



PART 2: AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

CHAPTER XVI (2018) SAFEGUARDING PART 1: MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN

1. *Safeguarding Trust: The Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children*, approved by the Standing Committee of the General Synod and reported to the General Synod, hereinafter referred to as *Safeguarding Trust* shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the Church of Ireland in the church's ministry with children.
2. Each bishop and diocesan council shall ensure that *Safeguarding Trust* be implemented and adhered to by all parishes, clergy and diocesan bodies within the diocese and in any diocesan activity.

CENTRAL CHURCH BODIES

The Standing Committee, on behalf of the General Synod, has overall responsibility for the Church's Child Protection Policy (known as *Safeguarding Trust*) and has delegated to the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board responsibility for implementation. The Representative Body has responsibility, in conjunction with the dioceses, for providing funding to the Safeguarding Board to provide the necessary resources and training supports.

CHURCH OF IRELAND SAFEGUARDING BOARD

The Church of Ireland Safeguarding Board is authorised by Standing Committee to ensure that those within the Church of Ireland have a special duty of care towards Children and Adults at Risk and therefore a culture of collective responsibility to work in partnership with other statutory, community and voluntary organisations is encouraged.

The Safeguarding Board will follow basic rights which are embedded in both our gospel values and within international and domestic laws to protect those at risk of harm.

The Safeguarding Board is committed to learning from experience and by a process of continuous improvement to monitor and challenge the effectiveness of The Church of Ireland's safeguarding arrangements.



The Safeguarding Board is in place to oversee the implementation and review of *Safeguarding Trust*. This is a living document and will be reviewed every two years or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which *Safeguarding Trust* refers, and amended as required by the Safeguarding Board. The Safeguarding Board shall advise the Standing Committee and the Representative Body of the outcome of the review and any amendments that need to be made. The updated policy from this review shall then be presented to Standing Committee for approval.

The Safeguarding Board will ensure that there are training materials developed and that support and training is provided to Diocesan Support Teams so that training can be provided for bishops, clergy, staff, volunteers and panel members.

BISHOPS AND DIOCESAN COUNCILS

Each bishop and diocesan council(s) is required by the Constitution of the Church of Ireland to ensure that *Safeguarding Trust* is implemented and adhered to throughout the Church of Ireland.

Diocesan Councils through their secretaries will be responsible for issuing to each select vestry secretary on an annual basis, a standard form which will be completed and returned by the select vestry, confirming that *Safeguarding Trust* is being implemented by the select vestry in each parish. This is the declaration of compliance.

Diocesan Council will be required to report to the Safeguarding Board on an annual basis (usually by the end of June) that every parish and relevant diocesan bodies have completed the declaration of compliance.

The bishop of the diocese and diocesan council must set up a *Safeguarding Trust* diocesan support team. This team will undertake the evidence based triennial audit of the implementation of the Code in parishes and diocesan bodies and put in place a plan for each parish and diocesan body to action arising from the audit, provide support to parishes and diocesan bodies with the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust* and provide training in line with the Diocesan Training Strategy. The bishop of the diocese and diocesan council shall determine the composition of the diocesan support team and ensure that suitable people with the appropriate skills are appointed. The work of the diocesan support teams is supported by the Safeguarding Board in conjunction with the Child Protection Officer.

The bishop of the diocese, diocesan council and diocesan support team shall put in place a Diocesan *Safeguarding Trust* training strategy to outline what training must be completed and the frequency of such training.

The bishop of the diocese shall ensure that a current Access NI vetting disclosure is in place for a candidate for holy orders prior to ordination, or prior to institution to an incumbency or other charge or granted a licence to officiate or permission to officiate.

The bishop of the diocese shall attend role specific *Safeguarding Trust* (Child Protection awareness training) in line with the Central Training Strategy.



THE INCUMBENT AND SELECT VESTRY

Incumbents and select vestries shall, following the approval of the bishop of the diocese, ensure that within each parish*, there is a panel of at least three people ('the panel') trained to implement *Safeguarding Trust*.

The panel shall include the incumbent or in exceptional circumstances a person nominated by the incumbent together with two other members. The panel as far as is practical should comprise both male and female persons. Panel members may be working with children in the parish but at least one member of the panel should not be working with children in the parish.

