telephone), and persons present. The record should be signed and dated by the author.
- Do not be selective. Include detail, which to you may seem irrelevant. It may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation.
- This initial recording will form the first entry in a file of information about the case, which will be retained by the Diocesan Designated Person.
- All original records, including rough notes, must be passed immediately to the Diocesan Designated Person.

- Not all persons raising a concern will wish to go through the recording and reporting process. Nonetheless, information about the existence of a potential allegation must always be recorded and reported to the Diocesan Designated Person.
- In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, an immediate report should be made to the HSE as well as to the Diocesan Designated Person.
- Explain to the child/person raising the concern what will happen next. Indicate who will be made aware of the information given by them.
- Where the appropriate HSE personnel are not available, An Garda Síochána should be contacted to ensure that under no circumstances a child is left in a dangerous situation pending HSE intervention.
- It is important not to discuss the incident/concern with anyone other than those detailed in these procedures.

IMPORTANT:

Parents/Guardians must be informed that a referral has been made, except when to do so would be dangerous for the child.

Remember it is not your role to investigate but to Listen, Record and Report the information to the Designated Person. In the event that the Designated person is not available or a child is in immediate and serious risk, then please contact the HSE Duty Social Worker or during ‘out of duty social work hours’ the local Gardaí.

Contact Numbers for all the above are available on [Section 3.5](#) and [Section 3.6](#) and are displayed in all church buildings in your area.

3.4 Role of the Diocesan Designated Person

The Diocese has appointed two Diocesan Designated Persons, contact details as follows:

**Fr. Ray Browne PP,
Ballagh,
Killrooskey,
Roscommon,
Co. Roscommon
Tel: 0906 626273**

**Mrs. Mary Nicholson
C/O St. Mary's
Sligo
Tel 086 3750277**

The role of the Diocesan Designated Person⁵ is:

- To receive all concerns relating to the safeguarding of children, including any disclosures or allegations 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 An Gardaí.
- To ensure that the worker/volunteer raising a concern, disclosing abuse, or making an allegation is informed about the progress of the inquiry process.
- To liaise with the HSE, Diocesan authorities and the National Safeguarding Office, informally and formally as deemed necessary.
- To carefully record all steps undertaken as part of these procedures.
- To manage any internal Church investigation in relation to Church personnel/volunteers.

In the event of a Diocesan Designated Person not being available or when a child is at immediate risk contact should be made with the local Health Service Executive's Duty Social Worker or during 'out of duty social work hours' with local Gardaí. See below for contact details.

If a person is dissatisfied with the diocese's management of their concern, suspicion, report or allegation he/she may make contact directly with the HSE at the numbers below and/or with the National Office of Safeguarding Children, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. Tel: (01 5053124)

⁵ For further details on the role of the Designated Person, please See Resource 15, *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland, National Office for Safeguarding Children, 2008*

3.5 Health Service Executive (HSE)

Contact Numbers

County Roscommon

Boyle	071 96 62087
Castlerea	094 96 21155
Roscommom	090 66 37528

County Galway & City

Galway City (Mon to Fri 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon)	091 523122
Tuam	093 26800
Oughterard	091 552200
Loughrea	091 847820

Counties Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan

Sligo Social Work Dept / Duty No.	071 91 55133
Carrick-on-Shannon Social Work Dept	071 96 50324
Carrick-on-Shannon Duty No.	087 20 33267
Tubbercurry Social Work Dept	071 91 20062
Tubbercurry Duty Number	087 92 99666

County Westmeath

Athlone	090 6483106
---------	-------------

County Mayo

Castlebar	094 90 22333
Ballina	096 21511
Swinford	094 92 51900

Duty Hours Operate between 9.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.
Unless otherwise indicated

3.6 An Garda Síochána

Contact Numbers

County Roscommon Local Garda Stations

Boyle	071 9664620
Castlerea	094 9640002
Roscommon	090 6638300

County Galway & City Local Garda Stations

Galway City	091 538000
Tuam	093 70840
Oughterard	091 557320
Loughrea	091 842870

Counties Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan Local Garda Stations

Sligo	071 9157000
Carrick-on-Shannon	071 9650510
Tubbercurry	071 9185002

County Westmeath Local Garda Station

Athlone	090 6498550
---------	-------------

County Mayo Local Garda Stations

Castlebar	094 9038200
Ballina	096 20560
Swinford	094 9252990

Garda Confidential Service **Tel: 1800 666 111**

3.7 Church Staff Personnel Allegations Procedure

Reporting Process

The reporting procedures as defined above will apply when reporting allegations of abuse against Church staff personnel.

