



1.6A GUIDANCE ON A COMMUNICATION PLAN

The dissemination of information throughout the Church of Ireland about safeguarding children is an essential element of promoting a safe environment. It is important that all stakeholders are informed and have an opportunity to have their say, including children and young people who have a right to be protected, consulted and treated with respect. Dioceses and parishes shall devise a communications strategy, which sets out how communication about safeguarding at a local level will be disseminated.

Communicating what child safeguarding procedures and practice are in place is a core element of the Church of Ireland's approach to safeguard children. Policies and procedures are only effective if everyone, including children, understand their purpose and know how to use them.

Church personnel who are appropriately trained must be available to listen to and communicate with children, their parents/carers and regarding the Church of Ireland's approach to safeguarding.

There must be a range of methods to communicate what the Church of Ireland is doing to create safe environments for children, and how it is responding appropriately to allegations of child abuse.

It is helpful to identify what current communication practices are in place. The following checklist suggests some ideas for the Diocesan Support Team to consider.

Does the Parish/Diocese:

- Have a written communications plan, stating what you wish to communicate, to whom, by whom, and how often?
- Display the name and contact details of the RCB Casework Team on their website and in other communications?
- Place information on relevant websites about safeguarding children including whom to contact if an individual wishes to make a complaint?
- Ensure that communications between the Parish/Diocese and parents/carers/children/community leaders take account of language or communication differences?
- Ensure that parents/carers, children and relevant people know about the safeguarding policy and reporting procedures?
- Have a process for enabling people, including children, to make a complaint and ensure that this process is publicised so that everyone knows about it?
- Involve parents/carers, as well as children, in developing codes of behaviour, e.g. about anti-bullying?
- Devise ways of obtaining feedback from parents/carers/children/the church community to find out what you are doing well, and what is not working?



Using the information gathered in answer to the questions above, the Parish/Diocese should gather any further information necessary to develop a communications plan that reflects transparency, openness, accountability and responsibility. The aim of this plan is to make information available about all aspects of policy and practice, which keep children safe in church and related activities.

To develop this plan, the Diocesan Support Team needs to develop information on the following:

- Who are the target groups? The Diocesan Support Team should consult with relevant personnel to establish the target audiences for inclusion in the wider safeguarding plan. It is likely that the main target groups with whom a church body needs to communicate regarding its Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures are:
 - church personnel
 - lay faithful
 - children/parents/carers
 - parish staff and volunteers
 - external organisations, e.g. Tusla, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, HSCT (Health and Social Care Trust)
 - other relevant external agencies, the general public and the media.
- What are the safeguarding messages? Although child safeguarding messages must be consistent, the information needed may change depending on your target audience. Child safeguarding messages may include:
 - information on what is meant by child safeguarding
 - Information on the Child Safeguarding Policy
 - Information on the procedures for reporting allegations, suspicions and concerns
 - contact details of the Safeguarding Casework Officer
 - for children and parents/carers: how to keep safe; what to do if you, or someone you know, is in danger of being harmed; sources of advice and support; roles of agencies involved in child safeguarding; how the referral process works
 - for church personnel: how to deliver best practice; safe recruitment; dealing with allegations; accessing advice and support; availability of training; contact details for relevant child safeguarding personnel.
- How are you going to promote child safeguarding? Before deciding how you will do this, it is important to consider the most effective methods for reaching out to key groups of people. Methods could include:
 - Diocesan/provincial and parish websites that could host material such as the Child Safeguarding Policy, any additional resources developed in relation to child safeguarding, the annual training plan, a safeguarding children newsletter, or signposts to other websites such as the RCB or the statutory authorities;
 - Diocesan newsletters providing general information and updates on safeguarding;



- Parish newsletters with information on child safeguarding events and key contact details;
- Diocesan/provincial printed publications such as copies of Child Safeguarding Policy, handbooks and information pamphlets, posters for display in the church;
- National/local press releases announcing annual reports, updated resources, etc.;
- Other innovative methods: it is important to develop positive messages when promoting child safeguarding within the Church. Use the skills and expertise of key people in the church body to develop creative ways to put forward the positive child safeguarding message of the Church. This could include suggestion boxes, 'Safeguarding Sundays', meetings of key child safeguarding personnel, questionnaires, and workshops with children and young people.

Using the information outlined above it is important to identify who is responsible for each method of delivery. It must be understood that within each parish or diocese, the overall responsibility for implementing the Child Safeguarding Policy remains with the Select Vestry and Parish Panel. The overall responsibility for ensuring that each diocese implements effective child safeguarding practice lies with the relevant Bishop.

It is important that each plan has clear, realistic and achievable time frames within which each target can be achieved.

It is the responsibility of the Diocesan Support Team to write the communication plan using an appropriate format. This plan will form part of the overall safeguarding plan.

It is important to remember that communication is a two-way process. Developing mechanisms for consultation and feedback to review the communication plan is critical to ensure that the child safeguarding message is effectively heard, understood and revised in order to meet the needs of the target groups.





1.6A TEMPLATE 1: SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION POSTER

The Church of Ireland acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of all children sharing in its ministry. We are committed to ensuring that safeguarding reflects statutory responsibilities, government regulation and complies with best practice.

