1.7B GUIDANCE ON CROSS REFERENCING SAFEGUARDING POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

All church personnel are required to follow the safeguarding policy for the Church of Ireland. There are circumstances where more than one child safeguarding policy may overlap with another. This guidance is designed to offer advice and guidance to deal with the following situations:

1. Member of the clergy or other person who are ministering on behalf of another diocese in the Church of Ireland

If a member of the clergy or other person wishes to minister for a Church of Ireland diocese outside of that to which they belong, they firstly must have Permission to Officiate from the Bishop of the Diocese in which they are seeking to minister. If this permission is granted, they are bound by the procedures of the Diocese in which they are ministering, including safeguarding and notification of allegations.

If a child safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation is raised with the member while in ministry, they must report it using the safeguarding procedure of the Diocese in which they are ministering.

If there is an allegation against the member while ministering with another diocese, the following will be observed:

- If the allegation relates to an incident that took place in the Diocese (other than that to which the member belongs), the reporting procedures will be initiated by the Diocese in which the member is ministering in accordance with their safeguarding procedures. In this instance, the name of the casework officer assigned to that Diocese should be displayed as the contact person for reporting suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.
- If the member is the respondent, they will either directly inform their own Bishop, or give permission for the casework officer or Bishop to inform the Bishop of the Diocese of which the respondent is a member; this must be done only in consultation with the statutory authorities.
- Any decision to suspend the member from that Diocese rests with the Bishop for whom the member is ministering.
- Any decision to remove the respondent from ministry of the Diocese to which they belong rests with the Bishop to which the member belongs.
- Internal Church processes regarding the care and management of the respondent will be followed upon conclusion of any criminal investigation and other organisational disciplinary proceedings.
- Consideration will be given to the appropriateness of sharing the information about the allegation with the other organisations. Advice from Tusla/HSCT/PSNI/Garda should be sought as to how this should be done.

2. When working/volunteering for another organisation

If a member of the clergy or other person works or volunteers for another external organisation, they are bound by the policies and procedures of that organisation, which include safeguarding and notification of allegations. Therefore, if a suspicion, concern or allegation is raised with that member while in the employment of that organisation, they must report it using the safeguarding procedures of the organisation.

If there is an allegation against the member while working or volunteering with that organisation, the following will be observed:

- If the allegation relates to that organisation, the reporting procedures will be initiated by the Safeguarding Officer/Designated Liaison Person (DLP) of that organisation in accordance with their safeguarding procedures.
- The respondent will either directly inform their Bishop or give permission for the Safeguarding Officer/DLP of the organisation to inform their Bishop; this must only be done in consultation with the statutory authorities.
- Any decision to suspend the member from that organisation rests with the management of the organisation.
- Any decision to remove the member from ministry rests with the Diocese to which they belong.
- Internal Church processes regarding the care and management of the respondent will be followed upon conclusion of any criminal investigation and other organisational disciplinary proceedings.
- Consideration will be given to the appropriateness of sharing the information about the allegation with the other organisations. Advice from Tusla/HSCT/PSNI/Garda should be sought as to how this should be done.

3. If children and young people are using church property as part of church-related activity with staff or volunteers from an external organisation

This situation can occur in a number of different ways, including schools visiting the church, school choirs practising in the church, and youth groups on retreat in church property that are being facilitated by church personnel. Each of these situations is individual and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Church of Ireland Parish/Diocese should agree with the external organisation in writing:

- Whose safeguarding policy applies and when.
- Who is responsible for the children and when.
- Which organisation will take responsibility for reporting allegations.

This should be recorded and stored appropriately in line with data protection legislation and guidance.

4. Covenant Churches

Covenant Churches refers to the formal relationship established in 2002 between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland, creating a Covenant to share a common life, mission, and resources.

In terms of safeguarding, when a Covenant Church is created it is necessary to establish the following in a written agreement signed by the church authorities responsible for the Covenant. This may form part of the Covenant Partnership agreement and must include:

- A statement as to which church safeguarding policy is to be followed in the Covenant Church. This includes training and all associated procedures.
- Members of the clergy who are ministering in both the Methodist Church and the Church of Ireland, need to be recruited appropriately including Garda Vetted and/or AccessNI checks by both Churches and having been granted permission to officiate or equivalent. This includes situations of interchangeability where a Methodist minister is covering for a Church of Ireland member of the clergy.
- Details of the insurance policy which applies in the Covenant Church.
- A statement outlining which safeguarding policy will be followed during the period of transition when the Covenant Church is moving to its new status. It is recommended that this is in place as soon as possible to avoid duplication of safeguarding training and ease the process of transition.
- A statement produced on an annual basis to share with the church partner (whose safeguarding policy is not being followed by the Covenant Church), that outlines:
  - How many allegations have been received and reported on using the agreed safeguarding policy.
  - That Garda Vetting and AccessNI procedures are being followed.
  - That safeguarding policy and procedures are being implemented appropriately.

If there is an allegation against a member of church personnel while working within the Covenant Church, the following will be observed:

- If the allegation relates to the Covenant Church, the reporting procedures will be initiated as per the agreed safeguarding policy of the Covenant Church.
- The respondent will either directly inform their Bishop/District Superintendent (Methodist Church) or give permission for the Safeguarding Officer/DLP of the Covenant Church to inform their Bishop; this must be done only in consultation with the statutory authorities.
- Any decision to suspend the member from the Covenant Church is in line with the agreed safeguarding policy of the Covenant Church.
- Any decision to remove the member from ministry within the Church of Ireland or Methodist Church rests with the authorities in the Church to which they belong.

- Internal Church processes regarding the care and management of the respondent will be followed upon conclusion of any criminal investigation and other organisational disciplinary proceedings by the Church to which the respondent belongs.

Consideration will be given to the appropriateness of sharing the information about the allegation with the other organisations. Advice from Tusla/HSCT/PSNI/Garda should be sought as to how this should be done.