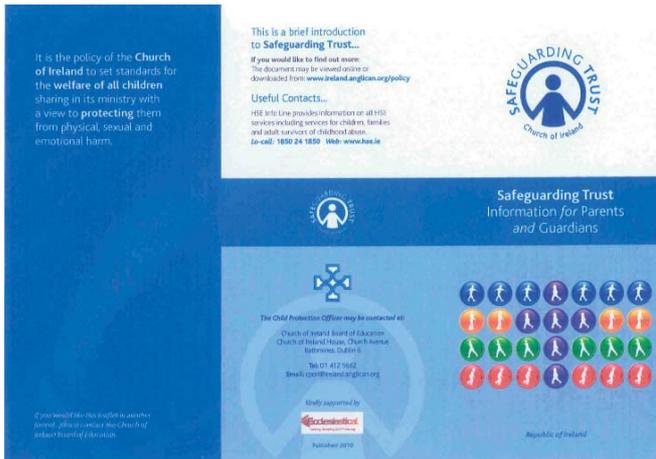


Newsletter

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Safeguarding Trust information leaflet for parents and guardians

A leaflet for parents and guardians has been developed. There are versions for each jurisdiction.

Information for carers is an important aspect of a child protection policy. Parents and guardians have a right to expect high standards of care when they entrust a child or young person to the Church.

This is a valuable addition to the suite of Safeguarding Trust resources.

The leaflet may be given to parents or guardians when a child is registered for a parish activity or a diocesan youth event.

Copies can be made available on church premises. The leaflet could also be distributed at a Sunday service when the code is being highlighted by the rector, panel members or organisation leaders.

The leaflet is set out in an accessible question and answer format and covers issues such as:

- Why a code of good practice is needed
- Who has responsibility for Safeguarding Trust in the parish
- How workers are recruited
- Information required from parents
- Confidentiality
- What happens if there is a concern of a child protection nature?

Leaflets are available to parishes **free of charge**. Please contact the Child Protection Officer if you would like to receive some.

We are grateful to Ecclesiastical for supporting the publication of the leaflet.

OUR POLICY

“It is the policy of the Church of Ireland to set standards for the welfare of all children sharing in its ministry with a view to protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.”

Vetting Update

Change of authorised signatory

Due a review of operations in relation to Garda Vetting, the child protection officer, Ms Renée English will, from the 1st November 2010, become an authorised signatory for Garda Vetting in addition to Ms Jennifer Byrne. During September 2010, Renée will attend training for this role with the Garda Vetting Unit, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.



Renée takes over this role from Ms. Vicki Hastie who has moved to a finance role within the RCB. We would like to thank Vicki for all her hard work in relation to Garda Vetting over the last number of years.

The current length of time required to process Garda Vetting applications is running at approximately 14 weeks.

New Secretary to the Board of Education and Education Officer

Dr Ken Fennelly has been appointed to the post of Secretary to the Board of Education and Education Officer in April 2010 and has assumed responsibility for the oversight of Safeguarding Trust from the Rev Canon John McCullagh who has returned to pastoral Ministry as Rector of Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow.

Ken joins the Board of Education from the HR Office at NUI Maynooth and the DIT Library Service. He holds a degree in Theology from St. Patricks College, Maynooth and an M.A. in Culture, Religion and Society in Modern Ireland from NUI Maynooth.



Ken has recently been conferred with a Ph.D from the Department of Sociology NUIM. His subject of his thesis was the redevelopment, change and future prospects of the provision of secondary education to the Protestant community in the Republic of Ireland. His research focused on various issues such as: ethos, funding, demographic change, minority status and the social role of the secondary school for the Protestant community.

Ken brings a number of experiences to this role including giving advice to personnel on difficult issues. Ken also has experience of teaching at third level both to final year undergraduates and post-graduates, which should be especially relevant to the training aspect of Safeguarding Trust.

In taking on this role, he has identified a number of areas of policy development which present as areas of priority. These include: development of quality assurance for the practical implementation of Safeguarding Trust; promotion of a positive perception of the role of Safeguarding Trust; developing a policy regarding vulnerable adults in the life of the Church; putting in place good practices, guidelines and procedures in relation to dealing with persons convicted of sexual offences who wish to be part of the Church community; developing a forum within the Church community where issues regarding child protection may be discussed. In this role of policy oversight of Safeguarding Trust, Ken looks forward to working with the Child Protection Officers Renée English (RI) and Margaret Yarr (NI) and Rev Ian Ellis, Secretary to the Board of Education (NI).

Originally from Kilkenny, Ken has lived in Maynooth, Co. Kildare since 1997 and is married to Éilish who is originally from Vermont, USA. They are both members of the congregation of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin where Ken is involved as a liturgical server and on the Board of the Friends of the Cathedral.

