



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

St Patrick's Missionary Society

Revised October 2013

Note: In this web-based version of the policy document, the page numbers of the printed document have been maintained, but blank pages, 2 and 4, are omitted.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all. We have a duty of care and must ensure that we create safe and positive environments for children. We have an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected and defended. These rights are enshrined in Gospel values, in international law and domestic law.

St Patrick's Missionary Society is committed to protecting and promoting children's rights. It is the responsibility of every member of the Society to uphold the law and adhere to Gospel values by respecting the dignity and rights of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to work together to ensure their safety and well being.

The abuse of children is reprehensible behaviour directed at the most vulnerable members of society. When abuse is perpetrated by anyone, but especially by a priest, it has to be viewed with the gravest concern and demands immediate action. St Patrick's Missionary Society regards any incidence of child abuse perpetrated by one of its members as criminal behaviour and a betrayal of trust of the gravest kind. Every decision and action taken in response to suspicions or allegations of child abuse must give paramount priority to the welfare of children.

The following is the Society Policy and Directives for responding effectively to complaints of child abuse by a member of the Society. All members of the Society, our employees, volunteers and those working in association with the Society are required to comply with this policy. A review of the policy and its implementation will be conducted at regular intervals no more than three years apart.

B. POLICY

1. The safety and welfare of children should be the first and paramount consideration following an allegation of child abuse.
2. The Society commits itself to the pastoral care of victims and other persons harmed, including the Respondent.
3. The policy commits St. Patrick's Missionary Society to make every effort to prevent such abuse by any of its members. Its directives prescribe the norms to be followed for the prevention of child abuse, for the investigation of allegations, and the action to be taken to provide pastoral care and justice to the victim, the accused, and any other persons or entities damaged by a member's misconduct or abuse.
4. A prompt response should be given to all allegations of child abuse.
5. The investigation will be conducted with as much confidentiality as is possible under the law.
6. The complainant should be reassured that the Society must act in accordance with the law and not in a way which will prejudice the process of the law.
7. All allegations of child abuse by members will be investigated and there will be no cover-up or shielding of offenders.
8. The Society will comply with all civil and ecclesiastical reporting requirements related to child abuse.
9. A member who admits abuse of a minor or has been found to have done so will be removed from ministries where he might come into contact with minors and will not be returned to them.
10. While these directives are designed to respond to allegations of child abuse against members of the Society, the same or similar procedures should be followed in the case of an allegation of child abuse against a Society employee, volunteer or person working in association with the Society.
11. The Society will ensure that all child protection personnel in the Society have adequate training.
12. The principles and policies for safeguarding children will be an essential part of the curriculum in our houses of Student Formation.

C. DIRECTIVES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

1. Each Region/District will follow the Society Policy and Directives on Safeguarding Children, taking into account its local Church policy and the legal framework within which child abuse is dealt with in the country. If the local Church procedures are less comprehensive than Society procedures, the Regional/District procedures should supplement those of the local Church.
2. In each Region/District Society Leadership will ensure that they are informed on the local legislation covering child abuse, procedures of the local Church to deal with such cases and the availability of persons with expertise in the area of abuse of minors and their willingness to help in the event of an accusation of abuse by a member of St. Patrick's.
3. Each Region/District will have in place the structure to deal, as a matter of urgency with an allegation of child abuse.
4. The Regional or District guidelines for responding to allegations of child abuse will be in line with the Society procedures which follow.

D. STRUCTURES

The Child Protection Coordinator

Appointed by the Society Leader (most likely a member of the Central Leadership Team), he will ensure the implementation of the Policies and Procedures of the Society.

The Regional/District Director of Child Protection

Appointed by the Regional/District Leader, he is responsible for overseeing and implementing the Policy and Procedures in the Region/District and to have such additional responsibilities as may be required. In particular the Regional/District Director of Child Protection will:

- Respond as soon as possible whenever a complaint of child abuse against a member of the Society is received.
- Ensure that the guidelines are implemented when a complaint of child abuse is made against a member of the Society.
- Create a child protection case file that includes a log of actions, events and information received.

- Be responsible for ensuring that every complaint is recorded and carefully examined so that all pastoral, legal and canonical obligations may be identified and acted upon at the earliest time.
- Be responsible for the co-ordination of the response of the Society to the complaint.
- Be familiar with the working arrangements of the civil authorities of the local area in the investigation of complaints of child abuse and liaise well with them.
- Be conversant with the treatment facilities available to victims of child abuse.
- Be familiar with the assessment and treatment facilities available to people accused of child abuse.
- Promote awareness and understanding of child abuse among the members of the Society in his Region.