NB A panel member cannot be the spouse of the incumbent or another panel member nor be an immediate relative of another panel member.

*If in exceptional circumstances, due to lack of available parishioners, it is not practical to appoint a panel of three persons and subject to the prior approval of the bishop of the diocese, alternative arrangements may be made for the appointment of a panel, subject to such conditions as the bishop of the diocese shall decide.

Select vestries must:

- affirm, in writing on the declaration of compliance to the diocesan council annually, that *Safeguarding Trust* is being implemented by the select vestry in the parish.
- take all reasonable care that the premises, in which all who work with children takes place, and equipment used for such work, are safe for such purposes and that appropriate insurance is in place.
- ensure that *Safeguarding Trust* is a standing item on the Select Vestry agenda and receive regular reports from the panel.
- exercise reasonable care when letting a church hall or other premises for activities which will involve work with children. All external bodies or tenants must sign an annual agreement accepting the terms of the *Common Protocol for Churches relating to Independent Organisations working with children*.
- confirm that the appropriate insurance advised by the Representative Church Body is put in place by the parish insurer.

PARISH AND DIOCESAN PANELS

PARISH PANEL

The Parish Panel functions as a sub-committee of the select vestry with the membership nominated by the incumbent and appointed by the vestry. Members other than the incumbent or priest-in-charge are not required to be members of the select vestry. Lay panel members should be vetted prior to appointment by the select vestry.



PARISH PANEL ROLES

- Maintain oversight of all matters regarding safeguarding in the parish on behalf of the select vestry and report on matters to each select vestry meeting. The Parish Panel should meet on a regular basis (at least twice) throughout the year. The checklists in section will provide guidance as to matters to be covered at these meetings.
- Implement and maintain good practice in the recruitment, assessment, training, management and support of staff and volunteers. The Parish Panel may include others in the interview process where a post requires specialist skills to be assessed.
- Keep records of all appointments, reports and other relevant documents regarding *Safeguarding Trust* and audit records such as the accidents and incidents book in case disturbing patterns emerge. Store all records securely in line with General Data Protection Regulations. (see *GDPR & Safeguarding Trust guidelines*)
- Follow the guidelines set out in *Safeguarding Trust*, and in the appropriate statutory guidelines, on how to respond to any safeguarding concern. The Parish Panel fulfils the role of Designated Officer and acts collectively.
- The Parish Panel will also be involved in managing situations where a member of staff or volunteer has been suspended pending a statutory investigation. Information may come to the Parish Panel from outside the parish, as from statutory authorities.
- Ensure that Parish Panel notices and children's information posters are displayed on parish premises giving relevant information regarding the statutory authorities to whom a concern can be reported. The notices and posters identify the panel members.
- Advise the select vestry in respect of its responsibilities. Safety and employment issues are normally advised directly to the vestry but information concerning child protection issues must only be shared on a 'need to know' basis.
- Meet members of the diocesan support team to undertake the evidence based triennial parish audit and implement actions required as a result of the audit.
- Ensure all clergy, staff and volunteers undertake regular training. They will be supported in this by their Diocese.

DIOCESAN PANEL

The Diocesan Panel will be appointed by the bishop of the diocese subject to approval by diocesan council. This should be composed of a senior member of the clergy plus two others, with at least one lay member. The Diocesan Panel as far as is practical should comprise both male and female persons. The responsibilities and duties are the same as those of the Parish Panel in terms of receiving and reporting concerns. This Diocesan Panel is required to be constituted and to meet under the following three circumstances:



1. **Diocesan staff**

If a diocese employs staff who are undertaking relevant work or activities relating to children then a Diocesan Panel must be constituted for at least the duration of their employment. The Diocesan Panel will be responsible for ensuring that the member of staff has relevant training prior to employment and that regular training is accessed during their employment.

2. **Events / camps**

Where a youth camp or children's event is being held and serving any area greater than an individual parish.

3. **Report of historical abuse**

When a retrospective allegation is made concerning a member of the clergy or diocesan staff, the Diocesan Panel should meet to support the bishop of the diocese in dealing with the allegation. The Child Protection Officer can provide support to the bishop of the diocese and Diocesan Panel in their management of this allegation.

