

# Child Safeguarding Statement

of the District of Ireland  
**St. Patrick's  
Missionary Society**  
2018



**St. Patrick's Missionary Society**  
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## **CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF IRELAND ST. PATRICK'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016.

### **STATEMENT**

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and well being and will work in partnership with parents/ guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

### **NATURE OF SERVICE AND PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM**

The District of Ireland, St. Patrick's Missionary Society as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry with children, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016:

1. Providing public Mass
2. Slí an Chroí (provision of retreat services and counselling facilities)

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland we are committed to the following principles:

### **CARING FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL CHILDREN AND THE ADULTS WHO WORK WITH THEM.**

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training support, communications and quality assurance.

### **RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO CHILD PROTECTION SUSPICIONS, CONCERNS, KNOWLEDGE OR ALLEGATIONS.**

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

### **MANDATORY REPORTING**

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:

- physically
- emotionally
- sexually
- through neglect

Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of Church personnel, but they can also relate to incidents in the child's family, or elsewhere in the community.

### **CARING PASTORALLY FOR COMPLAINANTS AND OTHER AFFECTED PERSONS.**

Those who have suffered child abuse by Church personnel will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counseling and support as they seek to rebuild their lives. An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order and to the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

### **CARING PASTORALLY FOR RESPONDENTS AND OTHER AFFECTED PERSONS.**

This Church body in its response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child sexual abuse will respect the rights under civil law and canon law of an accused cleric or religious or other Church personnel. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered to the respondent.

The Church authority will take responsibility for ensuring that any cleric or religious who is considered to constitute a danger to children is managed according to a risk management plan.

All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child.

Respondents belong to families and diocesan or religious communities. The Church authority will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

We, in the District of Ireland, St. Patrick's Missionary Society have carried out an assessment of any potential harm to a child while availing of our services. Following is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage risk identified</b>
Unsafe environment for children, clergy and staff	<b>Section 1 Developing a Culture of Safeguarding,</b> Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2017, Region of Ireland.
Members, staff and volunteers – recruitment and selection processes inadequate	<b>Appendix 2 Recruitment &amp; Selection (p17),</b> Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2017, Region of Ireland.
The environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to meet effective safeguarding practice	<b>Section 1 Developing a Culture of Safeguarding,</b> Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2017, Region of Ireland
Church personnel fail to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children	<b>Appendix 3 Codes of Behaviours for Adults (p25)</b> Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2017, Region of Ireland
The procedures for safeguarding children fail to be implemented	<b>Appendix 17 Action &amp; Compliance (p82)</b> Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2017, Region of Ireland
External groups who use the Society's property are unsafe to do so.	<b>Appendix 9 &amp; 10 (p38 &amp; 39)</b> Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2017, Region of Ireland
Church personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately	<b>Appendix 14 Reporting Concerns (p48),</b> Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2017, Region of Ireland
The Church authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons	<b>Appendix, 13 and 14</b> Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2017, Region of Ireland

## PROCEDURES

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: *A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. All procedures outlined in the risk assessment above are available at [www.spms.org](http://www.spms.org).

The procedures listed above include the following:

- ▶ Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/ volunteers of a child availing of our service;
- ▶ Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children;
- ▶ Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
- ▶ Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- ▶ Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
- ▶ Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The District of Ireland, St. Patrick's Missionary Society recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of The District's Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice support our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries.

As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ *Church Authority*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*For any queries relating to this statement please contact Sandra Neville, Safeguarding Officer (Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015).*