The Deputy Director of Child Protection

Appointed by the Regional Leader, he assists the Director of Child Protection and has the same duties and functions as the Director in the latter's absence or incapacity, or for any other sufficient reason.

The Advisory Panel

Appointed by the Regional/District Leader, the members of the Panel will be available to offer advice on a confidential basis, collectively and in their respective disciplines, when required. The Panel should include lay people with qualities and expertise relevant to the issue of child abuse. A child care professional, a canon lawyer and a civil lawyer will be included in the membership of the Panel. The Panel meets as often as is necessary.

The Support Person

Appointed by the Regional/District Leader, the Support Person is available to those who allege that they have suffered abuse and their families. The role of this person is to assist those wishing to make a complaint of child sexual abuse, to facilitate them in gaining access to information and help, and to represent their concerns on an ongoing basis.

The Adviser

Appointed by the Regional/District Leader, the Adviser is available to the

respondent. The Adviser should have regard to all pastoral, legal and therapeutic issues arising for the respondent.

The Media Relations Person

Appointed by the Regional/District Leader, the media relations person, preferably a member of the Society, will be the only person to respond on behalf of the Society to media enquiries. The media response must take fully into account the protection of the right of victims to privacy and the protection of the rights of the accused. Relations with the media will be based on the principles:

- the public has a right to information of a general nature;
- the accused has a right to a presumption of innocence;
- the alleged victim and his/her family have a right to maximum privacy;
- the State may institute proceedings which must not be jeopardised by prejudicial disclosure.

E. SOCIETY PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION

All allegations of child abuse by a member of St. Patrick's Missionary Society will be referred immediately to the relevant Regional/District Leader, who will immediately request the Director of Child Protection to implement Society guidelines. He will also inform the Society Child Protection Coordinator.

If the allegation is against one of these he shall stand aside and his immediate subordinate will assume the responsibilities of his office until the matter is resolved. The same principle applies if the allegation is against the Society Leader.

If a Society member has any suspicion or knowledge that a child has been or is being abused, by a member of the Society, he must report to his Regional/District Leader or to the Director of Child Protection in the Region/District.

It is imperative that any disclosure of child abuse, whether historical or current, is responded to without delay. In particular any person who receives a disclosure of current child abuse must immediately report the matter to the Social Work Department or relevant health authority in the area in which the child resides. Where there is a difficulty in making immediate contact, the local police department should be contacted.

The Regional Designated Person is to be informed immediately of the disclosure and is to be involved in reporting the matter, but this must not cause any delay in reporting. No child should be left in immediate danger.

1. Making a complaint

- a. A person who wishes to bring a complaint of child abuse against a member of the Society, should contact the Director of Child Protection or the relevant Leader.
- b. A Society member (other than the Director of Child Protection) who receives a complaint of child abuse against a member of the Society should:
 - i. listen carefully to the complainant and make a note of the name and contact details of the Complainant;
 - ii. explain the procedure the Society has put in place for dealing with complaints including the Society policy of complying with all civil reporting requirements.
 - iii. offer to accompany the person in bringing the complaint to the Director of Child Protection.
 - iv. make a written record of what the Complainant has alleged and give this to the Director of Child Protection.

Interviews will be conducted in a manner that demonstrates both compassion and concern for justice. A minor will not be interviewed except in the presence of a responsible adult.

2. Meeting between the Director of Child Protection and the Complainant

The Director should be accompanied to this meeting by his Deputy or by another person designated by the Regional/District Leader. The Complainant should be invited to bring someone to the meeting.

The Director will assure the Complainant that the Society has a policy on child abuse and that the policy is being implemented.

The Director will listen carefully to the Complainant and inform the Complainant of the seriousness with which the Society views any allegation of child abuse by one of its members.

The Director will ask the Complainant to report the matter to the civil authorities. He will inform the Complainant of the Society's reporting policy.

The Director will ensure confidentiality so that only those people who need to know will receive information about the complaint. However, no guarantee of absolute confidentiality can be given.

The Director will immediately offer a Support Person and counselling to the Complainant.

The Director will inform the Complainant that the specific rights and duties of priests are such that where there is a complaint of child sexual abuse against a priest or religious, an enquiry into the complaint is required under canon law. The future co-operation of the Complainant will be sought in so far as it may be necessary. Care will be taken that such an enquiry will not interfere with or be prejudicial to the administration of justice in a state criminal investigation or civil suit.

