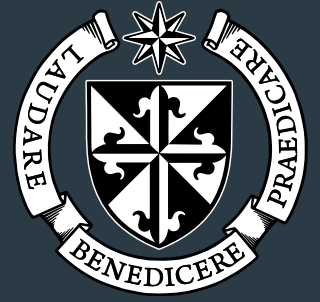
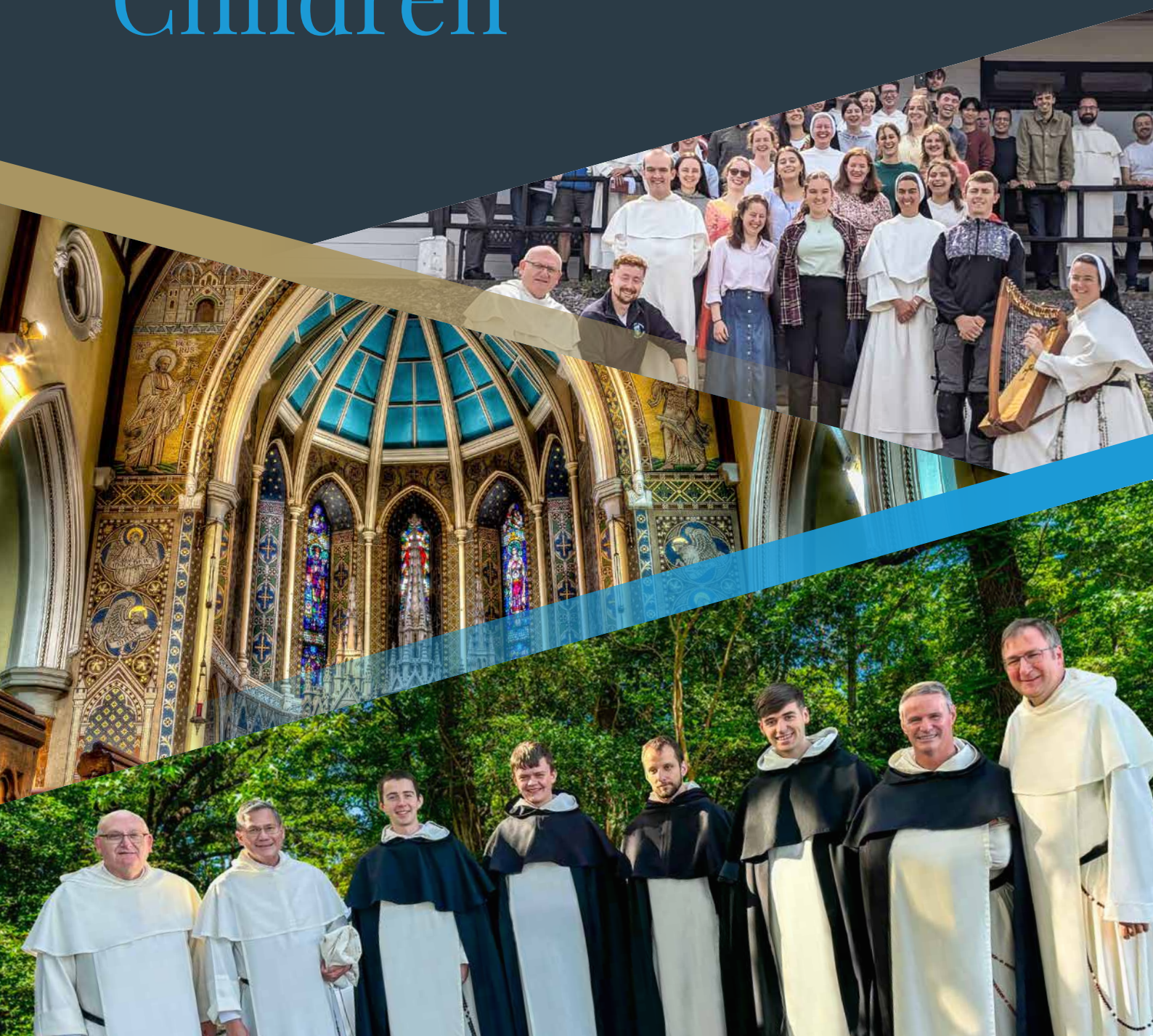


Dominican Province of Ireland



Safeguarding Children



Policy & Procedure Handbook 2026



“It is urgent that there take root throughout the church a culture of prevention that does not tolerate any form of abuse... This culture will only be authentic if it is born of active vigilance, of transparent processes and sincere listening to those who have been wounded.”

