

Standard 1



Leadership, Governance and Accountability

The Dominican Province of Ireland recognises and respects the rights and dignity of every child and young person. Our standards of behaviour and relationships with children and young people must always reflect this. This standard, applied at all levels and in all ministries, ensures a commitment to embody and impart the church's vision, principles and values through safe, caring and lifegiving environments for children and young people. The Prior Provincial has the ultimate responsibility for implementing this standard with the support of the Provincial Council.

Since leadership, governance and accountability is at the service of the Church's mission of preaching the Gospel and commitment to safeguarding children and young people, it is necessary that procedures are rooted in integrity which is embedded in adequate structures, personnel practices and provision of resources.

1. Personal Commitment of Church Authority

- 1.1** The Prior Provincial is committed to the policies and procedures proposed by NBSCCCI and those approved by the Provincial Chapter of 2025.
- 1.2** He undertakes to communicate through open and transparent communication in occasional sermons, pastoral letters, addresses to members of the province and in other situations, as well as by means of social communication.
- 1.3** He is committed to being available to those who request face-to-face meetings in relation to matters of safeguarding.
- 1.4** He is supported in this aspect of his governance and leadership by specific personnel, including the Safeguarding Coordinator and Designated Liaison Person, the Provincial Council and the Safeguarding and Advisory Committees.

2. Governance

- 2.1** Within the Dominican Province of Ireland, the Prior Provincial works alongside safeguarding personnel who assist in the systematic review of practice to recognise the good practice undertaken in the province, as well as enable learning for progressive improvement. Quality assurance procedures are in place at all levels for this purpose.
- 2.2** In terms of governance, the Prior Provincial is regularly assisted by the Safeguarding Coordinator/ Designated Liaison Person.
- 2.3** On a broader level, the Safeguarding Committee ensures that the province, guided by the Prior Provincial, promotes best practice at all levels of the Order's ministry in the province. This includes their attentiveness to:
 - Producing and reviewing a three-year child safeguarding plan, detailing the implementation and maintenance of the three standards across the Dominican Province of Ireland.
 - Liaising with the Prior/Superior and in the Diocesan parish churches with the Local Safeguarding Representatives (LSRs), to ensure the completion of an annual local safeguarding audit, and to identify areas where guidance and support on policy or practice are needed.
 - Ensuring that an annual safeguarding report is provided to the Prior Provincial.

- 2.4** With the support of the Safeguarding Committee and the Safeguarding Coordinator/Designated Liaison Person, the Prior Provincial is tasked with the implementation of the three-year child safeguarding strategic plan. This Strategic Plan seeks to assess the effectiveness of the steps being taken to keep children safe. The purpose of this internal child safeguarding plan is to set out what, how, who and in what timeframe, key elements of child safeguarding practices and procedures will be met in the province.
 - 2.5** The Prior Provincial has the responsibility to ensure commitment in the province to a training and communications plan. In these plans, he identifies specific and realistic objectives linked to identified allocated resources. Clear timeframes for implementation are set, taking into account the completion of local annual safeguarding audits. These plans are established for a period of three years, with dates set for the review of each specific objective outlined in the plan. These objectives should be achieved on an annual basis, to ensure they have been implemented in accordance with the timeframe provided and the outcomes detailed in the annual local safeguarding audits.
 - 2.6** Priors/Superiors ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures are adhered to locally.
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3. Quality Assurance

- 3.1** Quality assurance is identified as a central aspect of the role of the Prior Provincial in terms of his leadership, governance and accountability regarding safeguarding.
 - 3.2** This is undertaken internally through the annual self-audit which is completed locally but coordinated by the Safeguarding Coordinator/Designated Liaison Person on behalf of the Safeguarding Committee.
 - 3.3** The Prior Provincial keeps informed about compliance with the safeguarding standards within Dominican ministries and projects from information provided by the Safeguarding Coordinator/Designated Liaison Person during systematic visits to Dominican communities and other places of ministry and from annual visitation.
 - 3.4** The Prior Provincial, with the assistance of the Safeguarding Coordinator/Designated Liaison Person, in accordance with the requests made for external audits undertaken by the NBSCCCI and statutory authorities, ensures the Order is attentive to the GDPR protocols of the province.
 - 3.5** The Prior Provincial tasks the Safeguarding Committee with ongoing review of policies and procedures to ensure that friars, communities and those engaged in ministries and projects are attentive to keeping these standards.
 - 3.6** The Prior Provincial during his canonical visitations to each community ensures that all safeguarding procedures are adhered to and includes any relevant recommendations in his follow up canonical charge to the community.
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4. Assistance to the Prior Provincial

- 4.1** In matters which pertain to safeguarding allegations concerning any person involved in ministry, the Prior Provincial in conjunction with the Safeguarding Office has the primary responsibility to respond in an appropriate and pastoral manner.
- 4.2** The Prior Provincial is to utilise the Provincial Advisory Committee in order to receive guidance and direction with regard to allegations of a safeguarding nature concerning children and young people.
- 4.3** The Prior Provincial will ensure that he is aware of the obligations of his office regarding safeguarding, especially concerning accountability for his actions or omissions, in accordance with the *motu proprio, Vos estis lux mundi (2023)*. In order to aid him in this area, especially in the responsibility of decision-making, he is assisted by the Safeguarding Coordinator/Designated Liaison Person, the Safeguarding and Advisory Committees.
- 4.4** Along with those in the various safeguarding roles, the Prior Provincial undertakes training for leadership, induction training in safeguarding and continuous professional development in this area. He also is encouraged to avail of mentoring and support to assist him in seeking best practice in safeguarding in all aspects of Dominican life in the province.
- 4.5** The Prior Provincial is assisted in his commitment to providing training, care and support for those involved in safeguarding ministry by availing of the services offered by the NBSCCI and other professional agencies and organisations. This commitment is also identified by the Prior Provincial in following the universal and proper law of the Order of Preachers, as promulgated by General and Provincial chapters, or as directed by the Master of the Order and the General Council. Particular attention is given by the Prior Provincial to ensure that safeguarding has an integral role in the initial and ongoing formation of friars of the province, as well as for those who collaborate in their mission.

5. Communications

Practices are in place to communicate the safeguarding policy and procedures of the Irish Province.

These practices include:

- The website: www.dominicansafeguarding.com
- Child safeguarding statement and safeguarding notices, including relevant contact details, are on prominent and permanent display in Dominican churches and premises.
- Different media platforms to communicate information about safeguarding, including sermons, pastoral letters, addresses and newsletters.