

Proibhínse Phroinsiasach na hÉireann

franciscan province of ireland

provincial office – 4, merchants' quay – dublin 8 – ireland



Child Safeguarding Statement

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. The policy of the Catholic Church in Ireland is based on standards of practice, which contain indicators to assist in achieving the standards, as well as to assess and manage risk.

Name and contact details of the service provider.

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Statement

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children. We are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being, that they will be equally protected from harm regardless of race, ability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All Franciscan friars, 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.

Nature of service

The Franciscan Province of Ireland as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry with children, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016:

- Attendance by children and young people at Franciscan Church services with their parents / guardians.
- Altar servers, youth choir, children's liturgies, pray and play groups.
- Chaplaincy to hospital providing for the needs of children/young people.
- Pilgrimages abroad involving children and young people.
- Participation in school based religious and/or social activities.

It is important to note that this list is not exhaustive.

Principles of Safeguarding Children from Harm

Section 2 of the Children First Act 2015 defines harm as follows:

“harm means in relation to a child-

- (a) Assault, ill-treatment, or neglect, of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or
- (b) sexual abuse of the child”.

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland and Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, we are committed to the following principles:

Mandatory reporting

We all have a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused.

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Sexually
- Through neglect
- Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a friar, but they can also relate to incidents in the child’s family, or in the community.
- Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them.
- Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe, prevent abuse, and create nurturing, caring conditions within Franciscan-led activities for children and the adults who work with them, will be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training support, communications and quality assurance.
- Responding appropriately to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegation of child abuse.
- Anyone who brings a suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Province will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory and Church child protection procedures.
- All those in the Franciscan Province of Ireland have a responsibility to report suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child abuse that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. The Designated Liaison Person can assist with the process. The report will be made irrespective of the status, friar or lay, of the person suspected of having abused a child. If the allegation relates to a Franciscan staff or volunteer, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation relates to a friar, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority and anonymously to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.
- All Franciscans will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to a friar, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities in the and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse.

See the safeguarding section of the Franciscan Website www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com see also "Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016" www.safeguarding.ie/our-services/policy-andguidance

Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

The Franciscan Province of Ireland endeavours to provide a welcoming, nurturing and safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 and Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, we are committed to the following principles:

- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- We all have a role to play in safeguarding children, including creating safe environments for children, and cultures where children are heard, valued and protected, challenging poor practice and recognising and responding to child protection and welfare concerns.
- The welfare of the child is the first and paramount consideration. When making decisions and taking action the welfare of the child must be prioritised.
- Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.

Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in church activities in the Franciscan Province of Ireland and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse. See 'Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016' and the safeguarding section on the Franciscan website for detailed procedures.

www.franciscans.ie/safeguarding

Harm as defined in the Children First Act 2015, means '*in relation to a child-*

- a) *assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare,*
- b) *sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise'.*

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
<p>Risk of harm of a child / young person by church personnel.</p>	<p>Procedures for the recruitment and selection of Franciscan friars, staff and volunteers to ensure their suitability for working directly/ indirectly with children and which includes Garda vetting.</p> <p>Code of behaviour for Franciscans.</p> <p>A celebret will not be issued to any Franciscan priest until Garda vetting is completed.</p> <p>Reporting Procedures are in place.</p> <p>Procedures for dealing with the complainant and the respondent when a concern or allegation is made against a Franciscan friar, staff or volunteer, including a risk management plan.</p> <p>Training needs analysis and training strategy are in place to ensure that all Franciscan friars, staff and volunteers have received training appropriate to their role, responsibilities, and the level of contact they have with children.</p> <p>Procedure for internet and social media safety.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Risk of harm to children / young people through peer abuse, including bullying.</p>	<p>An anti-bullying policy & procedure is in place.</p> <p>The code of behaviour for children/young people implemented in all activities involving children and young people.</p> <p>A code of behaviour for adults is in place.</p> <p>Procedures for internet and social media safety are in place.</p> <p>The complaints procedure is in place.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Children / young people are not informed of the code of behaviour for adults and may be unaware of appropriate boundaries</p>	<p>Code of behaviour for adults.</p> <p>Age-appropriate information delivered to children and young people on safeguarding procedures to empower them to report issues, concerns, and worries.</p> <p>Communication and implementation procedure.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>