Disciplinary process

It will be the responsibility of the appropriate church authority (Bishop, Religious Superior, Senior Administrative Authority) in consultation with the Diocesan Designated Person, to deal with and manage all disciplinary matters relating to the continuing employment and/or voluntary service of the person concerned.

The management of such matters should be based on the guidelines contained in 'Children First': National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (1999) – Chapter 12. It should take cognisance of employment legislation.

'Disciplinary Procedures' will operate at the same time as and in parallel with the 'Reporting Procedures'. In general it is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with both the reporting issues and the disciplinary issues. It is preferable to separate these issues and manage them independently.

There will be consultation with the HSE and An Gardaí regarding protective measures for the child/children, always aware that the safety of children is paramount.

Those who are the subject of an investigation may be asked to step aside from their ministry and duties for the duration of the investigation. While the matter is pending the respondent enjoys the presumption of innocence and the right to his or her good name⁶.

Staff/volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations. Therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff including counselling where necessary. The primary goal is to protect the child while taking care to treat the employee fairly.

⁶ See Resource 15, *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, National Office for Safeguarding Children, 2008

4

CODES OF BEHAVIOUR



4. CODES OF BEHAVIOUR

4.1 Code of Behaviour for Staff and 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.

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 following Code of Behaviour applies to all workers/volunteers of the diocese who work with or are in contact with children/young people.

- 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. Refer to **Section 5.14** on Anti-bullying policy.
- There will be an adequate ratio of leaders to children/young people at all times.
The recommended minimum adult / young person ratio in any group should be **one adult per group of eight plus one other adult, and allowing an additional adult for each group of eight thereafter**⁷. Local circumstances, the ages of the children, the experience of the volunteers and the staff should be taken into consideration. Safety, ability/disability of young people and the nature of the activities being undertaken may require that these ratios be considerably lower. Please see **Section 5.5** for more detail.
- 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: leave door open, notify other leader(s), note and record meeting.
- 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.
- For overnight trips:
 - A full risk assessment must be made in line with the **'Procedure for trips away from home'**. See **Section 5.10**
 - A pre-check on accommodation and transport arrangements must be undertaken.
 - Information session for all young people and their parents must be held.
- Leaders will not consume alcohol or use illicit drugs while having responsibility for or in the presence of children/young people.

⁷ See *The Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 1996 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997*

4.2 Code of Behaviour for Children / Young People

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 diocese. It should be discussed with children/young people to whom it applies, so that they can understand it and take ownership for it. Particular groups if deemed necessary to do so, according to the nature and requirements of their particular activity/service and with relevant input from children/young people, may decide to add to this.

- Please respect everybody else because we are all God's children.
- Please respect God's house and all church property.
- Be fair; please don't cheat or lie.
- Please don't be a bully. (See Anti Bullying Policy **Section 5.14**)
- Agree not to hurt anybody by what you say or do.
- Please don't use bad language.
- Please respect other people's property.
- Agree to follow the rules of your group.
- Don't consume alcohol or use drugs.
- Talk to the person in charge if you have a problem; don't keep it to yourself.
- Agree not to bring anything into the church activity, which might cause harm to yourself or others.
- Please don't use your mobile while in church or during church activities.
- If using information technology during a church activity, please do so only with the consent of your parent/guardian and with the approval and monitoring of the leaders of the group. (See Policy on appropriate computer use **Section 5.12**)

5

CORE PROCEDURES - PREVENTION



5. CORE PROCEDURES - PREVENTION

5.1 Procedure to Ensure Adequate Record Keeping

Adequate record keeping includes the following:

- Youth Ministry Application Forms.
(See Form SG-02 in Appendix)
- Signed Parental Consent Forms [general & special] - to include medical information, treatment permission as appropriate and contact numbers for parents/guardians.
(See Forms SG-05 and SG-06 in Appendix)
- Accident/Incident Report Forms. **(See Form SG-01 in Appendix)**
- An incident book to record all concerns, which may not initially need to be reported to the HSE.
- HSE Standard form for reporting.
(This will be completed by a Diocesan Designated Person – See Appendix)
- Adult Volunteer Application forms.
(See Form SG-03 in Appendix)
- Declaration Forms.
(See Form SG-04 in Appendix)
- Evidence of Garda Vetting
(See Garda Vetting Procedure - Section 5.9)
- Training records.
- Attendance Records.
- Activity records.
- Activity reviews/evaluations.

