

# Standard 2

## Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding

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This standard identifies what is necessary to ensure that a culture of safety is created and maintained in Dominican communities and ministries. As keeping children safe from harm is an imperative and central aspect to the Church's ministry, the Dominican Province of Ireland is committed to upholding children's rights through nurturing, caring and safe environments where children will flourish in faith and love.

This Standard provides the required standard of practice in relation to the recruitment and selection of friars, staff and volunteers. The Dominican Province of Ireland recognises and respects the rights and dignity of every child and young person. Our Standards of behaviour and our relationships with children and young people must always reflect this. They must also include a firm commitment to providing a safe, caring and life-giving environment in which children and young people can feel respected, happy and secure.

It is essential that any friar, staff and/or lay volunteer who work within Dominican ministries/environments, in any capacity with children or young people are, as far as possible assessed to ensure that they do not present a risk to children or young people.

### 1. Child Safeguarding Statement

In the Republic of Ireland, there is a legal requirement to provide a child safeguarding statement detailing an overview of the measures that the Dominican Province of Ireland has in place to ensure that children are protected from harm. It is a written statement that specifies the services being provided by the Order to children and young people and the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure, as far as is practicable, that a child/young person availing of the service is safe from harm. The Child Safeguarding Statement for the Dominican Province of Ireland is posted on the Dominican Safeguarding website, and a copy is available from the Safeguarding Office.

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### 2. Procedures for Recruitment (including Garda Vetting/Access NI)

#### 2.1 Safe Recruitment

The Dominican Province of Ireland acknowledges that safe care starts with the appointment of suitably qualified, skilled and vetted personnel who have the desired competencies and skills to carry out their function in an effective, efficient and safe manner. Whoever is recruited by the Dominican Province of Ireland, either in a paid or voluntary role, must be recruited safely and deemed suitable for the role that they are being asked to undertake.

Safe recruitment means that the Dominican Province of Ireland will ensure that:

- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure we eliminate applicants who might pose a risk to children and young people.
  - Those engaged in the recruitment process are suitably trained and experienced to undertake this task.
  - The Dominican recruitment procedures are transparent, adhere to best practice and comply with the rules of natural justice, appropriate record-keeping, and human resource management.
  - All Dominicans are committed to the policy of inclusion and equality.
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## 2.2 Appointment procedures for Dominican friars

For religious who are part of the Dominican Province of Ireland, the following procedures must be completed.

All friars undertake safeguarding training and refresher programmes. Students in initial formation also participate in a specially designed module on safeguarding children and young people. It includes inputs from:

- Victim/survivors.
- A canon lawyer.
- Spiritual and therapy services.
- National Safeguarding Board for Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.
- and the Safeguarding Coordinator of the Province.

In addition, the Dominican Province of Ireland must ensure the following arrangements are in place prior to any appointment:

- Ensuring the member signs an agreement form to follow the Catholic Church policy and child safeguarding standards. (*Form 1 page 50*)
- Requiring the member to undergo vetting through the Garda National Vetting Bureau (Republic of Ireland) or access Northern Ireland. (*Guidance 2 page 54*)
- Ensuring the member attends training, in particular, child safeguarding training.
- Requiring the member to sign a declaration form stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children or young people. (*Form 2 page 51*)
- Ensuring the member is inducted into the Dominican Province of Ireland, Child Safeguarding Statement, Policy and Procedure document and agrees to follow the policy and procedures of the Dominican Province by signing the relevant agreement form. (*Form 3 page 60*)
- Ensuring the member abides by the Irish Dominican Province code of behaviour.

If a Dominican friar is visiting a diocesan parish or a community and/or is seeking to minister, the procedures for visiting clergy/religious for the respective diocese must be followed.

### 2.3 Dominican friars visiting Ireland

Any priest coming to Ireland to perform public ministry in a Dominican community is required to provide the following documentation to the Dominican Prior Provincialate Office.

- a** Letter of Good Standing from his Prior Provincial.
- b** Copy of valid celebret.
- c** Completed Garda Vetting Form/Access NI form for the particular Diocese.

