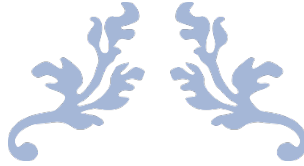


Safeguarding Children: Annual Report



DIocese OF MEATH



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ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Introduction

The annual report for 2018 has been generated to comply with Standard 7 (*Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards*) of the Safeguarding Children policy.

This requires that the Diocese:

- Puts in place arrangements to ensure and evaluate its compliance with the Safeguarding standards at local level.
- Produces a report on the level of compliance established through this audit exercise.
- Notifies the NBSCCCI in writing of the completion of this annual audit report.

The parish Safeguarding Audit returns are scrutinised by the Safeguarding Committee and recommendations for further action and/or improvements are incorporated in a report for the Bishop. This process applies to Standards 1, 5, and 6.

A report is prepared for the Bishop by the DLP on Standards 2, 3, and 4.

Any recommendations for action and/or improvements are incorporated into the Safeguarding Plan 2018-2021.

The Bishop notifies the NBSCCCI in writing that these processes have been completed.

REPORT OF THE SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

Meetings of the committee were held in February, June and November.

The meeting scheduled for April was cancelled.

The Resource Team met monthly.

Membership of the committee:

Bishop Michael Smith (Chair); Fr Paul Crosbie (Hon. Sec.); Ms Nuala McLoughlin (DLP) (Ratoath); Mr David Gavin (Trainer) (Mullingar); Ms Antoinette Shaw (Trainer) (Mullingar); Ms Pauline Clarke, (Coosan); Mr Alan Doran, (Dunderry); Ms Joan Walshe, (Navan); Ms Marie Willoughby, (Mullingar).

Bishop Tom Deenihan succeeded Bishop Michael Smith in September and chaired the November meeting. Fr Joe Campbell succeeded Fr Paul Crosbie as Director of Safeguarding and Secretary to the Committee.

MAIN AREAS OF WORK ADDRESSED:

• CREATING A CULTURE OF SAFETY

Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Auditing and Review:

- The Annual Report for 2017 was completed and notified to the NBSCCCI by Bishop Smith.
- The annual Safeguarding audit for parishes in the Diocese of Meath was conducted in 2018. A report on the audit is included in Section 2 of this annual report. Recommendations arising from the findings of the audit are included in the three-year Safeguarding Action Plan.

Policy Development:

- A Child Safeguarding Statement, as required by the Children First Act 2015, was prepared, using the template provided by the NBSCCCI. This has been incorporated in the Operational Guidelines on the safeguarding website (www.meathsafeguarding.ie), at S4.50. A summary version has been prepared for publication and display in poster format.
- Mr Alan Doran, a member of the Safeguarding Committee, was appointed as the Relevant Person.
- A constitution for the Safeguarding Children Committee (SCC) was developed and adopted by the committee. It is available in the Operational Guidelines on the website (www.meathsafeguarding.ie) at S3.6.
- The NBSCCCI guidance on Mandated Persons was adopted, incorporated into the Operational Guidelines and a list of Mandated Persons as generated.
- The committee was represented on the diocesan working group on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) by Fr Paul Crosbie and Ms Joan Walshe. An interim statement was included on the website.

Development and/or revision of Procedures:

- Vetting: The committee continued work on monitoring the new vetting procedures and ensuring that they were adhered to. Relevant information on updates to procedures were notified via the Newsletter.
- External groups using parish property: The Bishop briefed the committee on efforts by the College of Consultors to develop a standardised legal agreement with external agents using Church property, including schools.
- Updates to guidance and other materials produced by the NBSCCCI were incorporated into the Operational Guidelines. Members were briefed on them at each meeting.

- Bishop Deenihan requested the NBSCCCI to review the following updated resources:
 - Child Safeguarding Statement poster;
 - Safeguarding Policy Statement poster;
 - Safeguarding information leaflet.

These have been edited and are with the printers at present.

Standard 5: Training and support for keeping children safe

The safeguarding trainers (Mr David Gavin and Ms Antoinette Shaw) provided an update on training and support activities at each meeting of the committee. Their report on training and support activities in 2018 follows in Section 3 of this report. The Training Plan for 2019 is included in the Safeguarding Action Plan in Section 4 of this report.

Standard 6: Communicating the Safeguarding message

- The diocese has a written communications plan for the Church's child safeguarding message. This plan was updated in 2017, incorporated in the Three-Year Safeguarding Plan (2018-2021) and will be reviewed annually as provided for in the plan.
- The diocese makes information on safeguarding children available to a range of audiences including: parishioners; children and their parents involved in Church related activities; Church personnel; relevant agencies.
- Child-friendly materials and information leaflets are provided at training events. The Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safeguarding Statements are displayed in church buildings.
- The website www.meathsafeguarding.ie outlines the Safeguarding policy and procedures.

- Three newsletters were circulated across the diocese - to parishioners, clergy and committee members - both electronically and in hard copy, on matters including: the annual report, training dates, updates on Garda vetting and the three-year Safeguarding plan.
- A Child Safeguarding Statement was produced, published on the safeguarding website and a summary version prepared for display in poster format.
- Information sessions are held for those involved in Church related activities. Eleven sessions were held in 2018.
- A 'Safeguarding Sunday', held in parishes annually, took place on October 14 this year.
- Consultation and Feedback sessions are held in several parishes each year with an open invitation to parishioners to attend and express their views on safeguarding provision.
- Posters in Irish and Polish have been produced to communicate the Church's child safeguarding message to people whose first language is not English. There are two Gaeltacht areas in the diocese and a substantial Polish community. The need for material in other languages and means of communication with people who have specific needs, is kept under review.
- The diocese, through the SCC members, has links with various local organisations, seeks to promote a safe and caring community for children and to share best child safeguarding practice. For example, representative members of the committee meet with Children First Information and Advice Persons annually.