Please Refer to Resources Section for Diocesan Policy on Record Keeping / Storage

5.2 Recruitment Procedure

- Develop clear job descriptions.
- All vacancies (paid or voluntary) should be openly advertised.
- Application forms should be used for recruitment to all posts.
(See Form SG-03 in Appendix)
- Applicants should be required to provide photo identity and the names of two referees who can attest to their suitability for working with children/young people.
- Verbal contact must be made with referees.
- All appointments are subject to Garda Vetting and/or the signing of a Declaration Form.
(See Form SG-04 in Appendix and Garda Vetting Procedure Section 5.9 below)
- An interview panel must interview suitable applicants.
- All personnel – lay, religious and clergy – should undertake a recognised ongoing programme of child protection training.
- The Office of Youth Ministry and Safeguarding Children will provide training through HSE accredited trainers.
- All personnel must sign up to the Child Protection Policy of Diocese of Elphin. (see Form SG-09 in Appendix)
- Up-to-date files should be kept in respect of all personnel.

Please Refer to Section 7 for Guidelines on Parish Recruitment and Selection Committee and for other Support Materials on Recruitment and Selection of Staff and Volunteers

5.3 Induction, Training & Support Procedures

- Induction Training: This should involve familiarising new staff and volunteers with their new environment and the Church's culture. It should also allow for formal introduction to other staff and volunteers, create the expectation of what is required from staff and volunteers in terms of their role and duty and any other information that is deemed necessary for the person to carry out his/her role in accordance with the Church's expectations.
- All church personnel and volunteers will receive as part of their induction input on the Safeguarding Children Policy and will be required to sign up to it.
- Regular supervision and support should be available to new and existing church personnel and volunteers.

5.4 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).
- 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 such areas.
- Ensure that buildings and/or facilities used for events and activities are suitable, safe and secure.
- Make sure that fire precautions are in place and that all fire extinguishers are checked regularly.
- Make sure 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.
- Be alert to the risk of injury involved in some contact sports, paying particular attention to the child's age and to any medical condition or disability.
- 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.
- 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.
- There should be regular health and safety reviews of facilities, procedures and practices.
- 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 SG-01 in Appendix)**

5.5 Recommended Supervision Ratios

The Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 1996 and Child Care (Pre-School Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 1997 have the following requirements for adult/child ratios:

SERVICE	AGE	ADULT / CHILD RATIO
Full Day Care	0-1	1:3
	1-3	1:6
	3-6	1:8
Sessional	0-6	1:10
Drop-in Centre	Under 12 Months	1:3
	1-6	1:8

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

The minimum adult/young person ratio in any group should ideally be **one adult per group of eight plus one other adult**, and allowing an **additional adult for each group of eight thereafter**.

Local circumstances, the ages of the children, the experience of the volunteers and the staff should be taken into consideration.

Safety, ability/disability of young people and the nature of the activities being undertaken may require that these ratios be considerably lower.

5.6 General Complaints Procedure

All general complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. Efforts will be made to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with the parents and members of staff as appropriate.

Parents, young people/children, staff and volunteers 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. **(See Form SG-08 in Appendix)**

If a parent / guardian / young person / child / staff / volunteer 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 reoccurs, the complaint should be put in writing to the Parish Priest/Chairperson of Pastoral Council/Agency Manager.
- 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.

5.7 Procedure to be Followed If a Child / Young Person Breaches the Code of Behaviour

If a Leader is 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.

5.8 Procedures to Ensure Best Practice in Safeguarding Children

Each parish will have at a minimum one **Local Safeguarding Representative**. However any particular church area within a parish can decide to have its own Local Safeguarding Representative. The responsibilities of the Local Safeguarding Representative will be:

- To promote awareness of the Church's Safeguarding Children Policies.
- To ensure that the public has ready access to contact details for the Designated Person(s) and relevant HSE officials.
- To ensure that any activities run within the parish are provided in a manner which ensures the safety and well being of children involved.
- To facilitate anyone in the parish in bringing an allegation or suspicion of child abuse to the attention of the Designated Person should they wish to have such support.

In the event of the Local Safeguarding Representative being made aware of a suspicion, concern, report or allegation of abuse they, in keeping with Diocesan Policy, are obliged to pass this information onto the Diocesan Designated Person.

If the Local Safeguarding Representative or any other worker/volunteer involved in church activities is not satisfied or is concerned about the response of the Diocesan Designated Person then he/she like every member of society should make a report directly to the HSE if he/she has a suspicion or a concern that abuse is taking place.

The Office of Youth Ministry and Safeguarding Children will ensure that appropriate training and support is provided for Local Safeguarding Representatives.

The Office of Youth Ministry and Safeguarding Children will carry out a Parish Safeguarding Children Audit on a regular basis.

The Diocese is committed to healing and reconciliation. Support and Advice persons are available to both victim and accused.