Pope Leo XIV message to the Peruvian journalist, Paola Ugaz, June 2025.

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the contribution of the five members of the Safeguarding Committee in the revision and updating of the Handbook and appreciate their ongoing support and work in promoting child safeguarding in all Dominican ministries.

Prior Provincial's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce our revised and updated *Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure Handbook 2026*.

In June 2024 the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) replaced *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* with *A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024*, building on extensive consultation with dioceses and religious congregations and orders. The Dominican Province of Ireland signed up to the new Standards and as Dominicans, we are committed to upholding these three safeguarding standards.

The purpose of this Handbook is to update our previous Handbook of 2020 and to ensure compliance with the new Standards. The Handbook will not replace the contents of the NBSCCCI Standards but will provide policy guidelines, operational procedures, and copies of the relevant Forms to support its implementation.

The revised Handbook is designed to assist and facilitate the implementation of best practice in safeguarding in all our ministry with children and young people in the Irish Dominican Province.

I again reiterate the key principles and values which we want to promote and live out when we implement these policies and procedures, are:

- Children and young people must be cherished, kept safe and helped to achieve their potential.
- Recognising that children and young people are an integral part of the life of our Church.
- When we are concerned for the safety and welfare of a child or young person, we know what to do and how to respond in a caring yet definite way.

With the launch of this revised and updated Handbook, we are committing ourselves anew that every Dominican ministry adheres faithfully to these procedures as laid out in the Handbook.

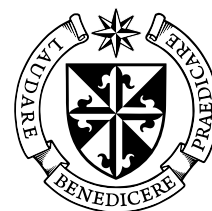
I am very grateful to the members of the Dominican National Child Safeguarding Committee, who generously give of their time, energy and expertise to ensure that our safeguarding standards, policies and procedures are updated and communicated throughout the province.

As preachers sent out to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world we must do so in a way that is both respectful and caring of children and young people. The standards set out in this new handbook ensure that by keeping to such principles and values we are witnessing to the Truth of the Gospel in the midst of today's challenges and opportunities.



Fr. John Harris, O.P.

Prior Provincial,
Dominican Province of Ireland



“Safeguarding is a fundamental responsibility within the Province, rooted in our commitment to protect the dignity and well-being of every individual. It is essential that we foster an environment where concerns or complaints can be brought forward without fear, and where those who speak up are listened to with respect and seriousness. Our responses must be marked by openness, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that all actions taken are both just and based on Gospel values. Only by maintaining these standards can we build and sustain trust, both within the Province and with those we serve.

Safeguarding is an essential and integral part of all our ministries, serving as a foundation for safety and well-being. It is vital that we actively promote and nurture a culture of safeguarding across all our ministries and communities, ensuring that every individual feels protected, respected, and valued. By doing so, we uphold our commitment to care, responsibility, and accountability in all aspects of our mission.

We remain deeply committed to the ongoing promotion and development of our youth ministries, recognising their vital role in the life of the Province. This commitment is firmly grounded within a strong culture of safeguarding, ensuring that all young people are supported in a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment and in which the brethren also feel safe and supported. By prioritising such well-being and protection, we foster growth, trust, and a lasting sense of belonging among all in the Church.”

Acts of Provincial Chapter 2025 (Ireland), nn. 6.1-3.



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Dominican Safeguarding Policy 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 civil 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.



Fr. John Harris, O.P.
Prior Provincial

June 2024

Safeguarding Office Contact Details	
ADDRESS	Safeguarding Office, Dominican Prior Provincialate, St. Mary’s Priory, Tallaght Village, D24, X585
OFFICE PHONE NO.	(01) 4048121
MOBILE NUMBER	(089) 7087881
EMAIL	safeguardingoffice@dominicans.ie



A safeguarding statement/notice is displayed in a prominent location in all Dominican priories, communities, properties, churches, and sacristies detailing contact details for the Safeguarding Office and Statutory Services.

Introduction

In all our work with children, young people, the Dominican Province of Ireland recognises and promotes the fundamental rights of every child and young person to a safe environment in which he/she will be free from any form of abuse, neglect or harm. The Dominican Province of Ireland will do all that is within its power to prevent any form of abuse and will respond appropriately if concerns of abuse arise.