*(Guidance 2 page 54)*

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### 2.4 Safe recruitment procedures - Staff

When staff are to be recruited for employment in houses of the province, the Prior or Superior is required to follow these procedures:

- Use the recruitment and selection checklist to ensure that effective practices are followed.
- Develop clear job and role descriptions.
- Openly advertise all vacancies as required.
- Use an application form including reference requests *(Form 2 page 51)*
- Interview suitable applicants for the position by an interview panel of at least two people with appropriate competence and authority. The interview will include advising applicants of their responsibilities towards children/young people; and assessment of their suitability will include an awareness of child protection and safe care practices.

The successful applicant will be offered a position subject to:

- Completion of application form, which include a declaration that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable for working with minors
- Provision of suitable reference/s.
- Proof of qualifications, where applicable.
- Vetting through the National Vetting Bureau (Republic of Ireland) or Access Northern Ireland.
- Positive proof of identification.

**Note** All recruitment and personnel files should be retained in accordance with the Dominican Province of Ireland, Data Protection Policy (2019).

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## 2.5 Safe Recruitment – Volunteers

All necessary steps should be taken to ensure that volunteers who work with children or young people in the context of the Dominican Province of Ireland, are assessed as suitable. This includes conducting the following procedures.

- Vetting through the Garda National Vetting Bureau or Access NI.
- Completion of Volunteer Application Form.
- Ensuring the volunteer participates in the required safeguarding training.
- Ensuring the volunteer signs the Dominican code of conduct.
- Ensuring the volunteer is aware of the reporting procedures regarding safeguarding concerns and allegations.

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## 3. Induction and Safeguarding Training of those involved in Ministry

All members of the Dominican Province of Ireland, and all their employees and volunteers have a role to play in child safeguarding, particularly if their work brings them into contact with children and young people. The Dominican Province of Ireland recognises training as the cornerstone in maintaining high standards and good practice, and all personnel are required to complete induction and training in child safeguarding. Those in safeguarding roles will be afforded further training to enhance their effectiveness.

### 3.1 Induction

On appointment, an induction programme should be put in place for the employee or volunteer to guide their successful integration.

### 3.2 Safeguarding Induction

In relation to working with children and young people, specific induction as directed by the Safeguarding Office. This includes:

- Details of the Safeguarding Office, in particular the names, contact details and roles of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP.
- Signposting to the Dominican Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure Handbook and Dominican Safeguarding Website ([www.dominicansafeguarding.com](http://www.dominicansafeguarding.com))
- Completion and signing of agreement form to adhere to the policies and procedures.
- Direction regarding probationary period, where applicable.
- Information on professional support and supervision.

This induction process is completed with the employee or volunteer by the relevant Prior or Superior or, where directed by the Safeguarding Office, by another suitable person.

**3.3 Dominican Safeguarding Training Requirements**

NATURE OF TRAINING	WHO SHOULD ATTEND
One-day Safeguarding Training Event	All Dominican members. Staff and volunteers who work directly or indirectly with children and young people. Local Safeguarding Representatives.
Safeguarding Information Session	Staff and volunteers, and retired Dominican members.
Safeguarding Refresher Session	Friars, Staff and Volunteers who have completed the one-day training event.
Role-specific Training	Prior Provincial, Provincial Advisory and Safeguarding Committee Members, Safeguarding personnel e.g., Safeguarding Coordinator/DLP, Support persons.
Specialist Training e.g., safe recruitment, running activities with young people, working with perpetrators of abuse.	Any Dominican member, staff or volunteer who considers the training to be relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Training attendance records are maintained, secured and stored by the Safeguarding Office and are reviewed as part of the Dominican annual self-audit.

**4. Code of Conduct**

The recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced personnel is a vital aspect of the Dominicans’ child safeguarding policy. In order to maintain a high level of child protection awareness and safe care, codes of conduct are equally important.

A code of conduct is a clear and concise guide to what is and is not acceptable behaviour and practice when working with children and young people. It is an essential part of the safeguarding procedures of any Church body that has ministry with children and young people. A key aspect of any code of conduct is the creation of an environment where it is safe for children and young people to ask questions and express their concerns, confident in the knowledge that what they say will be heard, taken seriously and acted upon.