The Director should ask the Complainant to provide a detailed account of the wrongful acts alleged and their background and circumstances. The Director should carefully record what is said, and check with the Complainant the accuracy of what has been recorded. Ample time must be given to this.

The Director of Child Protection will

- inform the Regional/District Leader of the complaint,
- identify the present and previous appointments of the Respondent,
- liaise with the Support Person,
- alert the Adviser to be on standby,
- inform the Society Child Protection Coordinator of the complaint.

The Regional/District Leader will

- meet, without delay, the Respondent and inform him that a complaint has been received and that it is being dealt with in accordance with the Society's policy and procedures,
- request the Respondent to meet the Director of Child Protection,
- ask the Respondent to take a Risk Assessment,
- explain the role of the Adviser, who is available to him,
- offer the Respondent the services of a Lawyer and Canon Lawyer,
- offer counselling to the Respondent.

The Adviser will

- be available after the Respondent's meeting with the Regional/District Leader, and accompany the Respondent, if so requested, to the meeting with the Director of Child Protection,
- inform the Respondent of his rights both in civil and canon law,
- assist in whatever way may be necessary.

3. Meeting between the Director of Child Protection and the Respondent

This interview should be conducted as soon as possible. The Adviser should normally be present at this interview. The Director should inform the Respondent of the nature and detail of the complaint and the name of the Complainant. The Director should point out that:

- the matter is being enquired into in accordance with canon law,
- the Respondent is not obliged, in law, to respond or to furnish evidence,
- any information given may be subject to the scrutiny of the civil

authorities,

- the Respondent is entitled to the assistance of civil and canonical legal advisers.

If the Respondent wishes to speak freely with the Director, a careful note should be taken by the Director and checked with the Respondent for accuracy.

If the Respondent wishes to consult with civil and canonical advisers before responding, arrangements should be made for a further meeting at which such advisers will be welcome to attend.

The Director will discuss with the Respondent and his Adviser the question of obtaining spiritual and therapeutic support.

4. The Report of the Director of Child Protection and Subsequent Action

The Director should, as soon as possible, make a report to the Regional/District Leader on the complaint received and the response of the Respondent.

The Regional Leader should consult the Support Person and the Adviser in order to afford an opportunity for any representation on behalf of either the Complainant or the Respondent to be made.

The **Regional/District Leader** should then consider carefully the following:

- the complaint itself;
- the appropriateness of providing help, if needed, to a Complainant and to the family of the Complainant;
- the appropriateness of the Respondent continuing in his or her present pastoral assignment, having regard to the paramount need to protect children. Care should be taken that a decision by the Respondent to take leave of absence from a ministry will not be construed as denoting guilt on his part;
- how the right of the Respondent to a fair trial on any criminal charge may be preserved, and his good name and reputation may be appropriately safeguarded;

- whether a specialist professional evaluation of the Respondent should be sought;
- the needs of a parish or other community where the Respondent has served;
- the needs of the wider community including the appropriateness and timing of any public statement.

He may contact the Victim (if not the Complainant), the Respondent, and any relevant witnesses, to request as much information as possible of the alleged perpetrator and witnesses, including names, addresses, dates, location, time, and nature of the alleged offence.

The Regional/District Leader should consult with the **Advisory Panel** in relation to all of the above matters. He will also liaise with the Society Child Protection Coordinator.

If there are substantial grounds to believe that the abuse has taken place, the Regional/District Leader will immediately notify the Society Leader, detailing all information and his recommendation for healing the damage done and preventing any recurrence.

In consultation with the Society Leader he will make his decisions and inform the Complainant, the alleged Victim (if other than the Complainant) and the Respondent.

He will notify the religious authorities concerned, the Bishop of the diocese where the abuse is alleged to have taken place and the Bishop of the diocese where the Respondent resides and/ or works.

The Regional/District Leader will comply with all civil reporting requirements relating to child sexual abuse.

The Regional/District Leader will seek Legal Counsel.

The Complainant (or her/his representatives) and the Respondent each may request, within fifteen days of learning of the determination, that the Regional/District Leader reconsider the determination that the allegation has or has not been substantiated. The party requesting reconsideration shall specify in detail the basis on which the request for reconsideration is made.

If the Regional/District Leader is satisfied that child sexual abuse has

occurred, appropriate steps should be taken to ensure that the Respondent does not remain in any pastoral appointment which affords access to children.