The Church of Ireland pledges to work alongside parents, carers and statutory authorities to value and support children as important members of our church community, to ensure they have a positive and safe experience in church activities.

The Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all church personnel and is recognised in Chapter XVI of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.

WHOM TO CONTACT TO DISCUSS SAFEGUARDING ISSUES WHICH ARE NOT RELATED TO ABUSE:

Parish Panel Members or equivalent

[INSERT DETAILS]

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE A SUSPICION, CONCERN, KNOWLEDGE OR ALLEGATION OF ABUSE:

RCB Safeguarding Casework Officer

[INSERT DETAILS]

IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY SITUATION OR YOU DO NOT WISH TO CONTACT THE RCB SAFEGUARDING CASEWORK OFFICER YOU CAN CONTACT:

Police contact for allegations that do not relate to members of the Clergy

[INSERT DETAILS]

Police contact for allegations that relate to members of the Clergy

[INSERT DETAILS]

Child Protection Service

[INSERT DETAILS]

For any other safeguarding queries contact safeguarding@rcbcoi.org



1.6A TEMPLATE 2: CHILDREN'S POSTER

HELLO

KIDS!



IN OUR PARISH WE WANT YOU TO FEEL HAPPY AND SAFE.

IF SOMETHING IS MAKING YOU FEEL SAD OR WORRIED TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST SUCH AS A PARENT, OTHER FAMILY MEMBER OR LEADER.



THESE PEOPLE ARE ALSO HERE TO HELP:

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1.6A TEMPLATE 3: CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY SUMMARY LEAFLET

AND WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU? TO ACT JUSTLY AND TO LOVE MERCY AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD.

MICAH 6:8





CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

SUMMARY LEAFLET

To view the complete Child Safeguarding Policy and accompanying Guidance go to:

www.safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org

EMAIL

safeguarding@rcbcoi.org

CHURCH OF IRELAND 2026

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WHOM TO CONTACT...

Whom to contact to discuss safeguarding issues which are not related to abuse Parish Panel or equivalent:

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Whom to contact if you have a suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of abuse RCB Safeguarding Casework Officers:

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If it is an emergency situation or you do not wish to contact the RCB Safeguarding Casework Officer you can contact Police contact for allegations that do not relate to members of the clergy:

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Police contact for allegations that relate to members of the clergy:

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Child Protection Service:

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For any other safeguarding queries contact: safeguarding@rcbcoi.org



1.6A TEMPLATE 3: CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY SUMMARY LEAFLET

POLICY STATEMENT

The Church of Ireland acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of all children sharing in its ministry. We are committed to ensuring that safeguarding reflects statutory responsibilities, government regulation and complies with best practice.

The Church of Ireland pledges to work alongside parents, carers and statutory authorities, to value and support children as important members of our church community, to ensure they have a positive and safe experience in church activities.

The Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all church personnel and is recognised in Chapter XVI of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.

The Child Safeguarding Policy is structured under 3 standards (Protecting, Responding and Complying). These are broken down into a series of indicators which are contained in this leaflet. Further detailed procedures to assist with implementation of this policy are included in the Guidance available at: www.safeguarding.ireland.anglican.org



STANDARD 1: PROTECTING INDICATORS

Dioceses, parishes & relevant church organisations must:

1.1 Ensure the safe recruitment of personnel who work with children including AccessNI checks for those in regulated activity and Garda vetting checks for those undertaking relevant work

1.2 Ensure the implementation of effective codes of behaviour for children and the adults that work with them

1.3 Ensure that all activities with children (whether in person or online) are assessed and mitigation measures are put in place to manage safeguarding risks

1.4 Have clearly written complaints and whistleblowing procedures which are easily accessible

1.5 Ensure that all church personnel attend safeguarding training, induction and role specific training relevant to their needs

1.6 Have in place a plan and process to ensure the communication of safeguarding to children, their parents and carers, members of the Church and external bodies

1.7 Ensure that relevant procedures are in place to manage groups not covered by this policy but using church property to work with children

STANDARD 2: RESPONDING INDICATORS

Dioceses, parishes & relevant church organisations must:

2.1 Ensure there is effective reporting and risk management procedures for child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations which meet the threshold for reporting. These procedures must be compliant with national and church law and respect the primacy of any investigation by the statutory authorities

2.2 Ensure that appropriate support and care is in place for the complainant if the respondent is a member of church personnel

2.3 Ensure that appropriate support and management is in place if the respondent is a member of church personnel

2.4 Ensure there is effective risk management and mitigation measures in place when the statutory authorities conclude their investigation if the respondent is a member of church personnel

2.5 Ensure effective practice in line with national and church law on the management of persons of concern taking part in church services or activities

2.6 Ensure effective information sharing procedures are in place to manage risk to children in line with civil law and statutory guidance

STANDARD 3: COMPLYING INDICATORS

Dioceses, parishes & relevant church organisations must:

3.1 Maintain a robust system of compliance with regular audit and reporting

3.2 Have in place and implement a safeguarding plan to address recommendations or non-compliance with this policy including the provision of training and communication