



diocese
of limerick
our catholic community

Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Limerick Standard 7 Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

In 2016, the National Board replaced the 2009 Standards and Guidance with Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland. This is a One Church Policy which the Diocese of Limerick adopted and agreed to implement.

In implementing this One Church policy, The Diocese of Limerick reviewed all its arrangements and this document is the outcome of that review.

This document of detailed procedures, developed in 2017, accompanies the National Board Policy Standards and Guidance and is updated on a regular basis

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Extract from Diocesan Procedures Document

Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

Responsibilities of Safeguarding Personnel in Relation to Standard 7 are:

The Bishop:

- Appointing a safeguarding committee and designated liaison person (DLP) and ensuring that they carry out their function in relation to monitoring effectively;
- Writing to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) to confirm that an internal annual report has been completed;
- Inviting the NBSCCCI to conduct reviews as necessary;
- Carrying out systematic assessments of the standards through visits to local areas of responsibility.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- Completing a report to the Bishop on an annual basis, outlining compliance with Standards 2, 3 and 4.

Safeguarding Committee

Under the overall direction of the Bishop the Safeguarding Committee plays a critical role in relation to quality assuring diocesan compliance with the Safeguarding Children Policy & Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. It is particularly concerned with Standards 1,5,6, and 7.

The Safeguarding Committee consists of a minimum of six and a maximum of ten members appointed by the Bishop. It meets formally on six occasions annually to review progress; it works to a standardised agenda and proceedings are recorded. Individual members of the committee take an interest and lead on aspects of the safeguarding agenda. The Diocesan Director of Safeguarding attends committee meetings as appropriate but is not a member of the committee. The committee does not involve itself in any executive matter or in any complaint/case.

- The safeguarding committee is concerned with the seven standards including the establishment of the local safeguarding policy and procedures.
- To develop and review the three-year child safeguarding plan on how to maintain standards 1, 5 and 6 across the Diocese and to ensure that an annual safeguarding report on these standards is made to the Bishop.
- Recommend the Annual Diocesan Safeguarding Plan to the Bishop for approval
- Review progress of implementation of the Annual Diocesan Safeguarding Plan and advise and support any necessary actions
- Report, through the Chair, to the Bishop on the Annual Diocesan Safeguarding Plan and on its implementation.

- Liaising with the local safeguarding representatives (LSR's) to ensure the compilation of a local safeguarding audit, and to identify areas where guidance and support on policy or practice is needed.
- Co-ordinate local safeguarding representatives. (LSR's)
- Co-ordinate activities related to child safeguarding, e.g. training
- Ensure the annual audit, including correlation of records for training related-activities.
- Ensure the completion of training needs assessments across the various child safeguarding roles in the Church body.
- Ensure, with the Church authority, that the appropriate child safeguarding personnel are in place.
- Uphold the seven Standards in practice and behaviour.

Parish Safeguarding Representative

- Working with the safeguarding committee to ensure the completion of the local safeguarding audit.

NBSCCI will

- Conduct planned reviews on the Diocesan safeguarding service;
- Store the annual notification of the Church authority, which states that an annual audit of safeguarding has been completed.

Review of Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Information

A monthly meeting is held involving the Designated Liaison Person, the Parish Safeguarding Support Worker and a member of the Safeguarding Committee with lead responsibility for information. At this meeting, National Board updates on Standards and Guidance are reviewed as well as any other related matters arising at Parish level and management of cases. Any appropriate updating of Policy and Procedure is addressed at this meeting.

Governance arrangements regarding the Seven Safeguarding Standards in the Diocese of Limerick

The Bishop has overall responsibility for safeguarding governance within the Diocese.

To assist this, the Bishop appoints people, approves organisational arrangements and processes to ensure that an appropriate Safeguarding Service is maintained.

Four Committees support this objective within the Diocese:

- **Policy and Governance Committee** - This committee is the senior forum within the Diocese which advises the Bishop on safeguarding children in all church activities. The committee meets annually or more frequently if required.
- **Case Management Advisory Committee** - Provides independent, expert advice to the Bishop on all aspects of the management of cases of alleged or confirmed child sexual abuse within the Diocese. The Case Management Advisory Committee meets as required.
- **Safeguarding Committee** – The Safeguarding Committee, under the direction of the Bishop, plays a critical role in relation to quality assuring compliance with the Safeguarding Children Policy & Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016.