Where it is established that the Respondent has offended, canon law indicates that before imposing ecclesiastical penalties, other means of correction or reproof should be attempted. (Canon 1341)

The Respondent found guilty of misconduct with a minor will be permanently removed from all ecclesiastical ministries involving minors.

The Regional/District Leader, in consultation with the Central Leadership Team, will employ procedures to restrict his contact with minors.

Should these means prove ineffective, canon law provides the Society Leader with a range of options which may ultimately result in the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state and from the Society.

F. RECORD KEEPING

Good record keeping is an integral part of safeguarding children within the Society and it should not be considered as an optional extra. It will help to improve accountability, show how decisions relating to safeguarding children are made, support effective assessments, provide documentary evidence of actions taken, help to identify risks and demonstrate how risks have been managed. Good record keeping also helps to safeguard the rights of all concerned.

The Director of Child Protection and the Regional/District Leader will undertake to create a record which is accurate and fair, in respect of any Safeguarding incident, allegation or suspicion. This record will be stored securely for whatever period it is thought necessary, updated regularly and accessed only by those who need to view it to secure the safety of a child. The subject of the file may correct inaccuracies and review the content upon request. Care will be taken to adhere to any data protection legislation in use in the country where the case file is held.

When an incident, allegation, suspicion or referral arises against any

member of the Society, staff, or volunteer, a case record will be created. It will record the information that has come to light, the actions taken, by whom and when. It will be accurate, fair and kept up to date. The contents will be typed, where possible, to ensure legibility. The subject of the case file will be asked to agree to the creation of the file and to its content. Access to the content will be given on an agreed basis only unless there is a clear requirement to share the information with others to prevent harm coming to a child or young person.

When created, the case file will be stored securely in a fireproof, locking cabinet in an agreed location. It will be held until ten years after the death of the subject of the file where upon it will be destroyed.

When a member against whom there is an allegation is transferred from one Society Region to another his personal file and case file must be passed on to the Regional Leader in the receiving Region.

G. CONFIDENTIALITY

The relationship of Church personnel with children and young people in their care is based on trust and confidentiality. There may be times, however, when a child or young person — or indeed an adult — confides in a person who works for the Church information which indicates that child abuse may have occurred or that the safety of children or young people is at risk, and they may ask that the matter be treated as completely confidential. In this situation, the person working for the Church should carefully explain that although they respect the sensitive nature of the information, they are unable to give an assurance of complete confidentiality. They will need to inform the relevant authorities so that action may be taken to protect children and young people from potential harm.

Important points for Church personnel to note in this regard are:

- All information regarding concerns about child abuse should be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interests of children.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. This should be made clear to all parties involved. Giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.

- Information obtained for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

The Seal of Confession guarantees that anything a person reveals in the reception of the Sacrament of Penance is guaranteed absolute confidentiality. The confessor should encourage the penitent to disclose the abuse. The maintenance of trust in the Sacrament of Penance requires the guarantee of absolute confidentiality, allowing for no exceptions

Pastoral wisdom would advise that in the event of a child or young person disclosing in Confession that they have been abused, the confessor should sensitively reassure the child or young person that they are not at fault. The confessor should encourage the child or young person to disclose the abuse to an adult they trust (for example, a relative, teacher, friend) and to have that person report the abuse. The confessor must at no time act in any manner that might violate the seal or compromise the Sacrament of Penance in the eyes of the faithful.

When an abuser confesses to a priest previously undisclosed child abuse, the priest should advise the penitent to seek the professional help they require immediately, for their own well-being and in order to prevent any recurrence of abuse.

H. SOCIETY EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

The Society Policy on Child Safeguarding applies to employees of the Society and to those who work voluntarily with the Society. The Society will not knowingly engage, directly or indirectly, anyone who poses a risk to children.

To this end it is committed to employing safe recruitment and vetting practices which seek to prevent those who pose a known risk to children from gaining employment or being taken on as volunteers. This applies to all positions within the Society and all reasonable steps will be taken to eliminate from the recruitment process applicants who might pose a risk to children.

The Safeguarding policy will be explained to employees and volunteers and each will be given a copy of the relevant document or where more appropriate a summary of the policy.

Employees and volunteers who do office work or who work in proximity to computers belonging to the Society will be made aware that the viewing of pornographic images of children or young people is a crime against children and should be reported to the relevant manager and to the civil authorities.

If a Society member is aware or reasonably suspects that a computer has been used by another Society member or by an employee or volunteer to view or send pornographic images of children or young people, this should be regarded as a child protection issue requiring immediate action and the member will inform the Regional/District Director of Child Protection or the Regional/District Leader. Where they are in doubt about the significance of the images concerned they will seek expert advice.