It is very important that everyone in the Dominican Province of Ireland is clear about what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working with children and young people. It is also important to involve children and parent/carers and/or guardians in the process of developing a code of conduct. When considering what sorts of behaviour are appropriate in dealing with children and young people, it is important to bear in mind that the intentions of adults are less important than the impact of their behaviour on children and young people.

In general codes of conduct should contain:

- Positive statements indicating what sorts of behaviours are appropriate, e.g., listening.

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- An awareness of the scope of bullying and how to cope with the problem, as it may occur in any group context.
  - Prohibitions indicating behaviours that are never acceptable, e.g., hitting a child or young person.
  - Good practice guidelines that indicate what is generally acceptable or unacceptable, but that also allow for exceptions, e.g., in a medical emergency, taking a child or young person in your car without a second member of staff or adult if there is no one else around.

If it becomes necessary to depart from the code of conduct, the reasons for doing so should be carefully recorded, and steps should be taken to avoid the recurrence of such a situation in the future.

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#### 4.1 Code of Conduct for adults working with children or young people

Prior to commencing any ministry with children and young people, it is a requirement for all Dominican personnel, staff and volunteers to sign the required form to state that they agree to the Code of Conduct.

If any adult breaches the code of conduct, efforts should be made to resolve the issue by:

- Discussion with and support for the adult and/or the child or young person.
- Consideration of attendance at supplementary training.
- In more serious cases, suspension or exclusion may be considered.

Any Dominican member, staff member, volunteer or lay person who becomes aware of a breach of this Code of Conduct should bring the matter to the immediate attention of:

- a** Designated Liaison Person
  - b** Deputy Designated Liaison Person,  
*and/or*
  - c** Prior Provincial, St. Mary's Priory, Tallaght, Dublin 24. (01) 404 8100
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#### 4.2 Code of Conduct for Children or Young People

Children and young people should be involved in drawing up a code of conduct for themselves. It is important that in working with children/young people, an appropriate adult with relevant skills and competence, participates to support them in developing the code of conduct.

The methods used in creating a code of conduct should be age- and ability-appropriate, with children and young people being encouraged to avoid merely drawing up a list of prohibitions. Instead, the code should be comprised of positive statements about respect and should consider what consequences ensue if the code is broken.

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In situations where this conduct is breached, necessary action will be taken. However, in these situations, the following is kept in mind:

- Disciplining of children and young people should be in the form of positive reinforcement.
- Rules about discipline and sanctions should be agreed as part of the code of behaviour and accepted by all workers, children and young people as a condition of becoming involved.
- The anti-bullying protocol should be communicated to all personnel and implemented by everyone.

Sanctions should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly and not used as a threat. Children or young people should be helped to understand why sanctions are being imposed. When a sanction has been imposed, it is important that a child or young person is able to feel that she/he is still valued.

Sometimes, children or young people can be disruptive, and their behaviour can be challenging. Such behaviour can put at risk the safety of the child or young person, himself or herself, as well as that of other children or young people and/or of workers. Workers need to be trained and prepared for coping with disruptive behaviour.

It is recommended that:

- More than one worker is present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with.
  - A record is kept, signed and dated in an incident book, describing what happened, the circumstances, who were involved, any injury to a person or damage to property arising from the incident, and how the situation was resolved.
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### 4.3 Anti-bullying Guidance and Protocol

We recognise the devastating effects and long-term damage that bullying can have on children or young people, and we hope to create safe bullying-free environments for our children and young people. (See Appendix 3 page 107)

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## 5. Empowering participation of children and young people

### 5.1 General Principles

In creating safe environments where children and young people can participate and develop well, activities need to be well planned. They should be child-centred in their practice and behaviour; and there should be clear procedures to guide practice.