To build a safe and secure environment, all Dominican brethren, staff and volunteers must always strive to be child-centred in their practice and behaviour and must acknowledge their obligation to promote the well-being of all children and young people and safeguard them from abuse.

Status of this Document

In June 2024 the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) replaced *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* with *A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024*, building on the extensive consultation with dioceses and religious congregations and orders which resulted in the adoption of a One-Church policy in 2009. The Dominican Province of Ireland is committed to the implementation of this updated Policy and Standards Document, as demonstrated by the updating of this Handbook.

The Dominican National Safeguarding Committee presents this *Safeguarding Children's Policy and Procedure Handbook 2026* as a practical support for all our brethren in Ireland and overseas, for communities, staff, volunteers and all those involved in Dominican youth ministries. This document offers guidance and procedures under each of the three standards outlined in the *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024* and should be read in conjunction with that document and its guidance documents.



Child Safeguarding Standards

STANDARD 1



**Leadership,
Governance and
Accountability**

STANDARD 2



**Nurturing a
Culture of
Safeguarding**

STANDARD 3



**Responding
Pastorally and
Reporting
according to Civil
and Canon Law**

What is a standard?

A standard is the level of practice required to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people. Each standard comprises a rationale, specific indicators, methods for providing evidence of implementation, and connections to other standards.



Dominican Province of Ireland Roles in the Safeguarding Structure

Prior Provincial

To be responsible for all safeguarding practices by:

- Appointing a Safeguarding Committee for the Province and, along with this Committee, ensuring that all appropriate child safeguarding structures and personnel are in place; and providing adequate resources to support and ensure the implementation of the required structures and appointment of relevant personnel.
 - Ensuring that appropriate personnel and procedures are in place to recognise and respond to allegations of abuse.
 - Ensuring, in conjunction with the safeguarding personnel, local priors and superiors, that all those who are recruited as Church personnel are suitable and appropriate for their role.
 - Ensuring compliance with civil and canon law and the NBSCCCI policy in creating and maintaining safe environments.
 - Liaising with the Holy See, and other Church bodies, as appropriate.
-

Dominican Safeguarding Committee (for the province)

The Prior Provincial established a Safeguarding Committee in October 2018. Committee members are selected for their knowledge, expertise and experience of the Church Body, in implementing policy and procedures, practical knowledge of working with children and child safeguarding, auditing and working with and supporting volunteers.

The role of the Safeguarding Committee is primarily focused on creating, maintaining and monitoring a safe environment for all aspects of life and activity in Dominican priories, churches and centres and for advising all communities in implementing best safeguarding practice. Its role is also to be supportive and developmental and to promote child safeguarding as follows:

- Developing a three-year child safeguarding plan which includes a training and communication strategy, and the establishment of local child safeguarding policy and procedures.
 - Coordinating activities related to child safeguarding, e.g., training, safe recruitment of staff and volunteers within the Dominican Order in Ireland.
 - Ensuring the completion of the annual audit, including the correlation of records for training-related activities.
 - Ensuring, with the Prior Provincial, that the appropriate child safeguarding personnel are in place.
 - Ensuring the completion of training needs assessments across the various child safeguarding roles.
-

Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC)

The PAC has been in existence since 2012. In recent years it has been restructured in accordance with national Church standards and best practice. Members of the Advisory Committee are selected for their knowledge and experience in canon and civil law, working with victims/survivors of abuse, assessment and/or management of those who present a risk, and working with children in child protection roles.

To be responsible for all safeguarding practices by:

- Providing advice to the Prior Provincial on the management of cases, involving allegations of child abuse made against members of the Dominican Province of Ireland.
 - Maintaining a record of the advice provided by the PAC to the Prior Provincial.
 - Upholding the three standards of the NBSCCCI in practice and behaviour.
-

Local safeguarding representatives (LSRs)

In a Dominican context the Prior or Superior of the community fulfils this role, apart from those Dominican churches which also function as diocesan parish churches. In these instances, LSR's are appointed and work in accordance with the safeguarding requirements of the respective diocesan area.

