

Child Safeguarding Statement



St. Patrick's Missionary Society 2023 Region of Ireland



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. 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

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children. We are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being, that they will be equally protected from harm regardless of race, ability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, 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

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 *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*:

- ▶ 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.

It is important to note that this list is not exhaustive.

PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN FROM HARM

Section 2 of the *Children First Act 2015* defines harm as follows: "harm means in relation to a child" –

- a. Assault, ill-treatment, or neglect, of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or
- b. sexual abuse of the child".

As outlined in the *Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017*, we are committed to the following principles:

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 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 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 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 anonymously to 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

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.

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 *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*: <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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
Church personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately.	Procedures for the safe use of digital media available at: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
Church personnel fail to support those who are victims of abuse.	Procedures to support complainants available at: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding
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: www.spms.org/safeguarding

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 Indicator 1.8 of <i>Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016</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](#).

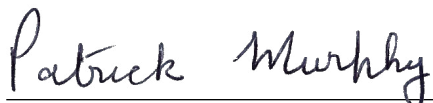
The following procedures are specified procedures under the *Children First Act 2015* and are also referenced above.

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 *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. 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: May 2023

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:

Address: Safeguarding Office,
St. Patrick's Missionary Society,
Kiltegan,
Wicklow W91 Y022 P295

Phone Number: 059 647 3600

Email: sandra.neville@spms.ie

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