

## The Child Safeguarding Statement of the Archdiocese of Dublin

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the *Children First Act 2015*.

### **1 Statement**

The Archdiocese of Dublin, as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children, is committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with parents/ guardians to do this. The Archdiocese recognises each child as a gift from God, and values and encourages the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All diocesan personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

This is the policy statement of the Catholic Church in Ireland. It is set out in *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016). The document *Child Safeguarding in the Archdiocese of Dublin: Statement, Reporting Procedures and Good Practice Guidelines* describes the arrangements for the implementation of this policy in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

### **2 Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm**

The Archdiocese of Dublin through its parishes and agencies engages with children in a variety of ways which include the following:

- Attendance by children in Church services usually, but not always, accompanied by their parents or guardians;
- Participation of children in sacramental preparation often, but not always, done in conjunction with schools;
- Participation in the sacraments through serving at Mass, singing with choirs, acting as Eucharistic Ministers and Ministers of the Word;
- Participation in youth groups and programmes;
- Participation in retreats and pilgrimages.

This list is not exhaustive.

## Safeguarding principles

The Archdiocese of Dublin endeavours to provide an environment for children (persons up to the age of 18 years) that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. The Archdiocese does this by:

- Adopting a child centred approach;
- Obtaining parental/ guardian permission for the involvement of children in Church activities;
- Choosing carefully those who work with children;
- Ensuring that diocesan workers and volunteers behave appropriately towards children;
- Encouraging positive behaviour in children and adopting strategies to prevent bullying;
- Making proper arrangements when organising activities and outings;
- Communicating appropriately with children and young people;
- Keeping good records.

### 3 Risk Assessment

The diocesan Child Safeguarding and Protection Service (CSPS) has carried out an assessment of the potential for harm to children through their involvement in Church activities in the Archdiocese. The following lists the identified risks and the practices and procedures in place for managing these risks.

Risk Identified	Practices and procedures in place to manage identified risk  (to be found in <i>Child Safeguarding in the Archdiocese of Dublin; Statement, Reporting Procedures and Good Practice Guidelines 2018</i> )
1. Children could be exposed through their involvement in diocesan activities to people who may harm them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe selection and recruitment procedures for those working with children, including vetting of all involved in public ministry and/or having contact with children</li> </ul>
2. Those who work with children could engage in unsafe work practices or behave inappropriately towards them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Practice for those working with children</li> <li>• Complaints procedures</li> <li>• Appropriate communication with children (including use of social media)</li> </ul>
3. Those working with children could operate in unsafe environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper arrangements for activities involving children</li> </ul>
4. Lack of clarity as to who is responsible for what when it comes to child safeguarding and protection in the diocese, parishes and agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles and responsibilities are clearly laid out in procedures document</li> <li>• Training, information and advice are provided by CSPS</li> </ul>

Risk Identified	Practices and procedures in place to manage identified risk  (to be found in <i>Child Safeguarding in the Archdiocese of Dublin; Statement, Reporting Procedures and Good Practice Guidelines 2018</i> )
5. Children involved in diocesan activities may not understand what is expected of them in terms of their contact with and behaviour towards each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults who work with children expected to provide good role models for them</li> <li>• Code of Behaviour for Children involved in diocesan activities</li> <li>• Anti-bullying strategies</li> </ul>
6. Concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected may go undetected and unreported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This statement and the accompanying procedures are circulated to parishes and diocesan agencies</li> <li>• Safeguarding information, training and advice provided by CSPS</li> <li>• Safeguarding message conveyed through parish and diocesan websites and newsletters, parish safeguarding notices and diocesan Safeguarding Sunday</li> </ul>
7. Diocesan personnel, whether mandated persons or others, may be unaware of their responsibility, or not supported, to report concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting thresholds and procedures are set out in procedures document and covered in training and information sessions</li> <li>• CSPS available to provide advice, guidance and support</li> <li>• Joint reports will be made by diocesan DLP/ deputy DLP and Mandated Persons, where appropriate taking account of data protection requirements</li> </ul>
8. Mandated persons may not be aware of their responsibilities under the Children First Act 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of mandated person described in procedures document</li> <li>• Information has been sent to mandated persons and contained in CSPS Newsletter circulated in December 2017</li> <li>• Training and information sessions will be provided</li> <li>• List of mandated persons is being compiled and will be kept updated</li> </ul>
9. Safeguarding practice in parishes and diocesan agencies may not be implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audits of practice carried out by CSPS</li> <li>• External review by National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland</li> </ul>

#### 4 Child Protection Procedures

The Archdiocese of Dublin promptly reports all concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected and manages such concerns as they apply to diocesan personnel in accordance with procedures developed in line with the requirements of the:

- *Children First Act 2015,*
- *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017,*
- *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice,*
- *Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.*

A copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement both is available on request and online at [www.csp.dublindioocese.ie](http://www.csp.dublindioocese.ie) . It also forms part of *Child Safeguarding in the Archdiocese of Dublin: Statement, Reporting Procedures and Good Practice Guidelines.*

## 5 Implementation

The Archdiocese of Dublin is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the practices and procedures that support our commitment to keeping children safe from harm while engaged in Church activities in the Diocese.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in February 2020 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Diarmuid Martin".

Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin, Archbishop's House, Dublin 9

For queries please contact: Andrew Fagan, Director, or Julie McCullough, Child Protection Officer, Child Safeguarding and Protection Service, Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe Road, Dublin DO3 P2E7, who are the Relevant Persons under the Children First Act 2015.

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