Safeguarding Coordinator

In the Dominican context, this role is presently carried out by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) as set out below. The Safeguarding Coordinator is responsible for coordination of all safeguarding practices as follows:

- Directing and implementing the child safeguarding statement and associated child safeguarding policy and procedures for the province.
 - Liaising with and supporting Dominican communities and apostolates to ensure implementation of local policies and procedures.
 - Reporting directly to the Prior Provincial on all child safeguarding issues.
 - Liaising with the Safeguarding and Advisory Committees.
 - Ensuring that all child safeguarding personnel are kept up to date with best practice, as communicated from the NBSCCCI and relevant statutory authorities.
-

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The Designated Liaison Person is appointed to promote safeguarding by:

- Receiving and hearing child safeguarding concerns.
- Referring child safeguarding concerns to the statutory authorities in the relevant jurisdiction, which includes, Republic of Ireland: Gardaí, Tusla (Child and Family Agency); Northern Ireland: Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health Service Social Care Trust (HSCT).
- Managing cases and all associated documents.
- Offering a support person and adviser to complainants and respondents, respectively, and liaising with them thereafter.
- Liaising with the Prior Provincial.
- Conducting internal inquiries as and when required.
- Monitoring of respondents and/or, in conjunction with the Prior Provincial, appointing a suitable person to carry out this role.
- Contributing to upholding the three standards of the NBSCCCI in practice and behaviour.
- Completing an annual report for the Prior Provincial regarding compliance with the standards.
- Notifying the NBSCCCI anonymously if an allegation concerns a Dominican friar.

Support Person

The role of the support person is to promote safeguarding in a way that includes:

- Keeping the complainant informed of the process of the case.
- Helping direct the complainant to counselling and support.
- Recording whatever meetings and/or contact they have with the complainant and reporting to the DLP as appropriate.
- Upholding the three standards of the NBSCCCI in practice and behaviour.

Note The Safeguarding Coordinator/DLP is the person who usually meets with a complainant unless they specifically request a support person to meet with them. In this instance, the Safeguarding Coordinator will arrange for a trained support person to meet with them. In some situations, the Safeguarding Coordinator will ask a DLP from a Diocese and/or from another religious order to accompany them to a meeting with the consent of the complainant.

Advisor

The role of the Advisor is to promote safeguarding by:

- Keeping the respondent informed of the progress of the case.
 - Helping direct the respondent to counselling and support.
 - Recording whatever meetings and/or contact they have with the respondent and reporting to the DLP as appropriate.
 - Upholding the three standards of the NBSCCCI in practice and behaviour.
-

An Garda Síochána and the PSNI

It is the responsibility of the Gardaí and the PSNI to investigate if a crime has been committed. They will liaise with the DLP or deputy, as appropriate.

Tusla (Child and Family Agency) and HSCT (Health and Social Care Trust)

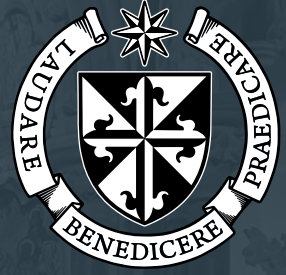
It is the responsibility of Tusla and of HSCT to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection and they will liaise with the DLP or deputy, as appropriate.

National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI)

The National Board provides standards, guidance and supports, and audits their implementation in practice.



Standards



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.
-

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.

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.

Standard 2

Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding



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.

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.
-

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)

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).

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.

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)
- 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.

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.

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)

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.

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

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

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*)

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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)



Standard 3

Responding Pastorally and Reporting according to Civil and Canon Law



Children and young people occupy a central place in the heart of the Christian community and have a right to be listened to and be heard. The purpose of the Dominican mission is the help people grow in faith and human development, surrounding children and young people in an environment that gives primary consideration to their protection and welfare.

To create and maintain this safe environment, all friars of the Dominican Order in Ireland, (the Irish Province) must respond to all allegations of abuse in accordance with civil and canonical requirements. (*Guidance 12 page 92*)

The only exception to this is the receipt of any information by a priest under the sacramental seal of Confession. (*Guidance 11 page 90*)

It is important that anyone working on behalf of the Dominican Province of Ireland knows how to respond to allegations, including who to tell and how to record the information. This section provides guidance on these issues.

Should any person be unsure of whether information they have received constitutes an allegation of abuse and/or if they want guidance on how they should manage a concern, they should contact the DLP or deputy without delay.