• ***RECOGNISING, RESPONDING, REPORTING***

Standard 2 (Procedures for responding to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations); Standard 3 (Care and support for the complainant); and Standard 4 (Care and Management of the respondent) are reported on to the Bishop by the DLP.

A new Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Ms Marie O’Sullivan, was appointed in succession to Ms Nuala McLoughlin.

• ***QUALITY ASSURANCE***

Standard 7: Quality Assuring compliance with the Standards

In relation to Standard 7 the Safeguarding Committee is responsible for:

- Liaising with the Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSR) to ensure the completion of a Parish Safeguarding Audit (See 3.3 of the Operational Guidelines). This has been completed and is reported on in detail in the next section of this report.
- Ensuring that an annual Safeguarding report on Standards 1, 5 and 6 is made to the Bishop.
- Identifying areas where guidance and support on policy or practice is needed. A number of recommendations made in the audit report will be incorporated in the three-year safeguarding plan.
- Ensuring that records in relation to safeguarding matters are produced and stored securely. Records are securely stored in locked cabinets and access is in accordance with data protection policy.
- Producing and reviewing the three-year child Safeguarding plan on implementing and maintaining the Safeguarding standards across the Diocese. This plan, incorporating the Training Plan and the Communications Plan for 2019 is attached to this report.

2. REPORT ON AUDIT OF SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES IN PARISHES

The Safeguarding Children Committee has overall responsibility for the implementation of Standards 1, 5 and 6, and aspects of Standard 7. In relation to Standard 1, this is delegated, in the main, to the diocesan Safeguarding Trainers and Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs) and is reported on through the annual parish self-audit.

All parishes were requested to return their completed audit forms by November 30. At the date of writing, fifty-nine forms (representing sixty-one parishes) have been returned, from a total of sixty-nine parishes. The trainers have followed up with non-respondents and it is expected that further forms will be submitted. This represents a high level of compliance; however, a 100% response is expected and sought.

The returns from the parishes have been collated, analysed and the following report prepared by the Resource Team. This report, and that prepared by an independent assessor have been considered and adopted by the Safeguarding Children Committee.

General Observations:

- Evaluation of the returned forms reveals a high level of awareness in parish communities across the Diocese of Meath of the need for good information and preventative measures in relation to child welfare and protection to be available at parish level.
- Generally, all parishes are compliant in creating and maintaining safe environments.
- Concerted efforts have been made, and sustained, in respect of training and information for those in parish communities.
- A number of parishes have indicated that training of their personnel (clergy, parish representatives, choir directors and sacristans) is outside the five-year limit and that they require updated training. However, they have confirmed that they have attended information sessions during 2018. Individual parishes have indicated specific training needs, and these will be accommodated during 2019.

- Formal or informal support is available to all Church personnel involved in child safeguarding. The trainers are always available to respond to emails and phone calls. All clergy and parish safeguarding representatives have access to the personal mobile numbers of the trainers. The trainers received and logged all phone calls received during 2018 and promptly responded to queries and concerns.
- An issue arises about the personal data retained by the audit. Any implications in relation to the GDPR need clarification.
- Parishes indicated that the diocesan Safeguarding poster with relevant contact details is displayed in appropriate areas and copies of the poster in Irish and in Polish are available on request. Information leaflets for children participating in Church activities are regularly distributed, as are information leaflets for adults, at information sessions.
- Safeguarding newsletters are widely distributed.
- Safeguarding Sunday was observed in many parishes.
- It is recommended that further attention is paid to raising awareness about the safeguarding website.
- All records are reported to be stored safely and securely. Church personnel are very conscious and aware of the importance of security since the introduction of the GDPR.
- The trainers will continue to follow up with any parishes where individual needs have been identified through the completion of the self-audit process.

REVIEW OF RETURNS:

Standard 1: Church related activities involving children

Forty-eight parishes provided information on activities involving children: most had altar servers and/or choirs. Twenty-five had both while five had a choir only and ten had servers only. Fifteen parishes listed additional activities, mainly relating to ministries such as Children's Liturgy. Junior readers, sacramental preparation groups and youth groups. Some of the larger parishes – Ashbourne, Mullingar, Navan and Tullamore – reported a wider range of activities.

All indicated that they have up-to-date lists of all groups and that the relevant forms are signed. An issue which has been raised is whether it is necessary to provide copies of the complaints procedure and reporting procedures to parents or whether making them aware of such resources and where they can be accessed is adequate.

Several parishes are unclear about procedures such as hazard/risk assessment (4) and protected disclosures (3) and appear unaware that these are available in the Operational Guidelines. In a small number of cases (3) parishes indicated that agreement forms had not been signed yet.¹

No issues were reported in relation to recruitment. It should however be clarified on the form that this question refers to the year under review.

Standard 5: Training

The returns indicated that training has been undertaken by all priests, except in one case where no data was entered and one where no data was entered for the PP. In many cases the date of original training was a long time ago (4-10 years) and with no indication of updating.² It is likely that provision for updating via Deanery sessions was availed of but there is no provision for recording this on

¹ In these cases the Resource Team will follow up with those concerned.

² Details available to Resource Team

the current form.

Regarding PSR: two returns provided no information while in three cases new PSR who require training were identified. There are also many PSR whose original training was a significant time ago.³

The returns indicated that many group leaders have taken an information session but have not attended the full day training.⁴ In some cases, parishes indicated that they have contacted the Trainers re attending courses in early 2019.