I YOUTH ACTIVITIES

It is important to bear in mind that the participation of young people in the life and activities of the Church must be encouraged. We must listen to children and young people and value and respect them as individuals. We must observe transparent and best practice in all of our activities, particularly in the organisation of pilgrimages, receiving young people in our homes, retreats and trips away from home. Other adults must be involved in such events, including parents/guardians. We must always respect the privacy and physical integrity of children and young people at all times. If the pastoral care of a child or young person necessitates the arrangement of a meeting alone with them, care should be taken that this does not take place in an isolated environment.

J. RESTORING THE REPUTATION OF A MEMBER WRONGLY ACUSED

Because a Respondent is presumed innocent unless the contrary has been established, natural justice, civil law and canon law demand that he should not be punished on the basis of mere allegation.

If the civil authorities decide not to prosecute and the Regional/District Leader is satisfied after consideration of the facts and circumstances of the complaint that the Respondent has been wrongly accused, appropriate steps should be taken to restore the good name of the Respondent with those among whom it has been called into question, and to repair such harm and scandal as has been caused.

K. REVIEW OF CASES

Where a Respondent has been accused of child abuse and it has not been established that the accusation is false, the Regional/District Leader in consultation with the Society Leader will review this case on a regular basis, to ensure that all necessary action is being taken by the Society.

L. REPORTS

If the allegation is substantiated a written report to that effect will be placed in the case file and in the personnel file of the Respondent. If the allegation is unsubstantiated, a written report to that effect will be placed in the case file. A similar report will also be placed in the personnel file of the accused member.

M. HEALING PROCESS FOR VICTIMS

- i. The ultimate goal is healing for all. It is important and consistent with our Gospel values that the members of the Society show in

- word and action respect, compassion and openness to every person harmed by the child abuse committed by a member of the Society.
- ii. Child abuse committed by a minister of the Gospel can cause deep psychological harm. This can be addressed with the help of professional psychotherapy. The Society will assist in finding a skilled professional and will help in defraying the costs. The on-going necessity of such professional help will be subject to periodic review.
 - iii. The damage done by child abuse can also be spiritual, some times rupturing the victim's relationship with God. The Society will help the victim find spiritual help if required, after the psychological issues have been addressed.
 - iv. Child abuse by a minister can also have strong repercussions in the family, the parish, or other entities. The Society recognises that the resulting grieving process is complex and that the process of healing can be a long one. The Society will collaborate with the appropriate authorities in the advancement of those processes.
 - v. In the event of possible litigation for financial compensation, a settlement out of court should be attempted. No final financial settlement will be agreed without the approval of the CLT.

N. HEALING FOR THE OFFENDER

- i. The Society will provide specialised therapy for a Respondent who has engaged in child abuse.
- ii. The Society will provide the therapist or therapy centre with information arising from the investigation which may be useful for the therapeutic process. The Regional/District Leader or Director of Child Protection will stay in contact with the therapeutic process.
- iii. If the Society member undergoing therapy is doing so on an out-patient basis the Regional Leader or Director of Child Protection is responsible to see that sufficient disclosure of his past behaviour is made to the persons who need to know.

- iv. The Society member will be asked to provide the Director/ Coordinator with authorization for the release of necessary diagnostic information. The information released is limited to that which might be helpful for his healing. The authorization is not a waiver of any statutory privilege of confidentiality.
- v. Upon completion of primary or in-house therapy any appointment of the Society member involved will be such as to ensure absolute minimum contact with minors.
- vi. Wherever the member is assigned in the future he must accept that the Society will have to provide a proper level of disclosure of his history to those with whom he will be living and working.

O. APPENDIX A

This policy is concerned primarily with the sexual abuse of children, or legally incompetent persons, i.e. any sexual conduct between a member of the Society and a child or legally incompetent person.

“A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1,1989)

The definition of child sexual abuse adopted by The Irish Law Reform Commission is as follows:

- i. intentional touching of the body of a child for the purpose of the sexual arousal or sexual gratification of the child or the person;
- ii. intentional masturbation in the presence of a child;
- iii. intentional exposure of the sexual organs of a person or any other sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification of the older person or as an expression of aggression, threat or intimidation towards the child;
- iv. sexual exploitation; which includes permitting, encouraging or requiring a child to solicit for or to engage in prostitution or other sexual acts as referred to above with the accused or any other person, persons, animal or thing or engaging in the recording (on video-tape, film, audio-tape or other temporary or permanent material), posing, modelling or performing of any act involving the exhibition of a child's body for the purpose of sexual gratification of an audience or for the purpose of any other sexual act referred to in subparagraphs (i) and (iii) above.