<p>Allowing an environment or culture that is harmful to children / young people.</p>	<p>Having a child-centred ethos as the basis of the code of behaviour.</p> <p>Whistle blowing procedures.</p> <p>Complaints procedure.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>External groups who use church property could be a risk of harm to children / young people.</p>	<p>Procedures for external groups to use Franciscan church property.</p> <p>Licence agreements are in place.</p> <p>Reporting procedure.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Risk of harm to children from adults attending Franciscan led events.</p>	<p>Ensuring appropriate supervision ratios are in place, depending on the age of the children, their needs and activity they are involved in.</p> <p>Ensuring appropriate codes of behaviour are in place for children / young people.</p> <p>Implementing the safeguarding procedures.</p> <p>Recruitment and selection procedures.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Risk of harm to a child / young person from Franciscan personnel or other adults during activities or trips away from home.</p>	<p>Code of behaviour for adults, specific to the trip is in place.</p> <p>Specific reference to adult to child ratios and supervision levels.</p> <p>Risk assessment and communication with personnel in the activity venue/residential centre.</p> <p>Code of behaviour for children/young people is in place.</p> <p>Information provision / meeting for parents in advance of the trip.</p> <p>Consent and emergency contact details obtained for all children / young people.</p> <p>Implementation of safeguarding procedures with children / young people.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>

<p>Risk of harm through the misuse of digital media (photography, video and social media)</p>	<p>Procedures for internet and social media safety</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Franciscan friars, staff or volunteers fail to appropriately report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge.</p>	<p>Reporting Procedures in place.</p> <p>Training-needs analysis and training strategy are in place to ensure that all friars, staff and volunteers receive training appropriate to their role, responsibilities and the level of contact with children.</p> <p>Disciplinary Procedure in place.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Franciscan friars, staff and volunteers fail to take action during and following any investigation into allegations of abuse made against a Franciscan friars staff or volunteer to ensure children/young people are protected from harm.</p>	<p>Reporting procedures in place.</p> <p>Appointment of safeguarding personnel.</p> <p>Procedures for dealing with the complainant and the respondent when a concern / allegation is made against a Franciscan friar, staff or volunteer, including a risk management plan.</p> <p>Disciplinary Procedure in place.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Church personnel fail to support those who are victims of abuse.</p>	<p>Reporting procedures in place.</p> <p>Appointment of safeguarding personnel.</p> <p>Recording and storage of information procedure.</p> <p>Confidentiality statement.</p> <p>Appropriate support and pastoral care is offered to the complainant.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Franciscan friars, staff or volunteers fail to understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding children / young people.</p>	<p>Training-needs analysis and training strategy are in place to ensure that all Franciscan friars, staff and volunteers receive training appropriate to their role, responsibilities and the level of contact with children / young people.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>

<p>Children/young people and their parents/ guardians do not understand the church's policy, procedures and structure to safeguard children.</p>	<p>Information, advice and support are provided to children / young people and their parents / guardians on keeping children safe.</p> <p>Communication procedure is in place to ensure that safeguarding procedures are implemented.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Safeguarding procedures fail to be implemented.</p>	<p>Local biannual safeguarding audits are carried out.</p> <p>An annual Safeguarding Report is produced by the Safeguarding Office.</p> <p>A 3-year child safeguarding strategy is in place.</p> <p>The Franciscan Order is audited by the NBSCCCI in relation to the seven safeguarding standards.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>The church authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons.</p>	<p>Procedure for the appointment of a relevant person is in place.</p> <p>Procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons is in place.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>
<p>Mandated persons are not aware of their safeguarding role and responsibility.</p>	<p>Information leaflet, information sessions and training provided to all mandated persons.</p> <p>A training strategy is in place.</p> <p>https://www.franciscanssafeguardingoffice.com</p>

Community Specific Risk Assessment

Each individual friary must document any additional safeguarding risks and the procedures in place to minimise these risks. A similar format as above should be used and personnel in the safeguarding office named below are available to support this process.

Procedures

All procedures outlined in the risk assessment above are available at:
www.franciscansafeguardingoffice.com

The following procedures (previously referenced) are specified procedures under the Children First Act 2015.

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against Franciscan friars, staff or volunteer of a child availing of our service.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of Franciscan friars, staff and volunteers who work with children.
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla, Child and Family Agency.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the mandated persons in the relevant service.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

Implementation

The Franciscan Province of Ireland is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 and Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.

This child safeguarding statement and our practice supports our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

Signed



Fr Aidan McGrath OFM
Minister Provincial

15/02/2024.

Date

For any queries relating to this statement please contact the Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015:

Ms Mary Tallon
Director of Safeguarding/Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
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