1. Recognising Abuse

There are four defined categories of abuse regarding crimes against children and young people:

1. Neglect.
2. Emotional abuse.
3. Physical abuse.
4. Sexual abuse.

(*Guidance 13 page 94*)

2. Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern

Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 and *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People, 2024* identify reasonable grounds concerning children protection or welfare. These grounds include:

- Evidence, for example, an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way.
 - Any concern about possible sexual abuse.
 - Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
 - A child saying, or indicating by another means, that he or she has been abused.
 - Admission or indication by an adult or a child or an alleged abuse they committed.
 - An account from a person who saw the child being abused.
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3. Signs of abuse

Something such as the behaviour of an adult to a child or young person may make you or them feel uncomfortable.

A child or young person may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. For example, the sexual abuse of a child or young person is also a form of emotional abuse, especially when it takes place in the context of a relationship of trust.

Abuse and neglect can take place within a family, in the community or in an institutional setting; and the abuser may be someone known to the child or young person or may be a stranger.

4. Guidance for responding to receiving an allegation

It is best practice to inform a person wishing to discuss suspicion of abuse, of the requirement to report child protection concerns to the civil authorities before any disclosure is made. However, it is not always possible to know when a child or young person or adult is about to disclose child abuse, so, the opportunity to inform them may not arise.

However, where a person, whether child, young person or adult, asks to speak in confidence to a Dominican friar, staff member, and/or volunteer, it is important to tell the person that if they disclose information concerning child protection or welfare concerns, this information will have to be reported to the statutory authorities, i.e., Tusla/HSCT and An Garda Síochána/PSNI. This can help the child, young person or adult to make an informed decision whether to disclose abuse or not.

It is necessary to tell a person who admits an offence against a child or young person that such information cannot be kept confidential. If such an admission is made to you, even where the admission relates to something that happened a long time ago, you must refer the matter to the DLP or Deputy DLP as soon as possible. The DLP or Deputy DLP will follow the procedures for referral to Tusla/HSCT and An Garda Síochána/PSNI.

4.1 Responding to a person making an allegation of abuse

People may tell you about the following:

- Abuse that happened to them.
- Something they have been told by someone else and that they strongly believe is true.
- Seeing signs of abuse, such as physical injuries on a child.
- Something they have witnessed that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Extra care needs to be taken if it is a child who is disclosing that they were abused. *(Guidance 14 page 99)*

4.2 Guidance on responding to children or young people disclosing abuse.

If a child or young person tells you directly about abuse happening to them, you should allow them to speak and you should listen attentively. However, it is not appropriate to set up a meeting with a child or young person for the purpose of receiving a disclosure or taking a statement. That is the role of the statutory services.

While it is assumed that it is difficult for all people to disclose abuse, the person receiving the allegation should be aware that a child or young person may feel very frightened and may need reassurance and support that they have done the right thing in disclosing the abuse.

The DLP or deputy will consult with Tusla/HSCT about informing the child/young person's parents/carers and/or guardians. It is best practice to inform parents/carers or guardians unless doing so would place the child/young person at further risk.

If the allegation is about Dominican personnel, explain to the child/young person and their parents/carers or guardians that the information will be reported to the statutory authorities and church authorities.