5.9 Procedure to Ensure Appropriate Vetting of All Church Personnel Staff and Volunteers

Garda Vetting is just one component of a good practice recruitment procedure, which has been detailed above. Elphin diocese shares a common Garda Vetting Policy and Procedure with the other five dioceses of the Western Province i.e. Achonry, Clonfert, Galway-Kilmacduagh-Kilfenora, Killala and Tuam. This Policy can be found in the appendix as a separate document.

See **Policy and Procedures For Garda Vetting (Sept 2009)**

5.10 Procedure for Trips Away from Home

Trips away from home include but are not limited to pilgrimages, day trips or overnight stays.

- All trips need careful advance planning including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place. Leaders must be properly qualified and supervised for activities undertaken.
- Written parental consent specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained in advance. Contact details for the duration of the trip are necessary. Written permission for leaders to make decisions of an emergency nature should be obtained in case of accidents.
- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents and guardians.
- There must be adequate, gender appropriate, supervision for boys and girls. Training in the Safeguarding of children must be provided for all leaders.
- Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.
- Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same sex as the group being supervised.
- If, in the case of emergency, an adult considers it necessary to be alone in the sleeping accommodation of the children/young people they should **(a)** immediately inform another adult and **(b)** make a diary note of the circumstances in the Incident Book.

5.11 Children/Young People with Disabilities

- Children/Young People with a disability may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, and so sensitivity and clear communication are particularly important.
- 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 worker/volunteer.
- In an emergency situation where this type of help is required, parents/guardians should be fully informed as soon as reasonably possible.
- Since especially vulnerable children may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance.
- Workers 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.
- It is particularly important that vulnerable children should be carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty expressing their concerns and in order that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.

5.12 Policy on Appropriate Computer Use

- The use of computers and Internet facilities should be carefully monitored and managed by adult leaders at all times.
- The reasons for using computers should be deemed appropriate to parish/agency activities by adult leaders.
- Where more than one child/young person uses a computer, each should be obliged to have a unique username and password, or where this is not possible then a signed record of the date, time and duration of his/her use should be maintained.
- Computers, which can be accessed by children/young people, should always have appropriate filtering software.
- Where the Internet is being used during parish activities all users should source material under the leader's supervision.
- Children/young people should obtain written Parent/Guardian permission prior to use of computers/internet during parish/agency activities. **Form SG-06 – Special Activity, Parental/Guardian Consent**, can be used for this purpose.
- 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.

5.13 Children/Young People Application Form and Parental Consent

Prior to children/young people participating in church activities/ministries the following forms should be completed:

1. Youth Ministry Application Form – SG-02 (see appendix)

2. Parental/Guardian Consent Form – SG-05 (see appendix)

It is vital that the consent form contains the name(s) and contact number(s) of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) so that they can be contacted particularly in cases of emergency. It should also contain details about specific dietary, medical or special needs of the child/young person.

Special Activities

For activities conducted outside normal parish group activities/ministries the **Special Activity – Parental/Guardian Consent Form - SG-06** (see appendix) should be completed.

5.14 Anti-Bullying Policy

We recognise the devastating effects and long-term damage that bullying can have on children/young people and we hope to create safe “bullying-free” environments for our children/young people. However should bullying occur our leaders will be provided with the resources and knowledge to respond effectively.

What Is Bullying?

- 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. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.
- Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.
- Any child/young person can be a victim of or perpetrator of bullying.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching 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.
- Cyber: All areas of Internet, such as email & web, chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities.

Signs of Bullying:

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should be concerned if a child/young person:

- Does not want to attend youth group/school/club anymore.
- 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.
- Has a shortage of money.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is reluctant to go out.
- Has torn clothes, broken glasses, missing schoolbooks.
- Becomes withdrawn, depressed, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stammering.
- 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 & 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.

(The above is not an exhaustive list)

Prevention

We will use the following methods for helping 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.
- Encouraging young people to take responsibility and report any incidents of bullying to leader.
- Review this Bullying policy with children/young people involved in our parish/agency activities.

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 should be informed of any incidents of bullying and should meet with leader/person in charge to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, the Gardaí will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- Both the victim and bully should be supported and helped throughout the process.

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.