In practical terms, organising the safe care and participation of children and young people will include the following:

- Completing a hazard or risk assessment: This assists with managing both health and safety issues, and the general welfare of children and young people. (Guidance 4 page 64)
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- Completing a child and parent/carer and/or guardian joint consent form. (*Form 6 page 68*)
  - Clear guidance on the participation of children or young people with specific needs.
  - Guidance on taking children or young people on trips away or pilgrimage.
  - Sign-in register of attendance. (*Form 7 page 71*)
  - Ensuring adequate supervision ratios. (*Guidance 5 page 72*)
  - Guidance on accidents or incidents.
  - Guidance on the use of technology - media policy. (*Guidance 6 page 76*)
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## 5.2 Guidance on Children or Young People with Specific Needs

Some children or young people have specific needs that place additional responsibilities on those who care for and work with them. It is often the situational and environmental factors that disable the child or young person, rather than the physical or intellectual difficulty the child or young person experiences. Where possible, the environmental factors should be adapted to the child or young person's needs. Prohibitive attitudes need to be addressed through education and information. Children or young people who have a disability have the same rights as any other child or young person, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Points to consider when including a child or young person with specific needs, in your group:

- Work in partnership with the child or young person, parents/carers and guardians, and all professionals involved, to establish how the child or young person can be included.
- Make sure inclusion is possible before bringing the child or young person into the group.
- Make reasonable adjustments.
- Be interested in the child or young person and build a rapport with them.
- If the child or young person has a communication impairment, acquiring some key skills in their communication method will be useful.
- Some specific training may be useful or required, e.g., the autistic spectrum, epilepsy.
- Hazard assessments may be necessary to ensure the safety of some children or young people with specific needs. (*Form 8 page 73*)
- Higher staff ratios may be required if the child or young person has additional needs or behavioural problems. (*Guidance 5 page 72*)

### 5.2.1 Intimate care issues:

When introducing a child or young person with specific needs into an activity, it is important to establish if they have intimate care needs, and who should provide or assist with this if it is necessary.

It is important to remember that not every child or young person with a disability has intimate care needs. Intimate care is, to some extent, individually defined and varies according to personal experience, cultural expectations and gender. It may be described as help with anything of a personal or private nature that the individual is unable to do themselves.

Generally, church personnel are not expected to be involved in the provision of intimate care of children or young people. This should be undertaken by suitably qualified people.

Children or young people with specific needs may be more likely than other children or young people to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and they may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.

It is particularly important that children or young people with specific needs are carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty expressing their concerns, and so that the importance of what they say is not to be underestimated.

Decisions regarding who provides intimate care for a child or young person should be discussed and agreed in advance by everyone concerned:

- The child or young person's view should be ascertained.
- The parents/carers and/or guardians should be consulted, and their consent sought.
- A rota of carers of the same sex as the child or young person should be agreed.
- The age, stage of development and ethnicity of the child or young person will need to be considered.

Guidelines to be borne in mind when providing intimate care include the following:

- The sensitive nature of such tasks.
- The need to treat every child or young person with dignity and respect.
- The need to ensure an appropriate degree of privacy.
- The need to involve the child or young person as much as possible in their own care.
- The need to ensure consistency in who provides care.

If a child or young person appears distressed or unhappy, this should be discussed with parents/carers and/or guardians if appropriate and the activity leader.

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### 5.3 Taking children or young people on trips away and/or pilgrimage

Trips away that involve children or young people can be rewarding and fulfilling experience for adults, children and young people involved with them. To do this safely and in a way that safeguards all concerned, requires careful planning and consideration.

Listed below are a number of areas that should be considered in planning a trip away.

