

Feedback on Safeguarding

Feedback on our present safeguarding arrangements is always welcome, and you are encouraged to do so. The Local Safeguarding Representative will receive any feedback/suggestions and forward them to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office. You can also give your feedback directly to your Diocesan Director of Safeguarding by contacting:

Helen Diskin on 087 - 0516888 or safeguarding@achonrydiocese.org
Michelle Gallagher on 096 - 72066 or safeguarding@killaladiocese.org
Mary Nicholson on 086 - 3750277 or mary@elphindiocese.ie
Maureen Walsh on 086-8345585 or safeguarding@tuamarchdiocese.org
Isabelle Mulkern on 083 - 8791745 or parishresource@clonfertdiocese.ie
Fr. John Gerard Acton on 091 - 563566 or info@galwaydiocese.ie

Safeguarding Contact Details

If you have a concern that a child/young person is being harmed, please contact one of our Diocesan Designated Liaison Persons who are responsible for receiving/managing concerns and complaints relating to safeguarding children that involve Church personnel.

Designated Liaison Persons:

Archdiocese of Tuam Fr. Francis Mitchell 087 - 6473755
Mrs. Mary Trench 087 - 4070206
Diocese of Achonry Ms Anne Leonard 087 - 6474136
Sr. Pat Casey 086 - 7303076
Diocese of Clonfert Ms Aileen Cawley 085 - 2288047
Fr. Ciarán Kitching 090 - 9676151
Diocese of Elphin Mary Nicholson 086 - 3750277
Helen Diskin 087 - 0516888
Diocese of Galway Ms Aileen Cawley 085 - 2288047
Diocese of Killala Fr. Francis Mitchell 087 - 6473755

TUSLA-Child and Family Agency

Contact Numbers:

Sligo/Leitrim 071 - 9155133
Galway/Roscommon 091 - 881860
Mayo 094 - 9049137
Clare 061 - 588688
Laois/Offaly 044 - 9353997

An Garda Síochána:

An Garda Síochána Confidential Service
1 800 - 555 222
or email gncsb_scmu@garda.ie.

NBSCCCI:

National Office for Safeguarding Children,
New House, St Patrick's College, Maynooth,
Co. Kildare. 01 5053124
Email: admin@safeguarding.ie



Towards Healing

Towards Healing is an independent organisation providing free professional support for people who have experienced institutional, clerical, or religious abuse in Ireland. It provides face to face counselling, structured phone counselling, family counselling and a counselling helpline.

Our information phonenumber is open:
Tuesday to Friday 10am - 4pm
Freephone 1800 303416 (Rep of Ireland)
Hearing-impaired Text Line Number: 089-4556422
email to info@towardshealing.ie



Towards Peace

Towards Peace provides spiritual support in a safe supportive space, where people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time.

The service is available on Monday and Tuesday from 9am - 4pm and on Wednesday from 9am -12 noon.

For out of office hours, please call us on +353 (0) 86 7710533 and leave a message. We will respond to your call as soon as possible.
Email: towardspeace@iecon.ie
Website: www.towardspeace.ie

ONE IN FOUR

Ending the trauma of childhood sexual abuse

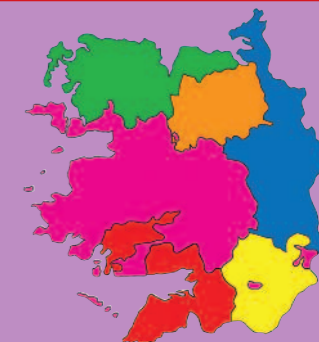
One in Four

Since 2003, One in Four has been a listening ear. We have been a support, a refuge, a lifeline. We provide professional counselling to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

One in Four
35-36 Arran Quay
Dublin 7
D07 E221
Email: info@oneinfour.ie
Call us: 01 66 24070

WESTERN PROVINCE

Safeguarding Newsletter 2025



Message from Archbishop Francis, Bishop Kevin and Bishop Michael

Dear Parishioners and Colleagues,

We are writing to you as the three bishops who, together have responsibility for the mission of the Church in the six Dioceses of the Tuam Ecclesiastical Province, covering counties Galway, Mayo, Sligo, most of Roscommon, and smaller parts of Clare, Offaly and Westmeath.

Ministry with young people, like the care of the vulnerable elderly, is an essential part of the mission of the Church. Altar Serving, Family Mass Groups, Children's Choirs, Parish-based Catechesis and the Pope John Paul II Awards Programme are just some of the ways in which our children are encouraged, not just to be present, but to be active in the life of the Church. We need to rediscover the beauty and the power of this ministry in all our parishes, and we need to be confident that it can be carried out safely. The independent reviews, which were carried out in all of our Dioceses in the past two years (and the reports of which we have published) have strengthened our confidence. The challenge remains for us all to keep our eyes and ears open and to appropriately report any concerns, reasonable suspicions, or actual knowledge we might have of failures in safeguarding.