9

RESOURCES





6. RESOURCES

6.1 Record Keeping Policy

1. Accident / Incident Report forms may be kept in a loose-leaf binder in the Church sacristy. Once completed they should be placed in another loose-leaf binder that is held in a secure place within the sacristy, e.g. locked drawer. These completed forms are to be forwarded before January 31st each year to The Elphin Diocesan Child Protection Archive (address below). In the event of a serious accident or incident, the form is to be photocopied and the photocopy forwarded to the diocese's Designated Person as soon as possible. The diocese's Designated Persons are:

**Fr. Ray Browne PP,
Ballagh,
Killrooskey,
Roscommon,
Co. Roscommon
Tel: 0906 626273**

**Mrs. Mary Nicholson
C/O St. Mary's
Sligo
Tel 086 3750277**

2. Registers used by choirs may be kept (between Masses and practices) in the sacristy or another place of safe keeping within the Church in which the choir serves. The Sacristy register is to be kept in the sacristy between Masses and other liturgical events involving altar servers.
3. All registers are to be forwarded before **January 31st** each year to **The Elphin Diocesan Child Protection Archive (address below)**.
4. Completed Parental/Guardian Consent forms, Youth Ministry Application forms and Confidential Adult Declaration forms (i.e. of adults in ministry or beginning in ministry) should be forwarded to The Elphin Diocesan Child Protection Archive as soon as they are completed. Ministry co-ordinators are encouraged to compile a list of parent/guardian contact details prior to forwarding the forms to the archive and to ensure that this list is available to them and other leaders during the times children/young people are engaged in ministry. This listing should also note any medical issues that co-ordinators and leaders need to be mindful of.

5. The address of the Elphin Diocesan Child Protection Archive is:

**The Elphin Diocesan Child Protection Archive,
Diocesan Offices, St. Mary's, Temple St., Sligo.**

6. Parental Consent – Special Activity forms should be held by the Special Activity Co-ordinator until the special activity has finished and then forwarded to The Elphin Diocesan Child Protection Archive.
7. All forms mentioned above are to be available to download via The Safeguarding Children section of The Elphin Diocesan web site: **<http://www.elphindiocese.ie>**
8. A review of our diocese's Recording Keeping Procedures re: Safeguarding Children will take place every three years at a minimum.
9. Further enquiries should be directed to: **Mr. Frank McGuinness,
Director of Youth Ministry
and Safeguarding Children,
St. Mary's Sligo
T: 087 9880690**

6.2 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’s insurance not the school’s.

Points to Remember

- All Sacristies should have a fully stocked first aid kit in case of accidents.
- Incident report forms should be filled out in the event of any accidents that occur.
- All adults should maintain appropriate boundaries when dealing with children/young people.
- Adults should 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.

6.3 Safeguarding Children Services

Office of Youth Ministry & Safeguarding Children

Frank McGuinness (Director)

St. Mary's

Sligo

Tel: 087 9880690

Diocesan Designated Persons

Fr. Ray Browne PP,

Ballagh,

Killrooskey,

Roscommon,

Co. Roscommon

Tel: 0906 626273

Mrs. Mary Nicholson

C/O St. Mary's

Sligo

Tel: 071 9162670

Diocesan HSE Accredited Safeguarding Trainers

Mrs Mary Nicholson,

C/O St. Mary's,

Sligo

Tel: 071 9162670

Frank McGuinness

St. Mary's

Sligo

Tel: 087 9880690

National Office for Safeguarding Children

New House,

St. Patrick's College,

Maynooth

Co. Kildare

Tel: 01 5053124

Website: www.safeguarding.ie

6.4 Counselling Services

Faoiseamh Helpline

Faoiseamh is an organisation, which provides telephone counselling and a counselling and psychotherapy referral service for people who have been sexually, physically, or emotionally abused by priests or religious. Their aim is to ensure that the people who make contact, receive the best possible help and support in dealing with the events of the past.

Free access to a helpline staffed by experienced Telephone Counsellors. This operates on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11.00 am – 8.00 pm, and on Fridays from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Freephone 1800 331234 (Rep. of Ireland) and Freephone 0800 973272 (NI and UK).

Website: www.faoiseamh.com

Connect

Connect is a free phone counselling service for any adult who has experienced abuse, trauma or neglect in childhood. The service is also available to partners or relatives of people with these experiences. With Connect you can talk in confidence with a trained counsellor who can listen or help with questions you have.

Connect is an out of hours service available Wednesday to Sunday, from 6-10pm.

To speak to a counsellor call: Freephone 1800 235 235

Website: www.connectcounselling.ie

National Counselling Service (NCS)

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS) is for adults who were abused in childhood and was established in September 2000 in response to the recognition that a large number of adults had been abused as children while in care in State institutions in Ireland. The NCS offers confidential face-to-face counselling, free of charge, to adults who experienced physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect during childhood. Counselling is available at 60 locations throughout Ireland.

For an appointment at a location of your choice:

Freephone: 1800 235 234

Website: www.hse-ncs.ie

Childline

Provides a 24 hour listening service for all children up to the age of 18.