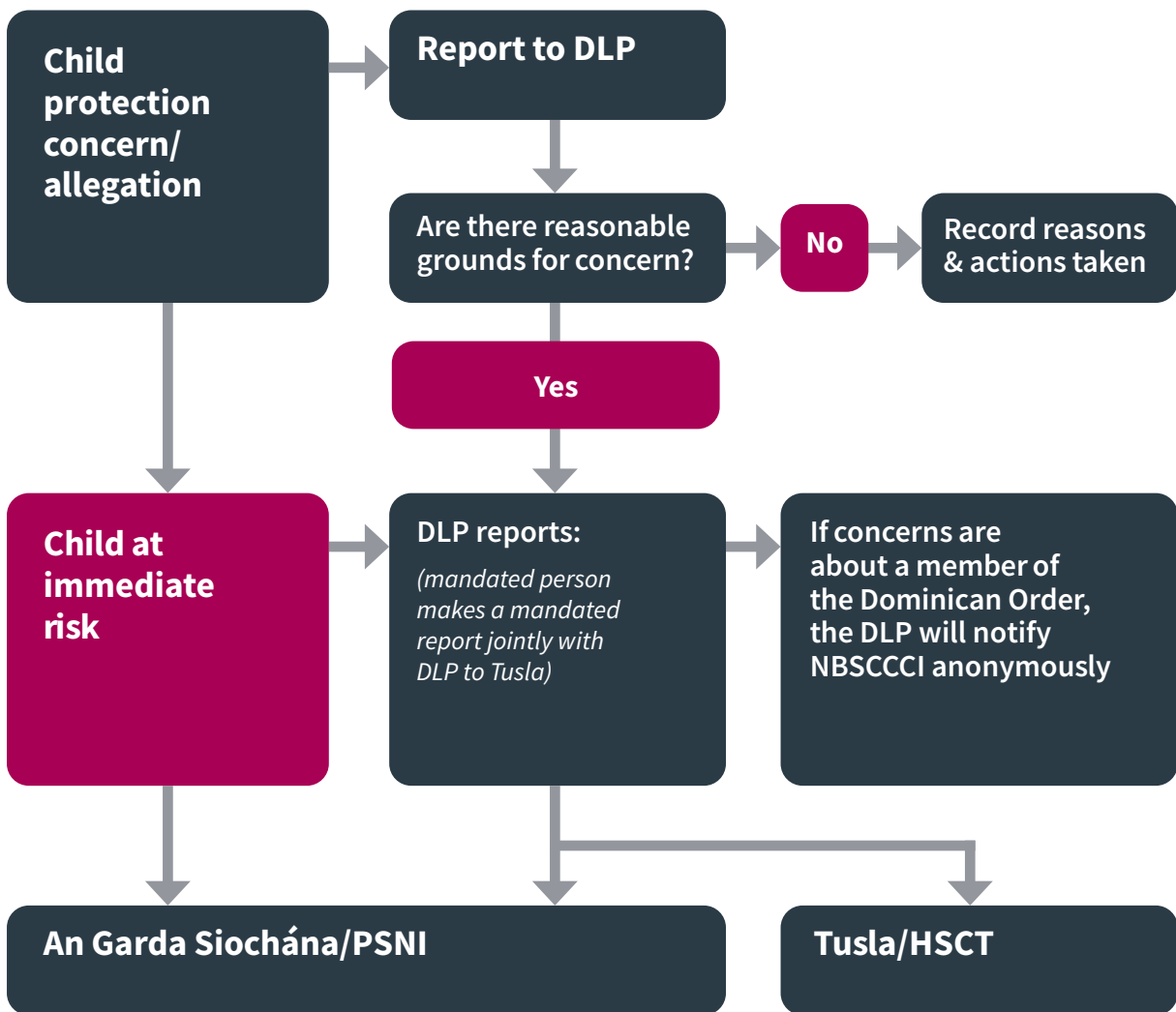
All offers of further support to the child/young person should be conveyed via the child/young person's parents/carers and/or guardians or an appropriate adult.

5. Guidance for reporting an allegation

When you have reasonable grounds for concern that a child/young person may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected, contact the DLP or Deputy DLP without delay. The DLP or Deputy DLP will assist in ensuring the notification procedures are completed and can make a joint report to the statutory authorities with any other person.

In an emergency or if there is an immediate concern for the protection of a child/young person, a report should be made directly to An Garda Síochána/PSNI.

5.1 REPORTING FLOW CHART



5.1.1 Allegations against Dominican Friars

The DLP or deputy will report the matter to the statutory authorities on behalf of the person making the report about the possible abuse of a child/young person or will make a joint report if the person is a mandated person making a mandated report. If the complaint concerns a member of the Dominican Province of Ireland, the Prior Provincial and the NBSCCCI are also informed. (*Guidance 14 page 99*)

5.1.2 Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (who are not Dominican friars)

Where an allegation of abuse is made against a Dominican staff member there are two procedures that are put in place:

- a the reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person.
 - b the reporting procedure for dealing with the staff member/volunteer.
-

5.2 Guidance on responding to an anonymous allegation of abuse

Anonymous complaints are to be managed and responded to carefully. Anxiety and fear may persuade some people not to reveal their identity immediately. It is sometimes difficult to act on information under these circumstances, unless at some point the name of the person raising the concern or making an allegation becomes known. If you are unsure whether the information you have received reaches the threshold for reporting, consult with the DLP or Deputy DLP. An approach to the statutory authorities may be appropriate.