In the course of the past year, the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, with the approval of the Irish Catholic Bishops and the Association of Religious and Missionaries of Ireland, finalised and published a revised Safeguarding Policy and

related Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland. One significant change in the policy is the inclusion of specific procedures to hold Bishops and Religious Superiors personally responsible for any failure on their part to appropriately manage safeguarding concerns which may be brought to their attention. These procedures were initially promulgated by the late Pope Francis in a document called "Vos Est Lux Mundi" ("You are the Light of the World", cf Mt. 5:14)

Since the new policy and guidance were published, our Diocesan Safeguarding teams have been working closely together to fine tune our own communications, our training and our procedures. While the essentials remain the same, a periodic review like this helps to keep us all on our toes.

Arising out of the recent Universal Synod, there is possibly a greater awareness that all the Baptised are called to be co-responsible for the mission of the Church, each in accordance with his or her gifts. When it comes to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable persons, this has been the reality for many years now. We wish to express our sincere thanks to our safeguarding staff and our parish safeguarding volunteers who, together with the clergy, have worked so hard to ensure that children and vulnerable persons can participate actively and safely in the Church. This is something that Bishops alone simply could not achieve.



Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024

The new Policy, **A Safe and Welcoming Church; Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024** came into effect on **11 June 2024**.

The policy reminds us that Safeguarding is core to the Mission of the Church. Consistent with Gospel values, those who minister will do so with dignity and integrity, honouring their calling to ensure that children are welcomed, cherished and protected, following the example set by Jesus.

The new policy and the accompanying standards focus on leadership, governance and accountability, nurturing a culture of safeguarding, and responding pastorally and reporting according to civil and canon law ensuring that the Church continues to prioritise the safety and well-being of its youngest members.

The policy sets out the principles that guide our three standards. Those three standards are interwoven in all that we do to safeguard. A focus for all our work going forward is to continue to nurture the culture of safeguarding. Keeping children safe from harm is an imperative but more than that, the Church will promote the wellbeing of children through their participation in the ministry of the Church. The Church will create and maintain environments that uphold children's rights and that create nurturing, caring conditions where children will flourish in faith and love. All ministry should be:

- based on National Law, Canon Law and Government Regulation
- based on the Constitution of Ireland, Children's Rights and International Treaties
- Caring for Complainants
- Providing a Fair and Just Process for Respondents
- Acknowledging the Safeguarding Journey of the Church

We are all responsible for Safeguarding. Let's continue the journey!

Throughout the rest of 2025, all dioceses will be rolling out the new training programme. Please contact the Director of Safeguarding in your respective diocese for further details on safeguarding training and dates for local trainings.

Child Safeguarding Policy Statement

The Gospel teaches the importance of ensuring that the Catholic Church community is a warm, welcoming and safe place for children.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Mark 10:14-15) "

Children are gifts from God, to be cherished and recognised for the joyful contribution they make as valued members of the Church. Our challenge is to follow the example of Jesus in cherishing them.

Safeguarding is key to this important task and should be seen, not as a burden, but as an opportunity to embrace and encourage children's ministry, following the example of Jesus Christ.

This Church body pledges to safeguard children and young people from harm and to support them in their development as valued and integral members of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Church's ministry will be inclusive and will uphold their rights. Consistent with Gospel values, and with civil and criminal law, those who minister will do so with dignity and integrity, honouring their calling to ensure that children and young people are welcomed, cherished and protected, following the example set by Jesus.

This Safeguarding Children Policy will be honoured and complied with by all ordained clerics, by vowed female and male religious, and by all lay staff and volunteers in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Safeguarding Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is an exercise where the Church examines all aspects of its service from a safeguarding perspective, to establish whether there are any practices or features of the service that have the potential to put children at risk.

The risk assessment process is intended to enable the Church/organisation to:

- Identify potential risks
- Develop policies and procedures to minimise risk by responding in a timely manner to potential risks
- Review whether adequate precautions have been taken to eliminate or reduce these risks

A Risk Assessment is completed at Parish level in conjunction with the Parish Priest and the Local Safeguarding Representative(s). It is reviewed annually and must be updated as soon as possible where significant changes occur during the year.

A separate Risk Assessment must be completed for each Church activity that involves children/young people. The Safeguarding Risk Assessment Form, SG-06, can be downloaded from the relevant Diocesan website.