Freephone: 1800 66 66 66

Website: www.childline.ie

ISPCC

The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Tel: 01 6767 960

Website: www.ispcc.ie

6.5 Protection for Person Reporting Abuse

Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the Health Services Executive or An Gardaí. This means that, even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted ‘reasonably and in good faith’ in making the report.

This Act came into operation on 23rd January, 1999. The main provisions of the Act are:

- The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers of the HSE or any member of An Garda Síochána.
- The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal.
- The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities “knowing that statement to be false”. This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

6.6 Guidelines for Outside Groups - Insurance and Child Protection Policy

Insurance

Person(s)/Groups/Organisations considered as outside groups⁸ who wish to use Diocesan/Parish Church property/facilities for their own purposes should provide their own Insurance cover.

Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy

Person(s)/Groups/Organisations considered as outside groups who wish to use Diocesan/Parish Church property/facilities for their own purposes should have their own Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy and Procedures in place before being allowed to use Diocesan/Parish Church property/facilities. If they don't have a Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy and Procedures then they should sign up to the diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures, see **Form SG-09**.

⁸ Any group/activity which is not organised by the clergy or by a committee/person authorised by them or under their control

6.7 Sacristy Registers - Guidelines

Every Church Sacristy should have a register in place, which should be in line with the following best practice guidelines:

1. It should be hardbound.
2. Each page should have 6 columns as follows:
 - Date
 - Time In
 - Name
 - Signature
 - Ministry
 - Time Out
3. Everybody who has occasion to be in the sacristy before or after mass/liturgical service while altar servers are present should sign it, with the exception of those who come to the door to get a Mass card signed or with a quick once off query.
4. It should be kept in a secure place between masses/liturgical services e.g. locked drawer/filing cabinet.
5. It should be returned to the Elphin Diocesan Child Protection Archive before January 31st each year (see **Section 6.1** for policy on record keeping).

6.8 General Registers - Guidelines

Each diocesan/parish church group in which Children/Young People under eighteen years of age are engaged should have a register which **should be completed whenever the group congregates for official purposes or practices**, for example choirs, Church run youth clubs, etc. The register should be in line with the following best practice guidelines:

1. It should be hardbound.
2. Each page should have 6 columns as follows:
 - Date
 - Time In
 - Name
 - Signature
 - Ministry / Activity / Group
 - Time Out
3. It should be kept in a secure place between group meetings, e.g. locked drawer/filing cabinet.
4. All who take part in the group meeting, i.e. adults and children/young people, should complete it.
5. It should be returned to the Elphin Diocesan Child Protection Archive before January 31st each year (see **Section 6.1** for policy on record keeping).

7

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PACK



7. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PACK

7.1 Recruitment and Selection Pack

Introduction to Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers and Staff

Volunteers and Staff in our parishes are valued, appreciated and very necessary, as without them our parishes would not be the thriving communities they are today. They give of their time, talents and experience willingly.

In particular volunteering is a practical way to show that we care and that we want to be involved in the future growth and development of our community within the Church. In order that our parishes and community continue to grow and thrive it is essential that sound recruitment and selection procedures and processes are put in place, and that all volunteers will be committed to ensuring the safety and well being of children and young people. Some volunteers, particularly those already known to the parish community, may feel that the recruitment and selection process is unnecessary, however by having good standards of practice in place more volunteers will come on board. In time, for the genuine and well motivated applicants, the procedure will become routine and accepted as part of our overall safeguarding policy which is in the best interest of everyone. It will also ensure that the diocese is meeting its commitment to ensure good standards in line with national guidelines.

One of the ways to promote best practice throughout the Diocese of Elphin is the requirement to complete a Recruitment and Selection procedure for staff and volunteers who are serving children and young people in our parishes and diocese.

This Section is a resource pack that should help parishes in our diocese to ensure that good practice in Recruitment and Selection is adhered to and contains information to enable parishes to implement procedures contained in this policy.

7.2 Parish Recruitment and Selection Committees (PRSC)

It is recommended that each Parish put in place a specific committee that will oversee the recruitment and selection procedure. If a parish feels that it hasn't sufficient resources or personnel to establish this committee then it should work with other parishes in its cluster group. This Parish Recruitment and Selection Committee (PRSC) will consist of at least three people comprised of some or all of the following.

- The Parish Priest or his nominee.
- A member of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- A Local Safeguarding Representative.
- One other person if necessary and in the interests of gender balance.

The committee will be responsible for overseeing the selection of staff and volunteers engaged in the parish. The Recruitment procedure as outlined in **Section 5.2** should be adhered to.