Have you:

- Identified the aim and outcomes of the programme?
- Followed the Dominican Child Safeguarding Statement, Policy and Procedures?
- Carried out a risk assessment? (*Form 5 page 65*)
- Used safe practice guidelines when recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers?
- Selected a key staff member who has overall responsibility for the trip?
- Selected staff and volunteers for the trip who are appropriately trained, qualified and vetted?
- Nominated a staff member or volunteer who is responsible for First Aid, if appropriate?
- Checked the First Aid kit and/or received training in First Aid as relevant to the activity planned for?
- Ensured adequate and gender-based supervision in line with the Dominican Safeguarding Statement, Policies and Procedures?
- Appointed a contact person (at home) who has access to all information and contact details?
- Checked insurance and ensured that there is adequate coverage for all activities planned for?
- Checked that the transport has appropriate insurance, qualified drivers and seatbelts?
- Carried out an equipment safety check?
- Made provisions for returning home early, if required?
- Allocated a budget and contingency fund?
- Obtained from parents/carers and guardians any information which may be relevant to a child or young person staying away from home overnight, e.g., information concerning allergies, medical problems, or special needs.
- Checked out the locations and accommodation of the trip away to ensure they have:
  - Appropriate safeguarding policy, practices and procedures in place.
  - Insurance cover.

- Appropriately trained and qualified staff.
- Separate changing areas for boys and girls, if required.
- Disability access, if required.

Have the children or young people who are participating:

- Been involved as much as possible in planning the trip?
- Agreed upon a Code of Behaviour?
- Agreed on boundaries around unstructured time?
- Been provided with information on appropriate clothing?
- Been provided with contact details for leaders?
- Consented to the trip away?

Have parents/carers and/or guardians:

- Met with leaders and been informed of the programme?
- Been made aware of the Dominican Child Safeguarding Statement, Policy and Procedures?
- Consented in writing? (*Form 6 page 68*)
- Been provided with contact, medical details including allergies, illnesses, medications and dietary requirements?
- Been provided with contact details of the leaders and centre or accommodation being used for the duration of the trip?
- Been provided with details for pick-up and drop-off plan for children or young people?

Have staff:

- Received training on the Dominican Code of Conduct and Dominican Child Safeguarding Statement, Policy and Procedures Handbook, on how to deal with a disclosure, and on dealing with challenging behaviour?
- Been assigned responsibilities and scheduled for breaks?
- Been made aware of how to respond to, and whom to contact in an emergency?
- Worked with children or young people to evaluate the success of the activity?

If staying overnight, have staff checked the following:

- If there is 24/7 access to centre staff?
- If there are appropriate sleeping arrangements for children or young people, i.e. separate provision for boys and girls, and separate provision for leaders (within earshot of the children or young people)?
- security and supervision arrangements at the centre.

#### 5.4 Guidance on Maintaining Adequate Supervision Ratios

In planning a trip or activity, it is critically important to consider how many adults are needed to supervise the children or young people in a safe manner. It is recommended that a certain number of adults be available to supervise a certain number of children or young people.

At a minimum, two adults are required for each activity. In addition, the minimum following ratios should be applied. These ratios may need to be reviewed, depending on whether the children or young people have specific needs or requirements and on the duration of the activity.

#### Supervision Ratio Table

<b>0-1 years</b>	2 adults for the first 3 children plus one adult for every additional three children
<b>1 – 2 years</b>	2 adults for the first 5 children plus one adult for every additional five children
<b>2 - 3 years</b>	2 adults for first 6 children plus one adult for every additional six children
<b>3 – 6 years</b>	2 adults for the first 8 children plus one adult for every additional eight children
<b>7- 12 years</b>	2 adults for the first 8 children/young people plus one adult for every additional eight children or young people
<b>13 – 18 years</b>	2 adults for the first 10 children or young people plus one adult for every additional ten children or young people

If it is an overnight activity, additional staff should be considered. If the group is mixed, a gender balance should be maintained.

#### 5.5 Attendance Register

A minimum of two officially appointed leaders should be present for each activity involving children or young people. The leaders and participants must sign an attendance sheet. The leaders are also to put their initials under each date to confirm that the children or young people and adults marked were in attendance, as indicated by the 'time in' and 'time out' for each date.

### 5.6 Parental/Guardian/Carer Consent

The consent of parents/carers and/or guardians should always be sought prior to engaging children or young people in any activity, and also the consent of the child or young person participating, confirming that they wish to participate in the activity.

