

1<sup>st</sup> July 2019

**Re: Safeguarding Norms from Pope Francis**

Dear Father,

I am writing to you regarding the new Safeguarding Norms which Pope Francis has established for the whole church from 1st June 2019. Here is the link to the document and I would urge you to read it carefully and familiarise yourself with this very important document.

<http://www.downandconnorsafeguarding.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Vox-Estis-Lux-Mundi.pdf>

With regard to complaints of child abuse, you will note that the Norms are consistent with the arrangements already in place within the Diocese. In particular, the obligation to report, without delay, all allegations of abuse of a child to the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person is set out clearly.

In respect of children, certain people are specified in Irish law as mandated persons. This includes “members of the clergy (howsoever described) or pastoral care workers (howsoever described) of a church or other religious community”.

Mandated persons must, by law, report to Tusla any incidence of harm that meet or exceed a specified threshold. While the obligation to report is a personal one, it is possible to make a joint report with the Diocesan Liaison Person and this is Diocesan policy.

I would draw your attention in particular to the new definition of Vulnerable Persons. This states that a Vulnerable Person is *‘any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want to otherwise resist the offence’*. It is reasonable to anticipate that at times it may not be immediately clear if a concern is of such a nature as to require formal reporting. Therefore, it is important to discuss concerns which arise for you with the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding who will ensure that appropriate responsibilities are met and all records are maintained.

In respect of vulnerable persons, you should note that the Irish legal requirement to report abuse related concerns directly to An Garda Síochána arises also in respect of vulnerable persons.

The H.S.E. has responsibility for adults who may be vulnerable and at risk of abuse and has put in place a dedicated team who are available to assist Limerick Diocesan personnel.

It is also appropriate that I would bring to your attention two related and important issues:

1. the need to familiarise yourself with the particular legal obligations and related reporting obligations which arise in organisations in which you may be employed or have some pastoral or related role. These include for example, schools and centres for the elderly
2. It is illegal for anyone to enable or permit any person to have an engagement in relevant work or activities with Children or Vulnerable Persons without being the subject of Vetting. It is critical that we do not assume that a predecessor has made the appropriate arrangement. Rather it is important to establish now that all persons involved on behalf of a parish with children or vulnerable Persons are in fact Vetted.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Website is being revised to reflect the new norms and all relevant information will be available at <http://www.limerickdiocesessafeguarding.com/>

If you wish to clarify anything regarding these matters please contact the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding/Designated Liaison Person Mr. Ger Crowley at [ger.crowley@limerickdiocese.org](mailto:ger.crowley@limerickdiocese.org) or 087 3233564 (Diocesan Safeguarding line).

Kind regards



+Brendan Leahy  
Bishop of Limerick

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"Come and see the works of God tremendous his deeds among us" – Ps. 66 (65)