P. APPENDIX B

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Introduction

St Patrick's Missionary Society commits itself to best practice, openness and transparency in its Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children. This Communications policy sets out the processes put in place to make our Safeguarding policy and procedures more widely known and understood.

It is consistent with, and based on, Standard 5 of "*Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*" – Communicating the Church's safeguarding message.

The Society policy reflects a commitment to openness, in a manner that respects the reputation and privacy of all persons who are affected by matters pertaining to the abuse of children. When there are concerns about safeguarding children all information must be shared on a "need to know" basis in the best interests of the child. Sharing information in this way and in these circumstances is not a breach of confidentiality.

Target Groups

The main target groups with which the Society needs to communicate regarding its Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children are:

- All members and students of St Patrick's Missionary Society

- Our volunteers, employees and supporters

- Children, and their parents and carers, involved in church based activities with our members

- Parishioners, members and staff of institutions, voluntary groups, youth clubs, etc., where our members and students work or are involved

- The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI), the Health Service Executive (HSE), An Garda Síochána (GS) and the equivalent agencies

and statutory bodies in the other Regions of the Society Relevant external agencies, the media and the general public.

The Message

Information on St Patrick's Missionary Society's Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children

Contact details of those with safeguarding responsibilities in the relevant Region

To children and their parents/carers:

- How to keep safe

- What to do if you, or someone you know, is being harmed

- Sources of advice and support

- Role of agencies involved in safeguarding

- How the process works

To Society leaders, members, students, volunteers, employees and co-workers:

- Good practice and how to deliver it

- Safe recruitment

- Dealing with allegations

- Accessing help and advice

- Availability of training

- Contact details for relevant persons/agencies

Methods of Communication

Website:

www.spms.org is the Society's international website. It contains two policy documents on safeguarding children: ***Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children*** (General international policy) and ***Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children in the Region of Ireland*** (2012 revised edition). Contact details of the Irish Regional Leader and the Irish Designated Person are clearly displayed on the website.

Internal:

The Central Leadership Team (CLT) will include a section on safeguarding children in communications to Regional Leadership Teams, Formation staff, and in circular letters to all members.

Our monthly newsletter (*Ad Invicem*) will cover general information

about safeguarding and any new developments in safeguarding policy and procedures.

All members, students, volunteers, employees, co-workers, etc., are supplied with a copy of the Policy and Procedures relevant to their particular Region.

The following fora will be used to communicate information on safeguarding:

Chapters

Regional assemblies

ELM meetings

The Society Leader's annual report to members

Regional Council meetings

In the curriculum of our Formation Houses

Information will be communicated at regular training meetings in the Regions.

A poster displaying the Society safeguarding policy statement and contact details for reporting child protection concerns will be clearly visible at the entrance to all Society houses.

Public media:

The Society Communications Office in consultation with CLT and Regional Leaders will issue statements when warranted by major events like court cases, the launch of reports and other matters of public interest. Requests from the public media for information will be responded to positively by the Director of the Communications Office.

Only those persons delegated by the Society Leader will speak on behalf of the Society. Any statements, observations or opinions offered by another are to be understood as personal or private remarks, not necessarily reflecting an official communication of the Society.

Implementation of the Policy

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with CLT. Together with Regional Leadership Teams, Regional Safeguarding personnel, the Society Communications Office and other delegated persons CLT will adhere to this policy and faithfully

implement it. Regular checks will be made by the Society Safeguarding Coordinator (member of CLT) to ensure that all aspects of this policy are being observed and implemented in all the five Regions of the Society.

Monitoring and Review

The Society Safeguarding Coordinator together with CLT will monitor the implementation of this policy during their annual visitation to the Regions. It will be reviewed annually in the context of the review of our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Communication is a two way process. Consideration will be given to developing consultation and feedback processes with the target groups in order to ensure that their needs in this area are met and to improve practice.

Q. APPROVAL

I hereby approve for implementation this revised Society Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children. It is to be distributed to all members of the Society. All members are to familiarise themselves with the Policy and Procedures and to implement them when necessary.

Signed: 

Fr Seamus O'Neill
Society Leader

Date: 22 October 2013

St Patrick's, Kiltegan, Co. Wicklow, Ireland