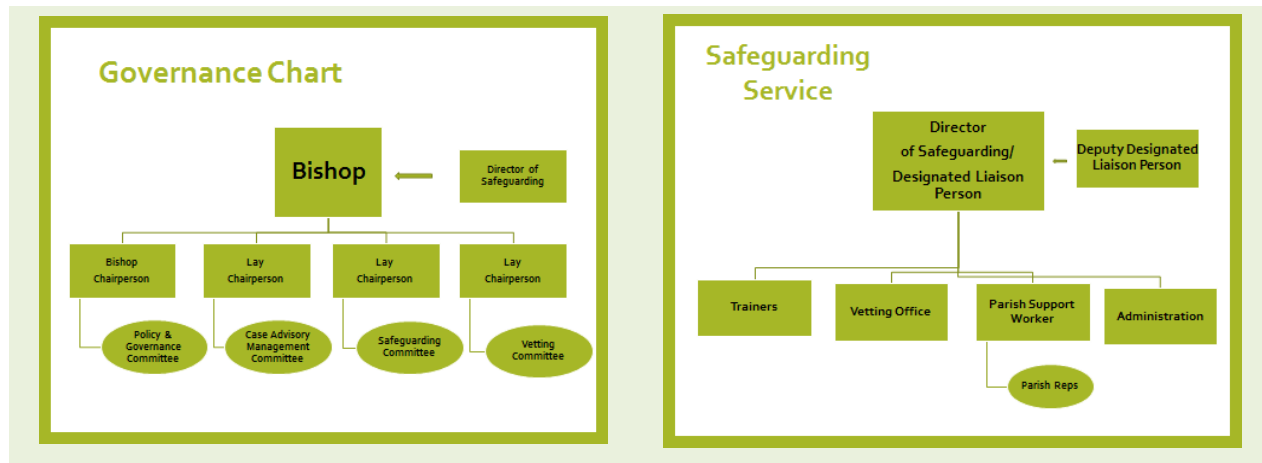
Governance Role of the Safeguarding Committee in relation to each of the 7 Standards.

Standard 1	To ensure that Diocese meets its responsibilities to provide an environment for children, this is safe. To ensure the Annual Parish Audit is undertaken and reviewed.
Standard 2	To ensure that appropriate child care procedures are in place, communicated and made available by the Diocese
Standard 3	On an annual basis the Chair obtains assurance that the following arrangements are in place: Panel of trained Complainant Support Person. Counselling Services
Standard 4	On an annual basis the Chair obtains assurance that the following arrangements are in place: Panel of trained Priest Advisors
Standard 5	To ensure that Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role by the Diocese
Standard 6	To ensure that the Diocese meets its responsibility to appropriately communicate the Church's child safeguarding message
Standard 7	To ensure that the Diocese develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the Safeguarding standards within the Diocese

- Safeguarding Committee that meets six times annually
- Vetting Committee that meets monthly

The Bishop chairs the Policy and Governance Committee and appoints an Independent Chair to each of the other committees. The Bishop meets regularly with each of the committee chairs.

The Director of Safeguarding has responsibility for the operation of the service and is the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person. A Priest of the Diocese is identified as Deputy Designated Liaison Person.



The Diocese maintains membership of the National Case Management Service of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland. This membership enables the Bishop to secure case management advice from the service and/or from the C.E.O. of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Ensuring Compliance with the Seven Safeguarding Standards at Local Level (NBSCCCI 7.1C)

Quality assurance procedures are a systematic method of assessing the extent to which the seven child safeguarding standards are implemented at all levels within the Diocese. This is an important method of ensuring that a process of continuous improvement takes place, and of demonstrating accountability and transparency.

Quality assurance is done by applying the following methods:

1. Members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Service and Committee will visit parishes to assess compliance and to ensure that there is an awareness of child safeguarding, and that effective practice is being implemented.

