

# **DIOCESE OF CORK AND ROSS**

## **3 Year Safeguarding Strategy Plan January 2023 to December 2025**

## **Introduction.**

The Diocese recognises that to keep children and vulnerable adults safe, policies, procedures and plans must be implemented and their effectiveness monitored and evaluated. In order to do this the Diocese has outlined the following strategy. This strategy is in place and operational.

### **1.0 Establishment of Safeguarding Structures.**

The Diocese of Cork and Ross under the Bishop has established the following structures in order to ensure its safeguarding policies, procedures and plans are fully implemented and monitored.

#### **Safe-Environment Safeguarding Structure in the Diocese of Cork and Ross**

- **Bishop** – Overall responsibility for Safeguarding in the Diocese.
- **Director of Safeguarding** – To Support the Bishop in the development, implementation and monitoring of best practice in Safeguarding throughout the parishes and agencies of the Diocese. (See expand role in appendix of this document)
- **Parish Priest** – Overall responsibility at parish level for Safeguarding.
- **Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR)** – Every Parish in the Diocese will appoint at least one lay person as Local Safeguarding Representative in order to promote safeguarding in conjunction with the Parish Priest by:
  - Raising Awareness of Diocesan Safeguarding Policies & Procedures.
  - Ensure contact details for Designated Persons are widely available.
  - Ensure church activities are in line with best practice.
- **Safeguarding Committee** – To support and advise the Bishop and Director of Safeguarding for the Diocese on:
  - The provision of training.
  - The safe recruitment of volunteers and staff within their service area.
  - Creating, maintaining and monitoring a safe environment for children and adults in all aspects of Church life and activity.
  - Advising on the human resources required for implementing best practice.

- **Safeguarding Trainers** – The Diocese has two Accredited Trainers who are responsible for the provision of all aspects of Safeguarding training to Clergy, Staff, Volunteers, Parents and Children/Young People throughout the Diocese.

### **Case Management Structure in the Diocese of Cork and Ross.**

- **Bishop** – Overall responsibility for Safeguarding in the Diocese.
- **Designated Liaison Persons (DLP)** – The Diocese has appointed a Designated Liaison Persons. (See Appendix for role description).
- **Statutory Authorities** – The Diocese has established collaborative and professional links with key safeguarding personnel in the Tusla, HSE and liaises closely with An Garda Síochána.
- **Support Person(s)** – The Diocese has appointed a Support Person who is available to those who make an allegation/disclosure of abuse. (See Appendix for expanded role).
- **Adviser** – The Diocese has appointed an Adviser who will be available to the respondent. (See Appendix for expanded role)

## **2.0 Implementation and Review of Diocesan Safeguarding Policies & Procedures.**

The Diocese has implemented a Diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures Document and An adult Safeguarding Policy (Adults at risk of abuse) in line with Statutory and Church Guidelines. These documents are widely disseminated and made available to all Clergy, Staff, Volunteers, Diocesan Agencies, Committees, Parents & Children/Young People.

The Diocesan Child safeguarding Policy and Procedures are operational and are made known to the whole church community including children/young people. All people, clergy, Staff & Volunteers, who through their ministry in the Catholic Church within the Diocese of Cork and Ross have direct contact with children/young people, are obliged to sign-up to this policy document and all that it contains.

The Diocesan Policy & Procedures Document will be reviewed and updated in accordance with the Diocesan Review Policy for the document.

### **3.0 Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation of Safeguarding Policies & Procedures.**

The Diocese through its structures as outlined above will continually endeavour to implement, monitor & evaluate its Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- Best Practice Audits of Parishes – The Diocese through its Safeguarding Committee, led by the Director of Safeguarding will conduct regular audits of all parishes in the Diocese to ensure all pertinent aspects of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures are being implemented and monitored. The audit will include the completion of a written review questionnaire encompassing all aspects of Safeguarding Policies & Procedures. This will be completed by the Parish Priest & Local Safeguarding Representative and returned to Office of Safeguarding in the Diocese.
- The Diocesan Office of Safeguarding will facilitate Implementation and Monitoring Workshops for Priests and Local Safeguarding representatives.
- Training will be provided by the Trainers to all staff and volunteers to ensure they are familiar and competent in all matters concerning Safeguarding.
- The Policy and Procedures Documents will be reviewed annually and updated a least every three years in line with the Diocesan Review Policy for the document, taking on board the views and opinions of staff, volunteers, children/young people and aligned to Legislation, Statutory & Church Guidelines.
- The Diocese will constantly be attentive to the communication of its Safeguarding Policies & Procedures and use all methods at its disposal to ensure that it is communicated as clearly and as widely as possible. Communication methods will include:

- Dissemination of Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Document in various formats to Clergy, Staff, Volunteers, Diocesan Agencies, Parent & Children/Young People.
- Raising Awareness conferences for Parishes/Deaneries.
- Posters.
- Website.
- Brochures/Flyers.
- Newsletters.
- Region Papers when deemed appropriate.
- Parish Newsletters/Bulletins.
- Letters/Emails to Key Safeguarding Personnel.
- Meetings/Briefing with Key Safeguarding Personnel.
- Liaising with local Tusla, HSE, Gardaí and the NBSCCC.

The Diocese recognises that all strategies and plans must be dynamic and, so it will review its strategy and plan on an on-going basis.

