



Dominican Nuns

**Monastery of St. Catherine of Siena
Drogheda**

Child Safeguarding Policy

March 2012

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Purpose of Child Safeguarding Policy

- 1 To ensure that the Monastery has a safeguarding policy in keeping with the document “Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance document for the Catholic Church in Ireland”.
- 2 To ensure that the Monastery has in place what is required by the NBSCCC.
- 3 To provide guidance for the nuns in the exercise of their ministry, for volunteers and employees of the monastery.

Commitment

The nuns are committed to best practice as laid down by the NBSCCC. This includes employees and volunteers who work with the community.

Standard 1 A written safeguarding policy

Standard 2 How to respond to allegations and suspicions

Standard 3 Preventing harm to children
a) Recruitment and vetting
b) Code of behaviour
c) Running safe activities for children

Standard 4 Training and Education

Standard 5 Communication

Standard 6 Access to advice and support

Standard 7 Implementing and monitoring these standards

Standard One

Child Protection Policy Statement

1 As Dominican nuns we seek God by observing the norms of the purely contemplative life, by maintaining our withdrawal from the world by enclosure and silence, by working diligently, studying the truth eagerly, searching the Scriptures with ardent heart, praying intently, willingly practicing penance, pursuing communion through the manner of government, in purity of conscience and the joy of sisterly concord, “in freedom of spirit”. (Book of Constitutions of the Nuns of the Order of Preachers V).

2 The nuns recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children and young people and are committed to their protection and support in a way that promotes their human dignity and integrity as children of God.

3 The community undertakes to do all in its power to create a safe environment for children and young people who may have occasion to enter the monastery where they will be protected from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

4 Each nun is committed to respect the rights and integrity of every child and young person whom she may meet in her ministry in the parlour or at any time she may have occasion to meet children or young people or vulnerable adults.

Making Contact

If anyone has a child protection concern or wishes to report an allegation directly to the statutory authorities please contact the Garda or local HSE and ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker. If anyone has a child protection concern or wishes to report an allegation of child abuse directly to the Monastery, please contact the Monastery's person who is the Prioress (ftb).

This applies in particular to any member of the Monastery, volunteers or employees of the Order.

HSE Duty Social Worker: 041 - 9838574

Gárdaí: 041 - 9874200

Designated Person: Prioress: 041 - 9838524

National Office for Child Protection: 01-5053123

Standard 2

Procedures

The safety and welfare of children is of paramount importance and at no time may children be put at further risk of harm by delay or inaction.

I Initial reception of a complaint of child sexual abuse

1 The Monastery is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and protection of children and vulnerable adults and takes all concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse by any nun, employee or volunteer, very seriously. Children have a right to be listened to and heard.

2 Anyone who receives a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse must act immediately and refer the matter to the Designated Person.

3 The Designated Officer will:

a) receive and inform the civil authorities of any complaints of child sexual abuse which are made against any of the nuns or any person who may work with the monastery in a paid or voluntary capacity.

- b) inform the nun, employee or volunteer against whom the complaint is made
- c) carefully record all steps undertaken
- d) secure a support person for the accused person
- e) prepare a report for the advisory panel

II Guidance on how to respond to people making an allegation

- 1 Listen, be welcoming. Do not discuss. It is not your role to investigate.
- 2 Inform the person that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to anyone who wishes to speak about a situation of abuse
- 3 Give the name and phone number of designated person
- 4 Take notes but ask permission from the person to do this – explaining the importance of recording information.
- 5 Offer to accompany the person to the Designated Officer.

The Advisory Panel

The Monastery will avail of the Advisory Panel appointed either by CORI or the Safeguarding Office. The Panel will consist of a canon lawyer, childcare professional, priest/religious with pastoral experience, lay person with relevant experience e.g. a parent.

The Role of the Advisory Panel

The role of the Advisory panel is to advise and assist the Prioress of the Monastery at all stages of the investigative process into the alleged abuse. The Panel will meet when necessary.

The Advisory Panel may provide advice on:

The complaint itself

Ensuring the safety and welfare of children remain paramount

The appropriateness of the respondent remaining in his/her position

How the right of the respondent to a fair trial is preserved

Whether a special risk assessment of the respondent should be sought

The needs of the community and the appropriateness or timing of any public statement.

Standard 3

Prevention

Safe Recruitment

1 It is vital to make sure that whoever is employed by the Church whether in a pastoral or voluntary role is recruited safely and is suitable for the job/role

2 In order to prevent unsuitable people working with the monastery we will put in place good recruitment and selection procedures. Garda clearance will be sought for all employees and volunteers.

Code of Behaviour

1 A code of behaviour is a clear and concise guide of what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working with children which will be signed by all employees and volunteers who work with children.

2 Nuns, employees and volunteers must always:

- Respect the physical, sexual and emotional integrity of children.
- Act in ways that protect children from abuse or risk of abuse.

- Be visible to others when working with children.
- It is inappropriate to spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Respect each child's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of their rights.

3 In the event of children, young adults or vulnerable adults ever using the retreat house, clear guidelines will be in place before their arrival.

- a) appropriate levels of supervision have been put in place.
- b) parental consent will have been given in writing.
- c) staff and volunteers have been Garda vetted
- d) ensuring that procedures for signing in/signing out are in place for all staff and volunteers.

Standard 4

Training and Education

We recognise that appropriate child protection training is necessary for all those who work with children. It is an integral and vital element in ensuring best practice.

Standard 5

Communication

We will ensure that our Child Safeguarding policy is communicated to all personnel – to the nuns, employees and volunteers and where necessary to parents, to children and to external agencies.

Our Child Safeguarding Policy will be displayed in public areas in the Retreat House, Parlour area and the church.

Standard 6

Access to Advice and Support

1 Specialist advice on child protection issues is available from the National Board for Safeguarding children.

a) Anyone who has been abused or who has perpetrated abuse should be assisted and supported in seeking help.

b) A list of services, authorities and organisations in our area that can provide assistance to children will be made available

2 A Support Person will be made to those who make an allegation/ disclosure under these procedures. The Support Person will assist, where appropriate, with communication between the child or adult making an allegation and the Designated Person. The Support Person will receive appropriate training.

Standard 7

Implementation and Monitoring the Standards

- 1 We will develop a strategy to implement and monitor the effectiveness of the steps it has taken to keep children safe.
- 2 There are four stages of implementation.
 - a) Developing the policy
 - b) Implementing the policy – when, where and to whom.
 - c) Promulgate the policy
 - d) Implementation – how to make it happen.
- 3 The Monastery will cooperate with NBSCCC requirements in auditing our policy.

Appendix 1

The welfare of the child is paramount which means that the interests and welfare of the child are of primary consideration.

A child means every person below the age of eighteen years excluding a person who is or has been married.

There are four primary types of abuse – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

1 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional or psychological needs, which is likely to result in significant harm.

2 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent injury or suffering.

3 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child, which adversely affects the child's emotional development.

4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or that of others. Any form of sexual behaviour engaged in by an adult with a child or young person is sexual abuse, and is both immoral and criminal.