Safeguarding Awareness Initiatives

This question had few responses. Most who responded noted training and/or information sessions for altar servers and their parents (17). Occasional notices in the parish bulletin; distribution of information leaflets for altar servers and choir members; information sessions for group leaders; Safeguarding Sunday; a workshop on Code of Behaviour and other procedures; Confirmation Sunday School were initiatives mentioned by a small number of parishes.

Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

There was a very positive response to questions re display of information on safeguarding. However, a survey of parish websites found that many displayed out of date information. This is being addressed. Very few parishes indicated that they had groups in their area whose first language is not English. One mentioned that they are developing material in Portuguese for Brazilian residents while another suggested posters in other languages.

Recording:

This was generally reported as undertaken in accordance with guidance.

³ Information available to Trainers

⁴ Information available to Trainers

Follow up actions to be taken:

Relatively few parishes either indicated what actions they needed to take or would suggest to the Resource Team (12 in total).

The only parish follow- up proposed was completion of outstanding Agreement forms by group leaders.

Suggestions to the Resource Team included: contacting the PSR directly by email re upcoming training; parish level information sessions were requested by several parishes; help with downloading forms; query on whether Eucharistic Ministers and Readers should be vetted; earlier training in completing the annual parish audit.

Recommendations for action arising from the audit:

- Follow up by the trainers with the parishes which did not respond to the audit to offer any training and/or support needed.
- Completion of a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) and inclusion of specific training needs identified by parishes in the 2019 training plan.
- Clarification of the support, both informal and professional, available to personnel involved in child safeguarding by the SCC.
- Further assessment of any GDPR implications of collecting and retaining personal data as part of the audit will be addressed by SCC.
- Attention drawn to the diocesan Safeguarding website at all training events and via the Newsletter.
- Amending of the Audit form by the Resource Team in line with the suggestions made by the independent assessor; the NSBCCCI informed of the issues raised.
- Development of a FAQ document to assist parishes in completing the audit.
- Publication of the report of the independent assessor in the Newsletter.

The Diocese of Meath commissions a review of returned parish audit forms on an annual basis.

The report on the 2018 audit follows:

DIOCESE OF MEATH PARISH SAFEGUARDING SELF - AUDIT 2018

INDEPENDENT ASSESSOR EVALUATION

In the course of this assessment of the self-audit for the year 2018, 59 individual forms completed by Parishes were evaluated, noting that some forms referred to two parishes in light of the current organisational structure of the Diocese. (Note: the returned forms represent 61 parishes).

This represents a very high level of compliance with the Diocesan policy of requiring parishes to complete self-audits on an annual basis.

It is noted that the self-audit forms have been designed centrally at national level and made available at Diocesan level for use in the process. As well as addressing the issue of compliance and assurance within the Diocese of Meath arising from the audit, it is evident to this assessor that there are a number of lacunæ with the forms, which might usefully be brought back by the Diocese to a national level in order to further enhance the overall Church measures in this context, thereby bringing greater assurance to and public confidence in the outcomes. Consequently, this report will deal with both aspects. Having also completed the independent assessment of the audit process in 2017, which was the first year of use of the new-template reporting form, it is apparent that those completing the process were considerably more comfortable in the task this year. To this end, credit must be given to the Safeguarding Resource Team who assisted the parishes last year in reviewing their initial completion of the form, thereby embedding good practice in this context, and providing valuable follow up in the course of 2018 and for the purposes of completing the 2018 audit.

Before dealing with the detail of the audit process a number of general observations can be made.

All reporting parishes have at least one and generally more parish safeguarding representatives in place. They have all received child protection awareness training, other than in one or two instances of recent appointees (though it is important to note that there continues to be existing safeguarding reps in those parishes). It is evident that the understanding among parishes of the requirements for robust child welfare and protection safeguards extends beyond simply adherence to the stated obligations, and encompasses a

deeper understanding and congruence with the various indicators of good practice as set out in Standards 1, 5 and 6 of the revised national policy and standards. This is most keenly evidenced through the concerted efforts which have been made, and sustained through undertaking initial and further training, thereby keeping abreast of developments in the area, in respect of training and information for those in parish communities working directly with children, on a clerical, professional and volunteer basis. As noted above, the Resource Team continued to provide general training and specific follow-up to issues raised by individual parishes in respect of the 2017 audit in assisting them in meeting their obligations.

In relation to the audit process itself in 2018, a number of observations can be made which have application locally within the Diocese and may be useful nationally, viz.

1. Three different audit forms were used this year. In many cases, these were the forms currently shown for use on “www.meathsafeguarding.ie”, while a significant number used the same form as used for the 2017 audit. One significant difference is apparent between the two forms, the 2017 form asked parishes on the cover page for a list of Church related activities which involve children in the parish, while the form currently on the website does not ask for this information. It is considered by this assessor that the 2017 form is actually more effective in this context as it helps a reviewer of the form to focus attention on seeking assurance subsequently from the audit that those involved in leading the particular activity involving young people have been encompassed in the child safeguarding endeavour undertaken at

parish level. Finally, one parish completed the audit using a different (shorter) form, which, while completed appropriately, provided significantly less detailed information than either of the two referred to above.

2. In some cases the audit forms were completed on what were clearly pre-printed booklet productions. In other cases, the forms were downloaded and printed in individual page format. The pages on all versions of the audit forms used are not individually numbered. This was an issue to the extent that in a small number of cases where forms had been downloaded and completed electronically some pages were not subsequently printed down and submitted for audit. In addition, though less evident, some forms which had been downloaded and

completed in pen, had some pages missing from the submitted material. A suggestion in this context would be that pages are numbered individually by the designers of the form, thereby assisting with a coherent approach to the completion process at parish level.