7.3 Garda Vetting Form Versus Adult Declaration Form

All volunteers and staff should at a minimum sign an **Adult Declaration form, SG-04** see forms in appendix. All existing and future volunteers and staff should complete this form, as it is a mandatory requirement for all staff and volunteers who work in our parishes and have contact with children and young people.

A Garda Vetting form should also be completed and returned to the Parish Priest/Agency Manager, who will then forward it on to the Western Province Diocesan Vetting Office for processing. The only exception to this is where an adult is volunteering for a once off short-term function/role, (no longer than 4 calendar weeks), where a Garda Vetting Form would not be processed by the time the volunteer had completed his/her function. In this case it suffices for the volunteer to complete an **Adult Declaration Form, SG-04**. However if the volunteer offers his/her service again or is required for a period longer than 4 calendar weeks, then it is a mandatory requirement that he/she complete the Garda Vetting process.

7.4 Steps to be Followed when Recruiting Volunteers

The Parish Recruitment and Selection Committee (PRSC) are responsible for these steps unless otherwise stated.

- A. Job/Function /Role Descriptions developed and clearly defined for Volunteers
- B. Positions for Volunteers openly advertised, using Newsletter, Parish Bulletin, Local Newspapers etc.
- C. Names and addresses of prospective volunteer(s) submitted to PRSC
- D. Cover Letter (See Template for New Volunteers), **Adult Application Form (SG-03)** sent to prospective volunteer(s).
- E. Prospective Volunteer Returns Completed **Adult Application Form (SG-03)** to PRSC
- F. Formal Meeting/Chat/Interview with prospective volunteer by PRSC
- G. 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.
- H. On receipt of satisfactory references, an **Adult Declaration Form (SG-04)** 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 License** 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)
- I. Prospective Volunteer Returns Completed **Adult Declaration Form (SG-04)**, Garda Vetting Form and Valid Photo ID to PRSC.
- J. Parish Priest/Agency Manager, Signs and forwards Garda Vetting Form to Western Province Diocesan Vetting Office for processing.
- K. 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)*
- L. Once PRSC is satisfied that all the above steps have been completed satisfactorily the PRSC decide whether or not the volunteer can begin work in the parish.
- M. As part of his/her induction the Volunteer should be informed about the contents of the Diocese Of Elphin, Safeguarding Children, Policy and Procedures, which he/she should understand. **Form SG-09 - Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Signup 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 should ideally accompany the above, see Letter of Appointment Template below.

7.5 Covering Letter to Accompany Adult Application Form for **New** Parish Volunteers (Template to be modified accordingly)

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, SG-03**.

Once completed the application form should be returned to the Parish Office. 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 references named on your form.

Following the receipt of satisfactory references, 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. Adult Declaration Form

You will also be required to submit a valid Photo ID in the form of a Valid Passport, or Valid Driving License or Valid Photo ID Card (EU Only).

Following a satisfactory check you will be able to take up your volunteering position.

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,

7.6 Letter of Appointment for new Parish Volunteer (Template to be modified accordingly)

Diocese of Elphin

Date _____

Parish of _____

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 *Diocese Of Elphin, Safeguarding Children, Policy and Procedures*, which you should read and understand.
- **Form SG-09** - Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Signup 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:

7.7 Church Roles for which Garda Vetting / Keeping Safe Training is Mandatory

Any Person whether Full-time, Part-time or Volunteer 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 and attend Keeping Safe Training. The following chart provides a description of the typical roles performed by such people, however 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.

Clergy and Religious

- Bishops and Congregation Leaders
- All Diocesan Clergy
- Religious who work on behalf of the Diocese and have contact with Children.
- Candidates for the priesthood and religious life

The Safeguarding Children System

- Members of Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee
- Diocesan Safeguarding Director and Keeping Safe Trainers
- Safeguarding Children Parish Representatives

Liturgical Preparation and Celebration

- Children's Liturgy Leaders and Supervisors
- Sacramental Programme Workers – Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation Teams
- Altar Servers Supervisors and Trainers
- Adult Altar Servers
- Leaders of Music Ministry and adults with designated responsibility for Children/young people in music groups This also applies to Music leaders who work with mixed groups of Adults and Children
- Eucharistic Ministers

Pastoral and Social Support

- Home or hospital visitors who work on behalf of the Church
- Transport volunteers (excluding private arrangements)
- Workers in Clubs for children/young people run by any organisation operating in the name of the Church
- Organisers of Diocesan / Religious Pilgrimages
- Adults with roles of responsibility / sole access to children/young people on pilgrimages (appointed parish carers, nurses, doctors, handmaids and brandcardiers)
- Identified Leaders on Youth Pilgrimages

Administrative Support Staff and Others

- Parish Secretaries
- Clergy Housekeepers
- All adults living in Parochial Houses and other Church Property
- Caretakers / Sacristans
- Counsellors / Rainbows personnel / Family Life Centre personnel

00

APPENDIX - FORMS





ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT FORM

SG-01

CONFIDENTIAL

(See Sections 5.1 & 5.4 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures)

Parish / Church area: _____

Date of accident / incident: _____

Reported by: _____

Ministry of Person Reporting: _____

(i.e. priest, altar server co-ordinator, choir leader etc.)