PANEL MEMBERS - SUITABILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

The people best suited to the foregoing tasks are those whose occupations, or lengthy voluntary experience, have brought them into contact with children.

Those who have already participated in foundation training in child protection, e.g. nurses, teachers, social workers, probation officers and doctors may be particularly suitable. Consideration should also be given to those who could bring particular gifts and skills to the panel, e.g. those with administrative experience.

Parishes need to indicate the duration of appointment for panel members, perhaps a period of five years which might be renewable, so that the role and responsibility is shared among parishioners.

PROVIDERS OF ORDINATION (PRE AND POST) AND LAY READER TRAINING

An Access NI check or a vetting disclosure from The National Vetting Bureau which has been assessed as being favourable, should be received for those who have been nominated for training, subject to residence, **before** commencing training.

The Principal of The Church of Ireland Theological Institute is responsible for ensuring that all its students attend training in *Safeguarding Trust* prior to their placement in parishes or in any work involving children.

The bishop of the diocese shall ensure that training in *Safeguarding Trust* is provided for lay readers in the diocese.

The bishop of the diocese shall ensure that those in ministry in their dioceses shall receive continuing training in relation to child protection.



THE CHURCH OF IRELAND YOUTH DEPARTMENT, DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCILS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The Church of Ireland Youth Department and every Diocesan Youth Council shall implement *Safeguarding Trust*.

All Church of Ireland groups using Church of Ireland premises shall implement *Safeguarding Trust* and ensure that their staff/volunteers undertake *Safeguarding Trust* training, where appropriate, and sign the declaration of compliance annually.

BISHOPS, CLERGY, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Anyone working with children in the Church of Ireland, whether as bishop, clergy, staff or volunteers should:

- (a) undertake in writing to exercise a duty to care for children;
- (b) adhere to the code of behaviour for bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers;
- (c) understand how to work safely with children in weekly activities as well as on day, weekend or longer trips (residential or otherwise);
- (d) have a basic knowledge of the definitions and features of child abuse;
- (e) know how to respond should a child make a disclosure;
- (f) report to the panel any concern regarding a child and cooperate in reporting the details to the appropriate statutory agencies. (In the event of the incumbent being implicated the report should also be made to the bishop of the diocese.)

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (CPO)

The Child Protection Officer (CPO) advises on and supports the implementation of the child protection policy of the Church of Ireland *Safeguarding Trust* and provides professional advice and assistance to panels, bishops and other church authorities in relation to the reporting and management of any child abuse issue.

The CPO also assists in the development and review of *Safeguarding Trust*, designs and delivers training in line with the Central *Safeguarding Trust* Training Strategy and monitors implementation of *Safeguarding Trust*. The CPO contributes to the annual report and compiles statistical data, where relevant, in addition to other related tasks.

COMPLAINTS

The Church of Ireland has an ethos of inclusion, transparency and openness.

Anyone who has a concern or child related concern relating to the Church of Ireland can raise an enquiry or complaint directly with the Representative Church Body (www.ireland.anglican.org).



Any serious complaints regarding the conduct of bishops or clergy will be referred to the Complaints Administrator. This will then trigger the complaints procedure as laid out in the Constitution of the Church of Ireland. Should the complaint require further investigation the Complaints Committee will sit to consider the matter.

The Church of Ireland Dignity in Church Life Charter also outlines the support available to anyone who wishes to complain about the conduct of clergy, staff or volunteers in relation to working with children in the Church of Ireland.

All parishes should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints at a local level. All leaders-in-charge, volunteers, staff, parents and participants should be made aware of the complaints procedure either through the Parish Magazine / Website or a notice clearly displayed in the Church and Church Halls.

BREACHING THE POLICY

Staff and volunteers should understand that:

- If they are unsure of their actions and feel they may have breached the Policy, they should consult with their Leader-in-Charge, Rector, Panel or the Safeguarding Officer.
- Breaching the Policy may be a serious issue that will be investigated.
- Breaching the Policy may result in disciplinary action and ultimately dismissal and if it constitutes harm/risk of harm.