3. The question style on the audit form uses a mix of “yes//no” or “yes/no/not applicable” format. In the case of questions requiring a “yes/no” answer this is a weakness as in some cases these have been left fully unanswered. It is challenging for an external reviewer to reach a firm conclusion as to whether these have been missed inadvertently or, very likely, where a “not applicable” response is actually the correct and appropriate response. Equally, a requirement to complete all elements of the form would assist with future assurance.

4. There are 4 pages on the form containing tables for completion in respect of basic awareness training for four categories of personnel, ie clergy; those with a specific role in safeguarding; those in a leadership role working with young people; and, all other church personnel. In a number of instances, the latter two forms were blank. It is not clear as to whether this was through lack of understanding of the purpose of each

form; where no such training has taken place, or simply was not necessary in the context of the situation applying in that parish. This is an important consideration when the “new” 2018 form has been used, as it did not require listing activities involving young people on the cover page. This prevents a cross-referencing of activity to leadership in the activity subsequently in the audit. Again, a requirement to complete these tables, even by providing a tick-box to indicate “not applicable”, where appropriate, would enhance the process.

5. A key element of the Church’s efforts in relation to child safeguarding relate to promulgating the message regarding the safeguards in place, complaint procedures etc. The audit form asks for details of any initiatives taken in this context. It is presumed that the designers of the form expected parishes to outline the range of publication measures in place, eg parish noticeboards, newsletters, Safeguarding Sundays, meeting with parents of and children becoming altar servers etc. However, a surprising number of forms are fully silent in this regard. Perhaps those completing the forms assumed that the use of the term “initiatives” sought details on something new or innovative being undertaken as opposed to continuing to provide the well-tried and tested measures as listed earlier.

6. An accompanying FAQ document, section by section, might be considered helpful for future audits, as the form is only required annually and those completing it will forget details from year to year. The FAQ document might usefully suggest examples of good practice in light of the actual experiences/activities evident across the Diocese of Meath, in respect of each question. The reason for this is that some of the questions are quite bald and don't allow a nuanced (yet valid) answer.

7. One question asks, "does the group have an appropriate hazard assessment process' A number of forms answered no or left this blank. The FAQ here might usefully advise that hazard in this context relates to child safeguarding, rather than,

presumably, the normal understanding of slips, trips and spills etc

8. Another question relates to a Protected Disclosures Policy – a sample would be helpful as part of the FAQs, as a number of parishes answered 'no' here.

9. The audit form deals with a snapshot at a point in time and relates to a twelve months period. However, some questions are more open-ended and could certainly cause confusion, eg in Standard 1, "In recruiting applicable personnel working with children, have you ensured that..." This could easily involve a Parish trying to review previous practice (including for long serving personnel) and where records may be difficult to locate, with the attendant difficulties in completing it.

General Observations on the Parish Safeguarding Audit Form

Form cover could have space for year and Parish Name. Form does not require signatures of those completing it. Form makes no reference to children with special needs

Standard 1

Question asks re "all" groups and does not specify groups where children are involved – quite a number of forms left this section blank. A supplementary (or replacement) question might ask about the maintenance of a register of all groups working with children, as this would be more easily answered (and is more germane to the purpose of the audit)

Standard 6

Recording Section needs to be answered item by item – FAQs or more clear guidance here would be very beneficial.

Final Page

Following completion of audit is there any follow up action to be taken? And immediately underneath, the form asks “If you require assistance from the Resource Team...” There should be space between these, and form (or FAQs) should specify that a list of actions where “no” answers given earlier should be addressed here by means of an action list at parish level– this would bring completeness to the process and allow for a significantly greater level of assurance that issues identified will be addressed (if necessary). Equally, if the “No” answers mean not applicable, this could be noted on the form and bring completeness and greater assurance to the outcome.

The observations made above have been raised in the context of seeking to enhance the assurance and confidence possible through an external review of a self-audit process, noting that, separately, the www.meathsafeguarding.ie website states that:

- Audit returns are scrutinised for compliance by the 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.

What is quite apparent from my evaluation of the 2018 audit, as in 2017, is that consistent and focussed attention to child welfare and protection has been taken as a matter of policy by the Diocese and implemented as a matter of practice at parish level. This is evidenced in particular by the commitment to training over many years now which demonstrates that the Diocese of Meath, at individual parish level, has been embedding this key message in its work through all of its agents who work with children.

It is evident and appropriate that the Diocese continues to support parishes in their work in this important area of child safeguarding and that the self-audit process, along with follow-up by the Diocesan Committee through the Safeguarding Resource Team, assists parishes in maintaining a focus, and enhancing, where necessary, their individual endeavours in this regard.

3. TRAINING REPORT

Standard 5.1

The Diocese of Meath ensured that the induction of Church personnel included training in the Church's child safeguarding policy and procedures. All parish clergy and parish safeguarding representatives were invited to a series of Deanery information sessions:

07/03/2018	Kingscourt
17/04/2018	Lobinstown
14/11/2018	Killucan
21/11/2018	Collinstown
02/10/2018	Mullingar

In addition, several information sessions were facilitated by the safeguarding trainers. Clergy, parish safeguarding representatives, sacristans, choir members and parish volunteers were invited to attend the information meetings. Among those meetings were the following:

08/10/2018	Drogheda – Attendance 18.
15/10/2018	Navan – Attendance 40.
16/10/2018	Ashbourne – Attendance 15.
18/10/2018	Tullamore – Attendance 24.
22/10/2018	Trim – Attendance 35.
23/10/2018	Mullingar – Attendance 46.

Over 200 clergy and volunteers attended these sessions which focused on the revised Standards. Copies of Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, a summary leaflet and posters for display were distributed. Leaflets were also available in both Irish and Polish. Participants were encouraged to display these leaflets and to make them readily available in parish churches.