Details: _____

Location of activity: _____

Type of activity: _____

(training, practice, retreat, outing etc.)

Time of accident / incident: _____

Parties involved: _____

Parents / Guardians informed (please tick): Yes No

Any Follow-up: _____

For Diocesan Use / Response

Date Received: _____

Action Taken: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Comments: _____



YOUTH MINISTRY APPLICATION FORM

SG-02

CONFIDENTIAL

(See Sections 5.1 & 5.13 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures)

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: _____

ADULT VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

SG-03

CONFIDENTIAL

(See Sections 5.1, 5.2 & 7.4 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures)

Ministry: _____

Parish / Centre: _____

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Telephone No.(s) _____

E-mail: _____

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. _____

Adult Volunteer Application Form (Cont.)

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. _____

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. _____

Adult Volunteer Application Form (Cont.)

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: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Tel No.: _____	Tel No.: _____
Email: _____	Email: _____

I declare that the above 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: _____

(For all persons working as employees or volunteers with children and young people)
(See Sections 5.1, 5.2, & 7.3 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures)

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, abide by 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: _____

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 offence(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: _____

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM*

SG-05

CONFIDENTIAL

(See Section 5.1 and Section 5.13 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures)

Parish / Church area: _____

Name of child / young person: _____

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

Name of parent / guardian: _____

Address: _____

Contact Phone Numbers: _____

I consent to (name of child) _____'s involvement in this ministry / these ministries.
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:

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

SPECIAL ACTIVITY PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

SG-06

CONFIDENTIAL

(See Section 5.1, 5.12 and 5.13 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures)

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.: _____ E-Mail: _____

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

I have read and I understand the activity outline 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.: _____



CHILD PROTECTION RECORDING FORM

SG-07

CONFIDENTIAL

For Use by anyone recording a disclosure or concern, 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 Section 3.2 & 3.3 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures)

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 (if applicable): _____

CHILD PROTECTION RECORDING FORM (CONT.)

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 etc): _____

Position in Church / Order: _____

Address at time of incident(s): _____

Current contact with children if known (sit on board of governors of school, runs youth activities etc):

Any additional information _____

6. Details of concern, allegation or complaint



CHILD PROTECTION RECORDING FORM (CONT.)

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.: _____ E-mail: _____

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: _____ E-mail: _____

CHILD PROTECTION RECORDING FORM (CONT.)

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: _____

E-Mail: _____

Position: _____

Parish/Order: _____

Form Completed

Date: _____ Time: _____

Signed: _____

(This form must be sent to the designated officer)



GENERAL COMPLAINTS FORM

SG-08

CONFIDENTIAL

(See Section 5.6 of Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedures)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.(s) _____

E-mail: _____

Complaint Details: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Office Use/Parish Use

Form Received by: _____

Date: _____

Action taken to resolve the problem:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Result of Action Taken: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES SIGNUP FORM

SG-09

CONFIDENTIAL

(See Sections 5.2, 6.6 & 7.4 of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures)

Parish / Church area: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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

‘Diocese of Elphin - 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 Elphin.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION AND/OR WELFARE
CONCERNS

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

A. To Principal Social Worker or Duty Social Worker : _____

1. Details of Child

Name	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address		
Age/D.O.B	School	

1a. Details of Parents

Name of Mother:	Name of Father:
Address of Mother if different to Child:	Address of Father if different to Child:
Telephone Number:	Telephone Number:

1b. Care and Custody arrangements regarding child, if known:

--

1c. Household Composition

Name	Relationship to Child	Date of Birth	Additional Information e.g school/occupation

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

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent's view(s), child's view(s) (if known).

--

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

Name	Age	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address			
Relationship to child		Occupation	

4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Workers	School
Public Health Nurse	Gardaí
G.P	Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club:
Hospital	
Other, specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs:	

5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

YES NO If YES, what is their attitude? _____

6. Details of Person reporting concerns (Please see Guidance Notes re Limitations of Confidentiality)

Name	Occupation
Address	
Telephone Number	
Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:	

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name	Date
Occupation	Signed

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 Siochana 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: (_____)

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