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### 5.7 Guidance on lone working with children or young people

In general, Church activities should not involve one-to-one contact and should usually be supervised by at least two adults. However, in circumstances that result in lone working with children or young people, it is best practice not to:

- Take children and young people away and/or to your own home or room, especially where they will be alone with you.
- Work with children or young people in one-to-one contact without a prior arrangement in place. (*Guidance 7 page 82*)

However, there may be two circumstances where this may occur:

- a** In a reactive situation, for example, when a child or young person requests a one-to-one meeting with you without warning, or where a child or young person has had to be removed from a group as part of a breach of a code of behaviour.
- b** As part of a planned structured piece of work, for example, one-to-one music tuition.

The following principles are to be kept in mind:

- If you need to talk to a child or young person alone, make every effort to do so in an open environment, in view of others.
  - If this is not possible, make every effort to meet in a room with visual access, or with door open, or in a room or area where other people are present.
  - You should advise another adult or a colleague that such a meeting is taking place and the reason for it.
  - Maintain a record of the meeting, including names, dates, times, location, reason for the meeting, and outcome, and store the record appropriately and securely.
  - Avoid meetings with individual children or young people where they are on their own in a building.
  - One-to-one meetings should take place at an appropriate time, for example, not late at night, and in an appropriate venue.
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Planned and structured pieces of work in these situations:

- The activity should have a clear rationale.
  - Parents/carers and/or guardians must be fully informed as to the nature and purpose of this work and must give their written consent for their child to participate.
  - A clear code of behaviour must be signed and adhered to by both parents. This should include limits of confidentiality and safeguarding procedures.
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### 5.8 Social Media and Ministry

The Dominican Province of Ireland uses social media in its various ministries in accordance with its policy on the use of technology and social media. Any ministry with children or young people needs to assess the benefits of technology and how this can be used safely and effectively. Leaders are directed to the media policy. (*Guidance 6 page 76*)



## 6. Supervision and support of workers who have contact with children or young people

Good supervision practice includes both formal and informal discussion, and individual and team dialogue, and is summarised as follows:

- Reviewing operations and practice in accordance with the charism of the Dominican Order.
- Regularly affording personnel the opportunity to raise questions, problems, or suggestions for change.
- Based on experience, assessing the need for change in policies, practice or training.

Supervisory and review considerations relevant to this policy are:

- Observation and assessment of the worker's attitude and competence in the role.
- Observation of relationships between workers, and between workers and children or young people.
- Observation of relationships among children and young people.

Priors, superiors and managers should be alert to any unusual incident or activity taking place, where workers may be putting themselves in vulnerable positions, or which may constitute a breach of the Dominican code of conduct. (*Guidance 7 page 82*)

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## 7. Dealing with Complaints & Whistleblowing

### 7.1 Guidance on responding to accidents/incidents

If a child or young person has an accident and injures himself/herself whilst attending a Dominican run event, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Assess the injury and reassure the child or young person. If the injury is severe or the child or young person has lost consciousness, contact the emergency services immediately by phoning 999 or 112. You can phone 112 from a mobile that has no credit or from a phone that has no SIM card. The 112-emergency number is a European emergency number and can be called from anywhere in Europe.
  2. If the emergency services are to be called, make contact urgently with the child or young person's parents/carers and/or guardians. If the parents/carers and/or guardians are not available, it may be necessary for a leader to travel with the child or young person to the hospital.
  3. If the injury is minor, local application of treatment should be available from the First Aid box. Under no circumstances should a member of the Dominican team or ministry administer medication. be it to a child or young person.
  4. As soon as possible after the accident, write up a report, using an accident/incident report (*Form 8 page 73*). Once completed, this form should be stored in a safe place, in line with data protection, and treated as a confidential document.
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5. Always inform parents/carers and/or guardians of any accident that has occurred involving their child or young person, regardless of how minor you consider it to be and ask them to sign the accident/incident report form.

It is good practice to give a copy of the accident/incident report form to parents/carer and/or guardians.

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## 7.2 Protected Disclosure Policy (often referred to as “whistle blowing”)

All Dominican members, staff and volunteers must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of their Prior or Superior, or a Line Manager, or the Prior Provincial. Although this can be difficult to do, it is particularly important where the welfare of a child or young people may be at risk. If you have a concern, do not let the fear of getting it wrong become a barrier to speaking to the appropriate person e.g., Prior, Superior and/or Line Manager. It is the responsibility of the person you report to, to inquire further and assess if there are grounds for action.