The topics covered were:

- Completing the parish audit form
- Mandatory reporting
- General Data Protection Regulation
- What to do if you receive an allegation or complaint
- Safeguarding Sunday: parishes were encouraged to mark Safeguarding Sunday, to make congregations aware of the dedication of volunteers and all the procedures which are in place to support and promote the safety of children. It also provided an opportunity to share the safeguarding message with parents and children.

Organisers of the Meath Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, as well as nurses and volunteers, were facilitated with three separate information sessions as follows:

15/08/2018	Navan
20/08/2018	Mullingar
07/09/2018	Trim

Standard 5.2

The Diocese of Meath conducted an Annual Training Needs Analysis that identified all Church personnel who required training and developed a training plan based on this process. This will inform the development of an annual training plan for 2019.

Standard 5.3

The Diocese of Meath ensured delivery at local level of basic training programmes that are identified and approved by the NBSCCCI, as outlined in the NBSCCCI Training Strategy, where this has been identified as necessary through the annual training needs analysis.

In that regard, the safeguarding trainers delivered two full-day training sessions to clergy, new parish safeguarding representatives, foreign clergy, choir directors and members of Children of the Eucharist, as follows:

24/03/2018	Trim
03/11/2018	Trim

These training days fulfilled the trainers' annual registration conditions.

Standard 5.4

The Diocese of Meath ensured that Church personnel who have specific child Safeguarding responsibilities had appropriate, role-specific, training that is identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy.

The trainers attended the following training hosted by NBSCCCI:

22/03/2018	Pastoral Centre, Cavan
26/05/2018	Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth.

Standard 5.5

The Diocese of Meath provided children who access Church-related activities and their parents/guardians with information, advice and support on keeping children safe, and involved them in Church Child Safeguarding training initiatives wherever possible and appropriate.

The Safeguarding trainers have circulated thousands of Child Safeguarding newsletters, published in three separate editions in the past year, in order to raise awareness of Child Safeguarding with children and their parents/guardians in the Church. Information specifically designed for a child-friendly readership was produced, aimed at altar servers and members of youth choirs. The trainers avail of the newsletters to encourage parishes to share with each other examples of good practice in reaching out to children and their parents/guardians.

Standard 5.6

The Diocese of Meath facilitated the provision of an appropriate level of support to all personnel in relation to their responsibilities to safeguard children.

In addition to specific training sessions, the Safeguarding trainers have readily and speedily responded to emails and phone calls. All clergy and parish Safeguarding representatives have access to their personal mobile numbers. The Safeguarding trainers received and logged all phone calls received during 2018 and promptly responded to queries and concerns. The Resource Team, comprised of the trainers and the Director of Child Safeguarding, met regularly during 2018. Minutes of each meeting were kept and stored in a safe environment in the Diocesan Office.

4. THREE-YEAR SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

(Revised January 2019)

This action plan has been developed in compliance with Standard 7 of Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2016). It follows from and builds on previous Action Plans.

All actions will be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Safeguarding Children Policy and the procedures detailed in the Operational Guidelines, commencing January 2017, unless stated otherwise. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually, or as new regulatory or legislative provisions become available.

The Training Plan 2019 and Communications plan 2019 are attached as Appendices.

<i>Creating a Culture of Safety</i>		<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>			
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 1: Creating and maintaining safe environments	Implement safe recruitment procedures	The following procedures, detailed in the Operational Guidelines, will be used as appropriate to the situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application form • Declaration form • Interviews • References 	Overall responsibility rests with the SCC. Specific areas of responsibility noted below. PSR/PP	With effect from 01/01/2017	Parish annual audit in Nov./Dec. each year.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vetting (S1.1 and S1.2; S4.1 -6 S4.11) 	Liaison person (L. Duncan)		
	Ensure code of behaviour is adopted by all adults and children involved in Church related activities.	Adults involved in Church related activities agree to observe and sign the COB at induction	PSR		
		Parents and children sign consent form which includes code of behaviour. Anti-bullying policy agreed between leaders and children (S1.4-.7; S4.7-.10)	Activity leaders	Start date of activity and each Sept.	Annual parish audit.

<i>Creating a Culture of Safety</i>		<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>
Standard 1: Creating and maintaining safe environments	Implement effective practice in safe care for all children, including those with special needs	<p>The following procedures, detailed in the Operational Guidelines will be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised supervision ratios • Dealing with accidents/incidents • Risk assessment of activities • One to one contact with children • Participation of children with specific needs. • Procedures for visiting clergy • Use of ICT • External groups using Church property • Complaints procedures • Protected disclosures <p>(S1.8 – S1.22 & S4.2 – S4.23)</p>	PSRs and activity leaders:	wef 01/01/17 Annual parish audit

<i>Creating a Culture of Safety</i>		<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>			
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 5: Training & Support for keeping children safe	Ensure that all Church personnel receive appropriate training in safeguarding in accordance with National Board Training Strategy.	<p>Develop annual training plan based on a training needs analysis (TNA). Incorporate specific training needs identified by parishes, including information on formal and informal supports available to personnel.</p> <p>Deliver and evaluate training.</p> <p>Ratify training plan (S1.23-S1.26+S4.24-4.27)</p> <p>2019 Training plan delivered</p>	<p>Trainers: A Shaw & D Gavin</p> <p>SCC</p> <p>See Appendix 2</p>	<p>Implemented on dates specified in annual plan</p> <p>Spring meeting annually.</p> <p>On dates specified in plan.</p>	<p>TNA based on parish audit</p> <p>Each training event evaluated as delivered and reported on in annual report.</p> <p>Annual parish audit</p> <p>Report on training as part of annual report Dec. each year</p>