The items to be examined during these visits may include, for example:

- a. Recruitment/Vetting arrangements
- b. Attendance registers
- c. Use of Parish Facilities.
- d. Notice Boards - Display of Safeguarding posters
- e. Parish Bulletins/Notices on Safeguarding
- f. Minutes/agendas of Safeguarding Meetings
- g. Codes of conduct for groups of children
- h. Previous year's annual child safeguarding audit from the parish.

The visit will, as far as possible, involve the local safeguarding representatives and the priests of the parish and may coincide with a Parish Information Session.

2. The Annual Parish 'self-audit', coordinated by the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee will be carried out in Quarter 4 of each year (Appendix 2). (It is important that the completed audit is returned by the specified date as confirmation of the completion of the audit has to be forwarded to the National Board).
3. Annual report by the DLP to the Bishop on Standards 2, 3 and 4.

The Bishop may engage an independent person/organisation to review the quality of compliance at any time.

Guidance on Compliance Visits by the Diocesan Safeguarding Service

The Diocesan Safeguarding Service should regularly visit parishes/community houses/ministries to ensure that there is an awareness of child safeguarding, and that effective practice is being implemented. It is important that these visits are outlined in the annual three-year child safeguarding plan which assesses the effectiveness of the steps taken to keep children and young people safe.

It is advised that the diocesan service has a checklist of items, linked to the safeguarding standards and diocesan procedures, to examine during these visits.

This list may include, for example:

- The attendance register;
- Safeguarding posters;
- Codes of conduct for groups of children;
- A copy of the previous year's annual child safeguarding audit from the local area.

This visit should, as far as possible, involve local people such as the Local Safeguarding Representative/s, alongside the parish priest or local superior, to allow the Diocese the opportunity to recognise good practice, and to thank those involved for their work in maintaining the child safeguarding standards.

Guidance on Local Safeguarding Audit

One of the primary methods, alongside the annual report written by the Designated Liaison Person to the Bishop, of ensuring compliance with the seven child safeguarding standards is the conducting of a local child safeguarding audit on Standards 1, 5 and 6. In accordance with *NBSCCI Guidance 7.1 A-F*.

Each standard contains a list of indicators that give details of the steps a Church organisation needs to take to meet the standard, and advises on ways to provide evidence that the standard has been met.

Process

Based on the level of ministry with children, the safeguarding committee will select the local safeguarding audit, which relates to the indicators contained in the child safeguarding policy.

- The safeguarding committee will forward the audit for completion by parishes on an annual basis.
- Returns are examined for compliance by the safeguarding committee.
- An annual report is prepared for the Bishop, with a review of compliance and recommendations for further action and improvement.

- Recommendations for change are incorporated into to the three-year child safeguarding plan.
- The Bishop will notify the NBSCCCI based on requirements of the child safeguarding policy by the end of January each calendar year that the local child safeguarding audit has been completed;
- The annual report made by the Designated Liaison Person has been completed.

Guidance on Developing a Three-Year Child Safeguarding Plan (NBSCCCI 7.2A)

The Church organisation must develop a child safeguarding plan to assess the effectiveness of the steps it is taking to keep children safe.

The purpose of this internal child safeguarding plan is to set out **what, how, who and in what time frame** key elements of child safeguarding practices and procedures are going to be met by the Church body.

A child safeguarding plan should include the following:

- **Specific objectives linked to each of the safeguarding standards.** It is important that specific objectives are set in line with the child safeguarding standards, any previous annual audit recommendations and any review recommendations by the NBSCCCI. These objectives can be broken down into set actions. The training plan and communications plan should be included under Standards 5 and 6.
- **Resources.** The achievement of this child safeguarding plan is fully dependent on the availability of sufficient resources. In order to successfully implement the three-year strategy, it is important to set specific and realistic objectives linked to identified allocated resources.
- **Implementation.** The Church authority, through the safeguarding committee, should identify clear time frames for implementation, which should take account of the completion of the local safeguarding audits (NBSCCCI Guidance 7.1C).
- **Review and evaluation.** It is important that the three-year plan sets clear dates for review of each specific objective outlined in the plan. These review dates should be achieved on an annual basis, and reviews should take account of the outcomes of the annual local safeguarding audits (NBSCCCI Guidance 7.1C) and, if appropriate, of the annual report made by the DLP to the Church authority (NBSCCCI Guidance 7.1D).