You may be the first to recognise a concern, but you may be unsure about whether and how to express your concerns out of feeling that this would be disloyal to the brethren, colleagues, or you may fear harassment or victimisation. The Dominican Province of Ireland ensures that you feel supported to make a disclosure.

These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be at risk. It is important to note that it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted.

These children or young people need an advocate to safeguard their welfare. Do not think, ‘What if I’m wrong?’ Think, ‘What if I am right?’

### Reasons for making a disclosure

- Everyone has a responsibility to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent yourself from becoming implicated.

### What stops people from making a disclosure

- Fear of starting a chain of events that spirals out of control.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers.
- Fear of not being believed.

### **How to raise a concern**

A protected disclosure can be about a range of concerns, not just safeguarding. It is important to:

- Voice concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is expressed the sooner and easier action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is causing concern, and why.
- Approach your immediate Prior, Superior, Line Manager, or the Prior Provincial.
- If your concern is about your immediate Prior, Superior, Line Manager, or the Prior Provincial, please contact your DLP, the statutory services, and/or the NBSCCCI.
- Make sure a satisfactory response is secured – do not let matters rest.
- Ideally, make known your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates, locations and any other relevant information.
- You are not expected to prove the truth of your complaint, but you need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for concern.

### **What happens next?**

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries resulting from your concern.
- Your immediate Prior, Superior, Line Manager, or the Prior Provincial has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations will be considered a disciplinary offence.
- Follow up if the person to whom you reported has not responded within a reasonable period of time, and if that follow-up is not acted upon, report the matter to the relevant statutory authorities.

### **Self-reporting**

There may be occasions when a member of the Dominican Province of Ireland, a staff member, or a volunteer has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health issue, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their Prior, Superior, Line Manager, or the Prior Provincial, so that professional and personal support can be offered to the person concerned. Whilst reporting will remain confidential, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children or young people.

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### 7.3 Complaint Procedure for Safeguarding Concerns that are not Allegations of Abuse

The Dominican Province of Ireland is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children and young people with whom we work. We also try to ensure that children and young people have a positive and enjoyable experience when participating and engaging in Dominican ministries.

A complaint is defined as a grievance and/or the raising of a concern about breaches of codes of behaviour. Allegations or suspicions of child abuse do not fall into this category of general complaints and should always be dealt with in accordance with the relevant child protection and safeguarding procedures.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. Efforts will be made to resolve complaints quickly and informally through discussion with the parents/carers and/or guardians, children, young people, volunteers, or members of staff and clergy, as appropriate. (*Form 10 page 87*)

#### Who can make a complaint?

Complaints can be made by:

- Children or young people involved in the specific ministry.
- Their parents/carers and/or guardians.
- Dominican friars, staff or volunteers working with the children or young people.
- Other advocates on behalf of children or young people.

#### Information you need to provide

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing. By providing the following information you can help to speed up the investigation of your complaint:

- The name and address of the child or young person affected.
- If the complaint is being made by a parent/carer and/or guardian and/or other adult, the name and address of the parent/carer and/or guardian and/or another adult.
- Exactly what the person is dissatisfied with.
- The name(s) of the official(s) dealing with the complaint.
- If your complaint is complicated, you may find it best to put it in writing so that no important detail is overlooked.
- Remember to send copies of all relevant documentation or correspondence that you may have.
- If you have special needs that may affect your ability to make a complaint, please advise at the earliest opportunity so make every effort is made to provide assistance.