<i>Creating a Culture of Safety</i>		<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>			
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message	Ensure that the Church's Safeguarding message is communicated to identified audiences	Review the communications policy annually	Safeguarding Committee	Continuous	Annual Summer meeting
		Revised safeguarding website regularly updated (www.meathsafeguarding.ie)	Fr R McCabe Resource Team	As required	Annual parish audit
		Promote awareness of the website	Trainers +PSR	Training events/ Newsletters	As part of policy review, SSC summer meeting
	Produce and circulate printed material for specified audiences	Copies of the Policy Statement and the Child Safeguarding Statement will be displayed in all buildings where Church related activities take place	PSR/PP	01/01/19 fw	As part of annual parish audit.
		Produce and circulate three Safeguarding Newsletters annually	Resource Team	Spring/ Autumn/ Winter	As part of policy review each summer

<i>Creating a Culture of Safety</i>			<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message	Produce and circulate printed material for specified audiences <i>(contd)</i>	Children who act as altar servers or are involved in choirs will be provided with safeguarding information leaflets	PSR/Activity leaders	September each year	Annual Report
		Posters in Irish and in Polish have been produced and will be made available on request.	Safeguarding Comm/Trainers	Spring 2017 fw, on request	Annual Report
		Research will be carried out on whether posters/information in other languages/formats are needed	Resource Team	Review 2019	Winter Meeting SCC
	Establish links with relevant organisations to promote safe environments and share best practice	At diocesan level: annual meeting with CF Information Persons. At parish level: Contact established with local Social Workers & Garda Síochána.	Resource Team PSR	Feb 2019, 2020 & 2021 TBD with CF information persons	Report to SCC & Annual Report
	Consultation & Feedback meetings	c. Six Parish meetings per year 2019: Collinstown, Coole, Delvin, Drogheda (St Mary's), Duleek, Ballivor 2020: Bohermeen, Dunderry, Dysart, Eglis, Enfield, Johnstown 2021: Kells, Kilbeg, Kilbeggan, Kilcormac, Kildalkey, Killucan	Safeguarding Committee members	Arranged in consultation with parishes	Outcomes reviewed at each SCC meeting & reported in Annual Report

<i>Recognising, Responding & Reporting</i>			<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 2: Procedures for responding to CP suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations	Personnel are made aware of how to recognise and respond to child abuse.	Training is provided and the Operational Guidelines contain definitions. (S2.1)	All personnel	01/01/17 fw (using new guidelines)	Annual audit
	Reporting procedures are in place	CP referral form (S2.2; S4.34)	DLP	01/01/17 fw	DLP Annual Report
	Case management procedures are in place	Use NBSCCCI forms and procedures as required (S2.3-2.14; S2.25-2.34; S4.35-S4.43)	DLP	01/01/17 fw	DLP Annual Report
	A data protection policy is in place.	New DP policy in preparation to comply with GDPR	All personnel	<i>TBD – training may be needed</i>	<i>TBD when procedures developed</i>
	There is regular liaison with statutory authorities.	Annual meetings held (S2.14)	Between Statutory authorities, Bishop and DLP. Between CF Information Persons and Resource Team.	In consultation with statutory agencies. Feb2019. 2020 & 2021 TBD in consultation with statutory agencies	Report to SCC following meetings

<i>Recognising, Responding & Reporting</i>			<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 2: Procedures for responding to CP suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations (contd)	A complaints procedure is in place	Responding to a dissatisfied complainant-3 stage process. (S2.15; S4.13)	DLP/Bishop/NBSC	01/01/17 fw	DLP Annual Report
	Protected disclosure procedure in place	Personnel made aware of procedures. (S2.16)	Information on website and in Newsletter.	In place since 2014 – NBSC version since 2017	Annual Report
	A disciplinary procedure is in place.	Panel established from which a disciplinary committee may be formed. (S2.17) Supporting procedures and documentation available from the Diocesan Office.	Resource Team/ Disciplinary panel	Convened as necessary	Annual Report
	A pastoral response is available to complainants.	Procedures in place to ensure a pastoral response is provided. (S2.19)	The Bishop, DLP & Support Person (Mr R Lowry)	As necessary	As part of annual DLP report

<i>Recognising, Responding & Reporting</i>			<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 3: Care and support for the complainant.	A Support Person is appointed.	Procedures and training are provided (S2.20+21)	DLP/NBSCCCI & Support Person (Mr R Lowry)	Feb 2017 fw as needed	SCC Summer meeting
	Cooperation is sought with relevant agencies when needed.	When necessary, specialist advice is sought from NBSCCCI and statutory agencies. (S2,22)	DLP/NBSCCCI	01/01/17+fw	DLP Annual Report
Standard 4: Care and management of the respondent	A system for supporting respondents is provided.	An Advisor is appointed to represent the pastoral needs of a respondent. (S2.23;2.24)	Advisor appointed by Bishop as needed	Appointed as necessary	DLP Annual Report
	A process is in place for investigating and managing child safeguarding concerns.	Undertaking risk assessment. (S4.24; 25; 26; S4.39;40;) Conducting a preliminary investigation following conclusion of any statutory investigation. (S2.29) Supporting and managing a respondent when it is found that there is a case to answer. (S28-34; S4.41-43	Bishop/DLP Bishop/DLP/CDF	01/01/17 fw 01/01/17	DLP Annual Report DLP Annual Report