The person raising the concern should be informed that anonymity might restrict the ability of professionals to access information or to intervene to protect a child or young person. As much openness as possible should be encouraged. However, if you receive any identifiable information that relates to an allegation of abuse (current or past), you must pass this information on to the appropriate statutory authorities so that an investigation can be undertaken to assess child protection risks.

6. Guidance for recording an allegation

- Whenever possible and practical, take notes during the conversation.
- Always ask permission to do this and explain the importance of recording all information. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day.
- Record the time, date, location, persons present, and how the allegation was received, e.g., by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter.
- This initial recorded information will be transferred to a child protection referral form and will become the first entry in a file of information about the case that will be retained by the DLP or Deputy DLP.
- Please always sign and date the record. The record would also normally include
 - Accurate identifying information of the complainant, as far as it is known. This should include the name, address, and age of the complainant when the alleged abuse occurred.
 - Where the person who has raised a concern or allegation is a child or young person, details of parents/carers or guardians should also be given.
 - Name of the individual against whom the concern or allegation is being raised, and any other identifying information.
 - Dates when the concern arose, or when the incident occurred.
 - The person's own words used to describe the event or incident. Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of the words used.
 - Details of any action already taken about the incident or concern or allegation.
 - Do not be selective. Include details that to you may seem irrelevant. This may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation.
 - All original records, including rough notes, should be passed immediately to the DLP or Deputy DLP.
 - Copies of retained records should be kept secure and confidential.

Remember – it is not your role to investigate.

- In cases of emergency (and/or outside normal business hours), where a child or young person appears to be at immediate and serious risk, an urgent report must be made to Tusla/HSCT, as well as to the DLP or deputy. Where the appropriate Tusla/HSCT staff are not available, An Garda Síochána/PSNI must be contacted to ensure that under no circumstances is a child or young person left in a dangerous situation pending social services intervention. (*see direct option arrow in Reporting Flowchart*)

-
- In all cases, consideration should be given as to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of forensic or other potential evidence. *(see direct option arrow in Reporting Flowchart)*
 - Explain to the person raising the concern what will happen next. You should inform the person making the suspicion, concern or allegation that their identity and the identity of the respondent and complainant will be shared with the statutory authorities.
 - Provide contact details for the DLP or Deputy DLP if the referrer needs to ask questions later. The incident or concern should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know, apart from the statutory authorities and appropriate church authorities detailed in these procedures.
 - Written confirmation should be given to the person making the referral to the DLP or Deputy DLP that the information has been passed on to the statutory authorities. If this has not happened, an explanation should be recorded (this will not be possible when dealing with anonymous allegations).
 - It is essential to respond appropriately to the complainant to ensure that they feel heard and taken seriously.
-

7. Caring for Complainants

Those who have alleged child abuse should receive a compassionate response from all Dominican personnel and be offered access to appropriate care, advice and support.

Complainants need to be listened to and heard to ensure that any allegation or disclosure of abuse is handled compassionately, effectively and professionally. Disclosing abuse takes enormous courage and calls for a high level of trust. Child abuse by its very nature can damage trust. It is therefore imperative that when a complainant is ready to tell their story, the listener responds with great sensitivity and compassion.

The Dominican leadership and safeguarding personnel will engage in ongoing reflection to identify who is best placed to offer pastoral care to complainants, recognising that providing pastoral care may not be the sole responsibility of any one person. Pastoral care may be offered and provided by the DLP or deputy managing the case, the support person, if the offer of a support person is requested by the complainant, the Prior Provincial at an appropriate time, or indeed another identified representative if there is something specific they can offer.