Annual Parish Safeguarding Reviews

Under our Safeguarding Children's Policy and Standards, each parish is required to complete an annual safeguarding review. This annual review is completed by the Parish Priest and the Local Safeguarding Representative. The review covers safe recruitment, training, visiting clergy, risk assessments, reporting procedures, church property, etc. The Review form is then submitted to the Director of Safeguarding, who collates the information and reports the findings to the Bishop and the safeguarding committee. Gaps in child safeguarding practice can immediately be identified and the Director of Safeguarding can support the parish to reach the required standards in safeguarding.

Parish Support Visits

In addition to the annual parish safeguarding review, parish support visits occur annually and when necessary, to offer support and guidance on all matters relating to safeguarding practice and to ensure parishes reach the required standards in safeguarding. These meetings take place with the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding, the Parish Priest and the Local Safeguarding Representative(s).

Support visits give us the opportunity to thank the parishes for their continued hard work and commitment to safeguarding.

Safeguarding Training

In June 2024, the NBSCCCI updated their Policy and Guidance on Child Safeguarding. Training based on the new policy is being rolled out to all clergy, religious, staff and volunteers.

All who work with children in the Catholic Church must undertake safeguarding training with an accredited NBSCCCI Trainer. This training is valid for 3 years. Contact your Diocesan Director of Safeguarding for information on training dates.

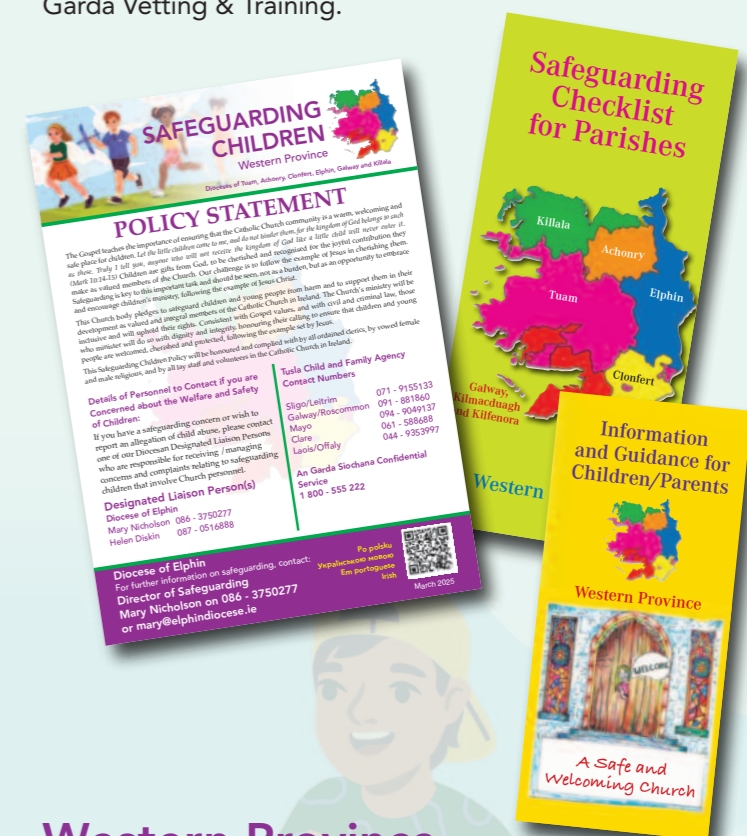
Vulnerable Persons

Within the Dioceses of the Western Province we have robust procedures for Safeguarding Children. We are also aware of the need for similar protocols to ensure the

safety of Vulnerable Persons (persons over 18 years of age) within our communities, who are not in a position to safeguard themselves.

In the dioceses of Achonry and Elphin, Clonfert, Galway, Killala and Tuam we have a Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy in place since 2019. Clergy, eucharistic ministers, religious, pilgrimage support staff, lay leaders and volunteers who minister, support, visit or take Holy Communion to vulnerable persons in their own homes, hospitals or nursing homes (excluding family members) must be vetted and receive vulnerable person safeguarding training.

Please contact your Parish Priest or the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding for information on Vulnerable Persons Garda Vetting & Training.



Western Province Safeguarding Publications

A key element of child safeguarding within our Catholic Church is to ensure that we employ a variety of methods to communicate and deliver our child safeguarding message. We are responsible for ensuring that relevant information is clear, accessible and appropriate.

Following the launch of the new policy, it was agreed that the six Dioceses of the Western Province would collaborate to update and produce a new and uniform set of child safeguarding posters and leaflets. No matter what Parish you visit throughout the Western Province, all child safeguarding posters displayed will now be the same, promoting our child safeguarding message and displaying the relevant information and contact numbers.