<i>Quality Assurance</i>			<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 7: Quality assuring compliance with the Standards	Appropriate structures are in place	<i>Roles of committees and individual personnel are as outlined in Operational Guidelines - Appendix 1</i>			
		Safeguarding Children Committee (SCC).	Members appointed by Bishop. Four meeting are held annually.	A nine person SCC is in place including Bishop Deenihan and two trainers. Review occurs at the Winter meeting each year. (Members serve a four-year term – 2 began a new term in 2017. One in 2016. All others are in place since 2015).	
		Resource Team/Trainers	Director of Safeguarding and two Trainers (AS and DG)	In place since 2010 (varying members). Meetings held monthly.	Annual report
		DLP	Ms Marie O'Sullivan	Appointed in 2018	DLP Annual Report

<i>Quality Assurance</i>		<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>			
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 7: Quality assuring compliance with the Standards (continued)	Appropriate structures are in place <i>(continued)</i>	Advisor	Appointed by Bishop as needed	As needed	DLP Annual Report
		Disciplinary Panel	An eight-person panel is in place	Appointed 2013	As part of Annual Parish Audit Annual Report
		Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs)	Each parish has at least two PSRs in post	Current and Continuing	Annual Report
		Vetting Liaison Person	Ms Linda Duncan	Appointed 2016	Annual Report
		Mandated Persons All Clergy; DLP; Safeguarding Staff	Director of Safeguarding	In accordance with legislation 2018	Winter meeting annually.

<i>Quality Assurance</i>		<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>			
<i>Standard</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Implementation & Review Dates</i>	
Standard 7: Quality assuring compliance with the Standards (continued)	Ensure arrangement are in place to evaluate compliance with the Standards	Annual Parish audit; SCC report; DLP report (S3.3 +4; S4.44; 4.45;4.46)	SCC / PSRs PPs / DLPs	Nov / Dec each year	SCC Winter meeting each year and NBSCCCI notified
		Follow up with parishes which do not respond.	Trainers	Dec / Jan	
		NBSCCCI notified	Bishop	Jan	
		Consultation with relevant stakeholders; informed by legislative and regulatory changes	SCC / Resource Team	Nov / Dec annually and Deanery meetings	SCC Spring meeting
		Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs)	Each parish has at least two PSRs in post	Current and Continuing	Annual Report
	Three year Safeguarding Plan produced	Reviewed and Updated annually following scrutiny of the parish audit returns	SCC	Jan / Feb annually	Reviewed at Autumn SCC meeting
	Independent Review by the NBSCCCI	NBSCCCI invited to conduct a review of Safeguarding practice at a frequency agreed with the Board	Bishop	2019 TBD	Following review process

RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CHILD SAFEGUARDING PLAN

The resources required are primarily the personnel involved in creating a culture of safety at all levels and in all Church activities involving children; and, should it prove necessary, in responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse; reporting these to the relevant statutory agencies; and providing support to complainants and respondents.

Providing the infrastructural supports to ensure that these processes are undertaken appropriately includes providing the training, information, communication strategies and ensuring quality assurance of all procedures and processes.

The Diocese of Meath strives to accomplish this through:

- Having appropriate structures in place (as detailed above).
- Contracting two trainers to provide necessary training and supports.
- Developing and maintaining communication systems, specifically:
 - (i) the safeguarding website;
 - (ii) publishing regular newsletters;
 - (iii) developing and disseminating information leaflets and posters.
- Establishing and maintaining contacts with relevant statutory agency personnel.

Most of those involved operate in a voluntary capacity, while the trainers, support person, and liaison person are funded by the Diocese on a contractual basis. Funding is also made available for the production of print and web-based materials and for training provided by external agents, generally the NBSCCCI.

(Original) Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Deenihan', with a stylized initial 'T' and 'D'.

Bishop of Meath

APPENDIX 1: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2019

<i>Communications Plan 2019</i>			<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Target audience</i>	<i>Safeguarding messages</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Review</i>
Children and their parents and carers involved in Church based activities.	How to keep safe	Information leaflets for children Information leaflet for parents (summary of Policy and Standards) Policy and Operational Guidelines available on safeguarding website. Implement project based on Kidscape qs	Leaflets are distributed and discussed with children by activity leader. Trainers/PSR ensures supplies are available Resource Team/Group leaders	Annually in Sept. On request; at information and sessions TBD	Annual parish audit SCC Winter meeting
	What to do if you, or someone you know, is being harmed.	Poster with policy statement and contact details for DLP and statutory agencies displayed in churches and buildings where Church related activities take place. Safeguarding Statement displayed and copies available.	PSR	Continuing	SCC Autumn meeting
Church personnel (volunteers, staff & clergy)	Sources of advice and support.	Safeguarding website www.meathsafeguarding.ie	Maintained & Updated by Fr Robert McCabe. SCC responsible for policy	As required according to information flow	At SCC Summer meeting

APPENDIX 1: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2019

(contd)

<i>Communications Plan 2019</i>			<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Target audience</i>	<i>Safeguarding messages</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Review</i>
Church personnel (volunteers, staff & clergy) (contd)	Good practice and how to deliver it Safe recruitment Dealing with allegations Accessing help and advice	Safeguarding Newsletter Information on safeguarding policy and procedures provided via online (www.meathsafeguarding.ie) edition of the Policy & Operational Guidelines.	Resource Team Newsletters circulated electronically and in hard copy.	Spring / Autumn / Winter	At SCC Summer meeting
	Contact details for relevant persons / agencies	Posters with Policy Statement and contact details for DLP and statutory agencies displayed in churches and buildings where Church related activities take place. Safeguarding Statement displayed and copies available. Posters available in Irish, Polish and English.	Resource Team responsible for providing supplies of printed material and website PSR	Continuing	As part of annual parish audit
	Accessing training	Support and training sessions.	SCC responsible for policy Trainers responsible for planning and delivery.	Spring & Autumn	As part of annual parish audit

APPENDIX 1: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2019

(contd)