Child Protection Links

One of the Child Protection Officer's roles is to forge links with statutory organisations and other bodies, to develop links with the HSE, Garda and others in the Health and Voluntary sector and to liaise with child protection officers of other churches.

It is most important for the Church of Ireland to maintain a public profile in the promotion of child welfare. This requires keeping abreast of current child protection issues, research, policy development and maintaining links with personnel in related fields.



Renée has HSE and Garda connections from many years of service in HSE social work departments. She maintains registration as a Keeping Safe trainer with the HSE and Volunteer Development Agency. She is a founder member of a network for child protection workers in the voluntary and community sector.

She is a committee member of the Presbyterian Church Taking Care Advisory Group (RI), and the SVP National Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee. She has also developed relationships with faith based child protection officers nationally and internationally.

Review of the Child Protection Officer Post

In March 2006 the RCB approved the positions of Child Protection Officers for NI and RI subject to review by Standing Committee. A CPO RI was appointed in September 2007 with a job role description which included the following strategic and operational roles.

Strategic role: Developing and reviewing policy

Operational roles:

1. Co-ordinating and delivering training at all levels;
2. Providing professional advice/assessment in relation to the reporting of child protection issues;
3. Monitoring implementation of Safeguarding Trust.

It was considered prudent to review the roles at the end of the first contract period in order to inform members of the Standing Committee on the perceived needs of the Church in respect of these positions.

A questionnaire was devised which sought responses from a small, representative number of individuals who had experienced direct contact with the CPO over the past two years in the above three areas of the role. These included Bishops, Clergy, Diocesan Secretaries, Parish Panel members and Diocesan Support Team members. Consideration was given to geographical spread across the dioceses and included clergy and lay members.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to consider the position and not the current post holder.

Conclusion of Review

In the past 3 years the role of the CPO has become well established. It provides a key support to bishops, clergy and parish panels in implementing child protection and in addressing concerns about child abuse. The review concluded that the role of CPO should be continued with some modification of current roles.

A number of areas have been highlighted for role development. These include:

- risk assessment of offenders in church
- the development of best practice in respect of safeguarding vulnerable adults
- a facilitation role for cases of a serious nature
- further development of training programmes for panels and workers at diocesan and parish level.

The review highlighted the need to provide administrative resources to meet the demands of supporting these new areas of work within the office of the Board of Education.

Revised Children First Guidelines

The guidelines were first issued in 1999 and a National Review of Compliance with Children First was published in 2008 by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

The review found that only minor amendments were needed to bring them up to date.

Revised Guidelines were issued in December 2009. They

take account of changes in legislation and organisational change such as the establishment of the HSE and the setting up of offices such as the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Ombudsman for Children.

Children First guidelines have not yet been put on a statutory footing but legislation is planned to require those working with children through state funded organisations to comply with the guidelines.

Children First is available to download from the website www.omcya.ie.

It is **not** currently available for purchase from Government Publications Office.



Safeguarding Trust Training for Clergy

Who is the training for?

Newly ordained clergy, new incumbents, clergy who have recently arrived in the jurisdiction, clergy who have returned to parish work after a break in ministry, clergy who would like to refresh their knowledge of the child protection policy.

Objectives

By the end of the session you will:

- be aware of the legislation and guidelines relating to child protection in the Republic of Ireland
- know how to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to disclosures and concerns
- be aware of the Safeguarding Trust requirements for reporting concerns of a child protection nature
- have a knowledge of historic abuse issues
- have a knowledge of safety issues
- understand requirements in relation to the recruitment, assessment, training, management and support of workers

Training days can be arranged where there is sufficient demand.

Diocesan Support Team Members Update

The implementation of Safeguarding Trust is greatly supported by those who undertake the training of workers, including panel members and carry out parish evaluations. Naturally circumstances change and people retire from this work while others come on board. We are very grateful to everyone for their commitment to promoting the welfare of children in parish ministry.

These are some changes of personnel that have taken place in the past year:

Stepping down either permanently or temporarily:

Mrs Christine Hilliard of the United Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross and Mr Brian Bovaird of Raphoe Diocese

Mrs Mildred Gilmore of the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry has ceased to provide training but will continue to undertake parish evaluations.

New team members

The Rev James Mulhall, recently appointed curate of Stradbally, Co. Waterford has taken over the Safeguarding Trust brief in the Diocese of Cashel and Ossory from the Rev Isobel Jackson. James formerly worked as a social worker with the Midland Health Board (now HSE) where he was involved in developing and delivering training in domestic violence to frontline staff. His social work background will be a valuable asset.

Isobel is the new rector of Templebreedy group of parishes based in Crosshaven, Co. Cork. She will retain her involvement as a Safeguarding Trust trainer in her new posting.

Ms Susie Keane of 3Rock Youth will provide Youth Worker Training in the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough in addition to Mrs Olive Good.

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