#### 4.0 Safeguarding Plan.

Standard	Specific Objective	Action	Responsibility	Implementation Date	Reviewed Date	Status
1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments	Ensure that all new groups using Church facilities have insurance and a safeguarding policy in place	LSR to complete checks on all new and existing groups using Church property  (identified through the local safeguarding audits)	LSRs	January 2023	January 2024	Part of the 2023 parish safeguarding Audit questionnaire
	Ensure that Church personnel have been vetted in accordance with guidance on vetting	Those requiring vetting are identified through local safeguarding audits	Vetting Personnel & LSR	January 2023	January 2024	Regular checks are made re current vetting in parishes by the vetting liaison person. Parishes are reminded of importance of vetting.
5: Training and Support	Ensure that all Church personnel receive appropriate training in safeguarding	Develop annual training plan  Deliver annual training plan	Safeguarding committee  Safeguarding committee	January 2023	January 2024	Training plan completed for 2023. Training done via zoom and face to face. Some training cancelled due to lack of attendees

6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message	Ensure that the Church's safeguarding message is communicated to identified audiences	Develop annual communications plan  Deliver annual communications plan	Safeguarding committee  Safeguarding committee	January 2023	January 2024	Communication plan in place and updated for 2024
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What resources are needed to carry out the safeguarding plan?	<p><b><i>Financial support from Diocese</i></b></p> <p><b><i>All key personnel appointed</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Training and support from NBSCCCI</i></b></p>
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**Signed:**

**Cleo Yates. Director of Safeguarding**

**Signed:**

**Colin Daly . Chair Safeguarding Committee**

**Dated:**

## **Appendix: Roles and Responsibilities**

A summary of the roles and responsibilities within the Diocesan Safeguarding Structure are listed below.

### **Bishop of the Diocese.**

- Ensuring that the appropriate safeguarding structures and personnel are in place.
- Liaising with the Holy See, as appropriate. If the Church body is a religious order or congregation, this is done through the superior general.
- Ensuring compliance with canon and civil law.
- Upholding the seven standards in practice and behaviour.

### **Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.**

- Developing a three-year safeguarding plan, including the establishment of the local safeguarding policy and procedures
- Coordinating local safeguarding representatives (LSRs).
- Coordinating activities related to safeguarding, e.g. training.
- Ensuring the annual audit, including the correlation of records for training-related activities.
- Ensuring the completion of training needs assessments across the various safeguarding roles in the Church body.
- Ensuring, with the Church authority, that the appropriate safeguarding personnel are in place.
- Upholding the seven standards in practice and behaviour.

### **Director of Safeguarding.**

- Directing and implementing the safeguarding policy.
- Liaising with and supporting parishes and communities to ensure implementation of local policies and procedures.
- Liaising with the safeguarding committee and the advisory panel.
- Ensuring that all safeguarding personnel are kept up to date with practice, as communicated from the NBSCCCI.
- Reporting directly to the Church authority on all safeguarding issues.

### **Designated Liaison Persons.**

- Hearing safeguarding concerns.
- Passing on safeguarding concerns to the statutory authorities.



- Managing cases and all associated documents.
- Liaising with the support person, advisor and the Church authority.
- Passing on safeguarding concerns to the NBSCCCI.
- Conducting internal inquiries.
- Contributing to upholding the seven standards in practice and behaviour.
- Completing an annual report regarding compliance with Standards 2, 3 and 4 for the Church Authority.
- Monitoring respondents or, with the Church authority, appointing a suitable person to carry out this role.

### **Support Person**

- Keeping the complainant informed of the process of the case.
- Helping direct the complainant to counselling and support.
- Recording any meetings or contact they have with the complainant, and reporting to the DLP as appropriate.
- Upholding the seven standards in practice and behaviour.

### **Advisor**

- Keeping the respondent informed of the process of the case.
- Helping direct the respondent to counselling and support.
- Recording any meetings or contact they have with the respondent, and reporting to the DLP as appropriate.
- Upholding the seven standards in practice and behaviour.

### **Safeguarding Trainers**

- Working with the safeguarding committee to identify training needs.
- Delivering full-day and information-session safeguarding training to those identified by the safeguarding committee in the Church body.
- Keeping records of all of those who have been trained.
- Contributing to upholding the seven standards in practice and behaviour.

### **Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR)**

- Raising awareness of what safeguarding is.

- Disseminating information regarding the standards and guidance, and circulating this information widely.
- Ensuring Church activities are provided in a way that ensures the safety and well-being of the children involved.
- Ensuring that the contact details of the DLP, Gardaí and Tulsa, HSE are widely publicised.
- Upholding the NBSCCCI seven standards in practice and behaviour.

### **National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI)**

- Assisting with the development of policy, procedures and practices across the Catholic Church in Ireland.
- Offering advice on best practice, including training, case management and implementation of national standards and guidance.
- Monitoring the practice of child safeguarding across the Catholic Church in Ireland.

### **National Case Management Committee (NCMC)**

- The NCMC exists as a function of NBSCCCI and is chaired and administered by its staff.
- The NCMC functions as an all-island group, offering advice to Church authorities on all aspects of the investigative process into alleged abuse (including the areas listed under the role of the advisory panel).
- Membership is agreed through the signing of a data processing deed, which allows the sharing of full information with the NCMC and is fully compliant with data protection legislation in both jurisdictions.

To find out more about the current composition of the group, please log on to: <http://www.safeguarding.ie>.