### **Follow up to complaint**

All complaints of this nature should be resolved using an open dialogue with Dominican personnel involved. However, if a resolution is not possible, the following steps should be taken:

- The making of a complaint will have no impact on the Dominicans' interaction or dealings with the person making the complaint.
- The Prior, Superior, Line Manager, the Director of a Youth Ministry or a Dominican representative should be contacted on receipt of the complaint
- A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be sent within seven calendar days, enclosing a copy of the Dominican complaints' procedure
- The person receiving the complaint will endeavour to respond to the complaint within seven working days, however, in some cases this may take longer.
- An official other than those originally involved will examine the complaint; and all complaints will be thoroughly investigated
- The Dominican representative may organise a meeting with the person making the complaint, if requested, to discuss and, hopefully, resolve the complaint. This communication may also take place by telephone if a meeting is not possible. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, this will be done within fourteen calendar days of sending the acknowledgment letter to the complainant.
- Within seven calendar days of the meeting or discussion, the Dominican representative will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out whatever solutions were agreed.
- If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Dominican representative will, within twenty-one calendar days of sending the acknowledgment letter to them, issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out suggestions for resolving the matter.
- If the complainant is still not satisfied at this point, they should contact the Prior Provincial or Dominican representative again.

At the conclusion of this step, the Prior Provincial may decide to take further action on the complaint. If, however, the Prior Provincial decides not to take further action, the process is completed. The Dominican Safeguarding Committee, Safeguarding Coordinator, and the Prior Provincial is responsible for ensuring that the message of 'keeping children safe' is communicated to all personnel, lay faithful and external agencies.

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## 8. Use of Property owned by the Irish Dominican Province by External Groups

It is a requirement that all external groups working with children and/or young people in Dominican owned churches and/or using facilities, for example, church halls, day centres, retreat or counselling centres owned by the Dominican Order are insured and have a child safeguarding statement and policy in place.

*(Guidance 8, page 84)*

The general principle is that the obligation to comply with requirements relating to insurance and child safeguarding is the responsibility of the external groups using church property and not of the Irish Dominican Province. Hence it is the responsibility of any group using Dominican property to run activities involving children and young people to ensure they comply with all applicable child safeguarding and child protection legislation and guidelines. The group is also responsible for liaising with Tusla to ensure that their policy and procedures meet the statutory requirements. *(Form 9 page 85)*

Dominican personnel should at no stage assist any external group in developing a child safeguarding policy but should advise all such groups to seek the advice of Tusla personnel in developing the required policies. It is the role of Tusla to validate the adequacy of the policy.

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## 9. Vetting

### Legislative Basis - Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland, Vetting is carried out through the National Vetting Bureau in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to 2016. From the date of commencement of the legislation in April 2016, it is a criminal offence to allow anyone to engage in ministry with children or vulnerable persons, without being vetted.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to 2016 sets out the circumstances in which vetting is required:

- Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children (and/or vulnerable persons).
- Any work or activity as a minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of religious beliefs, to children (and vulnerable persons) unless such work or activity is merely incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs to persons who are not children (or vulnerable persons).
- In other words, anyone who is 18 or over and involved in ministry, employed or contracted or volunteering, who has any contact with children and/or vulnerable persons which is more than incidental, must be vetted.
- Those who are aged 16 and under 18 years may be vetted, but this can only be carried out with the written consent of their parent/guardian and of the young person themselves.

For other Church personnel whose contact with children and/or vulnerable persons is incidental, vetting is not required.

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### Legislative Basis - Northern Ireland

The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Disclosure) is the legislation that allows for an enhanced criminal record check for those engaged in regulated activities with children and vulnerable adults. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 sets out the activities and work that are ‘regulated activities’, which a person who has been barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service must not do.

Vetting is carried out in Northern Ireland if a paid member of staff or a volunteer is to engage in a regulated activity. An enhanced check can disclose non-conviction information or ‘soft intelligence’ if the police consider it is relevant to the role. This could be an incident that did not go to court, or information about an ongoing police investigation.

An enhanced check also includes a barred list check for anyone applying to do paid or voluntary work that is a regulated activity. A barred list check involves checking whether the individual appears on a list of people who are prevented from doing certain types of work.

The full, legal definition of regulated activity is set out in Schedule 2 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, as amended (in particular, by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). Regulated activity excludes family arrangements, and personal, non-commercial arrangements.

*(Note – see Guidance 2 for further details re vetting process)*

