

# Child Safeguarding Statement



## St. Patrick's Missionary Society 2024 Region of Ireland



This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024*. The policy of the Catholic Church in Ireland is based on standards of practice which contain indicators that assist in reaching these standards. These indicators can be used in assessing and managing risk.

### **Name and contact details of the service provider**

St. Patrick's Missionary Society (SPMS)  
Kiltegan, Wicklow, W91 Y022 Ireland  
Contact number: 059 647 3600

### **STATEMENT**

The Gospel teaches the importance of ensuring that the Catholic Church community is a warm, welcoming and safe place for children.

*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Mark 10:14-15)*

Children are gifts from God, to be cherished and recognised for the joyful contribution they make as valued members of the Church.

Our challenge is to follow the example of Jesus in cherishing them. Safeguarding is key to this important task and should be seen, not as a burden, but as an opportunity to embrace and encourage children's ministry, following the example of Jesus Christ.

This Church body pledges to safeguard children and young people from harm and to support them in their development as valued and integral members of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Church's ministry will be inclusive and will uphold their rights.

Consistent with Gospel values, and with civil and criminal law, those who minister will do so with dignity and integrity, honouring their calling to ensure that children and young people are welcomed, cherished and protected, following the example set by Jesus.

This Safeguarding Children Policy will be honoured and complied with by all ordained clerics, by vowed female and male religious, and by all lay staff and volunteers in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

### **NATURE OF SERVICE**

SPMS 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 *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024*:

- ▶ Attendance by children and young people at SPMS Church services with their parents/guardians.

- ▶ Participation of children and young people in sacramental preparation, done in conjunction with schools.
- ▶ Participation in school based religious and/or social activities.

As outlined in *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024* we are committed to the following standards:

- ◆ Leadership, Governance and Accountability. As a leader, the Church authority embodies and imparts the Catholic Church's vision, principles and values, which are reflected and apparent in the child safeguarding culture, structures and practices at all levels and in all ministries with children and young people. This demonstrates, through words and actions, the Church authority's personal commitment to fulfil the safeguarding mission of the Church.
- ◆ Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding. Ensuring the creation and maintenance of a culture of safety, including a safe Church environment that is welcoming of children. Keeping children safe from harm is an imperative but more than that, the Church will promote the well-being of children through their participation in the ministry of the Church. The Church will create and maintain environments that uphold children's rights and that create nurturing, caring conditions where children will flourish in faith and love. Through fostering a culture of care, children feel safe and looked after and, in turn, they will be supportive of and respectful to their peers.
- ◆ Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law. Caring for complainants and ensuring a just process of inquiry. 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 Church personnel have a responsibility to report suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child abuse that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) can assist with this process. These reports will be made irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation being reported 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 being reported 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.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities in SPMS and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse.

See the safeguarding section of the SPMS website (<https://www.spms.org/safeguarding>)

(see also *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024*: <https://www.safeguarding.ie/our-services/policy-and-guidance>)

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a child by Church personnel or visitors to Church premises.	Procedures for safe recruitment and creating and maintaining a safe environment available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a child through bullying by peers	Procedures for internet and social media safety Anti-bullying procedures available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
The environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to protect them from harm, (as defined in the Children First Act 2015).	Procedures to create and maintain safe environments including localised hazard assessments, available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to children involved with external groups who use Church property and are unsafe to do so.	Procedures for external groups to use SPMS Church Property available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) through the use of digital media (photography, video and social media).	Procedures for the safe use of digital media available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
Church personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately.	Procedures for the safe use of digital media available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
Church Personnel fail to take action during and following any investigation into allegations of abuse against clerics and religious to ensure children are protected from harm (as defined in the Children First Act, 2015)	Procedures for reporting child abuse allegations, suspicion concerns or knowledge available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
Church personnel fail to support those who are victims of abuse.	Procedures to support complainants available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
Children and their parents do not understand the Church's policy, procedures and structure to safeguard children and protect them from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015)	Procedures to develop communications, training and support relating to child safeguarding available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
The procedures for safeguarding children from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) fail to be implemented	Procedures to ensure compliance and the implementation of the policy and procedures available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
The Church authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons	Procedures including safe recruitment, Tusla Child Safeguarding Statement and mandated persons available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>
Risk of harm of a child (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) being disclosed during the Sacrament of Reconciliation	Procedures to meet the Child Safeguarding Policy in relation to the Sacrament of Reconciliation available at: <a href="http://www.spms.org/safeguarding">www.spms.org/safeguarding</a>

## RISK ASSESSMENT (RISKS IDENTIFIED FOR EACH RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY)

Alongside the risks listed in the table above, SPMS individually risk assess their activities with children and put in place procedures to manage these risks.

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Local activity with children is risk assessed in each location in which the activity takes place as part of the national policy <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i> .	For full details of localised risks and the procedures in place to manage these please refer to the risk assessments stored at the Safeguarding Office.

## PROCEDURES

All procedures outlined in the risk assessment above are available at: [link for website](#).

The following procedures are specified procedures under the *Children First Act 2015* and are also referenced above.

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

SPMS is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024*. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice supports 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:   
**Fr. Patrick Murphy**  
**Regional Leader**

Date: July 2024

For any queries relating to this statement please contact the **relevant person** under the Children First Act 2015:  
**Sandra Neville, Safeguarding Co-Ordinator/ Designated Liaison Person**

Contact details:

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