<i>Communications Plan 2019</i>			<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>		
<i>Target audience</i>	<i>Safeguarding messages</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Review</i>
Parishioners	What we mean by Safeguarding.	Safeguarding website www.meathsafeguarding.ie	PP / PSR	Continuous	Consultation & Feedback meetings
	Contact details of those with Safeguarding responsibilities.	Posters in Church buildings Occasional items on Safeguarding included in parish bulletin Annual Safeguarding Sunday	SCC / PP / PSR	Continuous Mid-October	SSC
	Information on Safeguarding policy and procedures	Consulation and feedback meetings	Members of SCC	c. Six meeting scheduled each year	Outcomes reviewed at each SCC meeting
NBSCCCI / Tusla / An Garda Síochána / other relevant agencies		Policy and Operational Guidelines on safeguarding website.		Continuous	SCC Winter meeting
		Annual Reports; Safeguarding Plan on website		Dec. each year	
		Newsletters		Spring/Autumn/ Winter	
		Annual meetings with statutory agencies	SCC/Resource Team	Feb 2019& by arrangement with agencies.	

APPENDIX 2: TRAINING PLAN 2019

<i>Training Plan 2019</i>		<i>Child Safeguarding Plan for the period 2018-2021</i>				
<i>Target group</i>	<i>Training required</i>	<i>Delivery by local personnel (yes/no)</i>	<i>Delivery by NBSCCCI (yes/no)</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Trainers (AS + DG)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Clusters of Church personnel (Parish clergy, Parish Safeguarding Representatives, Sacristans, choir directors etc)	Five Deanery based information sessions	Yes	No	March – December	Kingscourt Lobinstown Killucan Collinstown Mullingar	
Clusters of volunteers (Parish clergy, parish safeguarding representatives, choir directors etc)	Six information sessions	Yes	No	October	Drogheda Navan Ashbourne Tullamore Trim Mullingar	
Parish clergy, parish safeguarding representatives	Two full days training	Yes	No	March November	Trim Trim	
Lourdes volunteers	Three information sessions	Yes	No	August – September	Navan Mullingar Trim	

TRAINING PLAN 2019

Standard 1 Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

1. Guidance will be provided by the Safeguarding Trainers at the annual deanery-level training sessions to clergy and parish safeguarding representatives on the following procedures, detailed in the Operational Guidelines:
 - Application form
 - Declaration form
 - Interviews and References
 - Adults involved in Church related activities agree to observe and to sign the COB at induction
 - Parents and children sign consent form which includes code of behaviour.
 - Anti-bullying policy agreed between leaders and children
 - Advised supervision ratios
 - Dealing with accidents/incidents
 - Risk assessment of activities
 - One to one contact with children
 - Participation of children with specific needs
 - Procedures for visiting clergy
 - Use of ICT
 - External groups using Church property
 - Complaints procedures
 - Protected disclosures

2. Training will be provided to Lay Apostolate groups who have contact with children in our Diocese.

3. Guidance will also be made available in advance of the annual Safeguarding Awareness Day.

Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions,

Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations

1. Training will be provided at the annual deanery-level meetings on all matters pertaining to this Standard, including the following:
 - definitions of abuse
 - referral procedures operating in the Diocese of Meath
 - requirements of the new General Data Protection Regulation
 - complaints procedure
 - disciplinary process
 - protected disclosure procedure.
2. NBSCCCI training for the *Safeguarding Children Committee*, Designated Liaison Persons, and Support Person will be made available. Training needs will be assessed as required arising from the Designated Liaison Persons' regular meetings with the statutory authorities.
3. Training specific to all Mandated Persons, will continue in 2019. The law on mandatory reporting will be clearly outlined.

Standard 3 Care and Support for the Complainant

New guidance from the NBSCCCI added to the Operational Guidelines and is brought to the attention of all relevant personnel.

Training needs analysis will be carried out on the basis of regular contact with the Support Person.

When necessary, specialist advice is sought from NBSCCCI and statutory agencies.

Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent

Training will be provided as required by the Advisor.

The guidance from the canonical expert on conducting a preliminary investigation following conclusion of any statutory investigation will be reviewed.

Training needs identified by the Designated Liaison Persons will be provided.

Specialist advice will also be sought from NBSCCCI and statutory agencies.

Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe

This training plan will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Children Committee on the basis of ongoing training needs analysis.

Training sessions will be evaluated by the Resource Team.

Professional supervision will be made available to diocesan safeguarding personnel, on request.

Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

The communications policy will be reviewed annually.

The revised safeguarding website will regularly updated (www.meathsafeguarding.ie) and new information communicated directly to all clergy and parish safeguarding representatives by email.

Copies of the Policy Statement will be displayed in all buildings where child-related activities take place

Three Safeguarding Newsletters will be produced and circulated widely.

Children who act as altar servers or are involved in choirs will be provided with the information leaflets.

Posters in Irish and in Polish have been produced; research will be carried out on whether we need posters/information in other languages.

An annual meeting will be arranged between Tusla - Children First Information & Advice Persons.

Contact will be established with local Social Workers and Garda Síochána.

Consultation and Feedback Sessions will take place in accordance with the Training Plan 2018-2021.

Standard 7: Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

The annual parish safeguarding audit returns will be examined and collated by the trainers. An outside auditor will be engaged to look at parish audits and report back to Safeguarding committee.

Clergy and parish safeguarding representatives will be assisted in completing the safeguarding audit at the end of the year, particularly with new questions on the form this year.

As indicated above, training provided by the NBSCCCI will be made available to the following:

- Safeguarding Children Committee,
- Designated Liaison Persons,
- Safeguarding Trainers,
- Support Person,
- Advisor,
- Disciplinary Panel,
- Garda Vetting Persons,
- Mandated Persons
- and all relevant personnel.