7.1 How support is offered:

- Once an allegation has been received, the DLP/Deputy DLP will arrange a face-to-face meeting with the complainant, in a manner that respects the wishes of the person.
 - The complainant may be accompanied by a person of their choice to the meeting.
-

- Every complainant is offered access to a support person. The role of the support person is to ensure that the complainant is appropriately supported throughout the process of disclosure and thereafter. It is the prerogative of the complainant whether or not they wish to accept the assistance of a support person.
- The complainant will be provided with details of support or counselling services, for example *Towards Peace* and *Towards Healing* and will be assisted in making an appointment, if required.
- The Dominican Province of Ireland is committed to pastorally supporting the family of the complainant.
- If the threshold for reporting has been reached, the DLP/Deputy DLP will help the complainant to understand the necessity to refer the matter to the statutory authorities.
- At an appropriate time in the process, the complainant will be invited to meet with the Prior Provincial and/or another representative of the Dominicans if this is their wish. This meeting is not for the purpose of determining the outcome of any investigations, but for the Prior Provincial to hear and acknowledge the experience of the complainant.
- At the end of this meeting, the support being provided to the complainant can be reviewed. Some complainants may wish to remain engaged with their Church despite the effect that the abuse may have had on their relationship with it, and, perhaps, with God. By meeting with and listening to complainants, the response from the Church that might best meet their spiritual needs can be identified with them. *Towards Peace* may be of assistance in this regard.
- The Dominican Province of Ireland is open to providing independent facilitation or mediation for meetings if this is required.
- The Dominican Province of Ireland is committed to engaging with the complainant in a thoughtful and respectful manner, aimed at acknowledging and addressing the harm that has occurred and, in accordance with the wishes of the complainant, to collaboratively determine a suitable process of reparation.

A leaflet is available to support people making allegations and/or complaints detailing support/counselling services. (*Guidance 16, Leaflet for complainants, page 102*)

8. Just Process for Respondents

It is important that there is fair procedure about the management and investigation of allegations. A proper balance should be struck between protecting children/young people and respecting the rights of respondents. Where there is a conflict, the child/young person's welfare must come first.

The Dominican Province of Ireland employ different processes in accordance with civil and canonical requirements, regarding the management of the respondent, depending on the stage the case is at. Care is an important element at every stage of the process.

8.1 Care of respondents

The Dominican Province of Ireland has access to appropriately trained personnel whose role is to listen to, regularly communicate with and represent the needs of respondents and their families throughout the civil and canonical processes. This includes access to an Advisor.

8.2 Management of Cases

The DLP/Deputy DLP has case management responsibility and for ensuring that appropriate protective measures have been taken, and that support is offered to the respondent. Through this time, it is important that the good name of the respondent is maintained.

- On receipt of an allegation, the priority is to ensure that information that has reached the threshold for reporting is referred to the statutory authorities.
- The DLP/Deputy DLP will check with the Gardaí/PSNI if there is any reason as to why the information cannot be shared at that time with the respondent. In specific circumstances, the Gardaí/PSNI will ask the DLP/Deputy DLP to delay informing a respondent so as not to hamper an investigation.
- At the earliest opportunity, the Prior Provincial will call a meeting with the respondent, for the purpose of informing him that an allegation has been made and invite him to bring a person for support/Advisor.
- The role of the Advisor is to support the respondent at meetings, direct him to counselling or other professional services, and to keep him informed of the progress of the case.
- At a further meeting, the DLP/Deputy DLP will share the details of the allegation with the respondent. The respondent will be offered canonical and civil legal advice. He will be advised that he can respond to the allegation if he wishes and that this response will be shared with the statutory authorities. However, he is advised that he does not need to make a response at this stage.
- A decision will be made as to whether an interim management plan is required, which may include restrictions to sacred ministry. This plan includes a written reminder from the Prior Provincial to the respondent advising him to continue to adhere to the child safeguarding policies and procedures.
- If required, the DLP/Deputy DLP and Advisor will meet the respondent and present him with the interim management plan, which the respondent will be asked to agree to and sign. During this meeting, the respondent must be advised that the preliminary investigation will be resumed following the conclusion of any statutory authority enquiries.
- The Prior Provincial and leadership team have responsibility to oversee the case and ensure that the relevant personnel are in place and acting in accordance with their role.
- While statutory and/or church investigations are underway, pastoral support is offered to the respondent. It is recognized that as this can be a difficult time for any person, they are offered the support of an Advisor and have access to therapeutic support, canonical and legal advice.

- If the threshold for reporting has been reached, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated by the Prior Provincial (CIC can. 1717). The preliminary investigation will be paused until formal confirmation is received from the statutory authorities that their investigations have concluded.
- The preliminary investigation is an inquiry into the facts and circumstances and imputability of the alleged delict. The person conducting the investigation produces a written report for the Prior Provincial. The Prior Provincial will determine the appropriate person to complete the investigation.
- If, as a result of the preliminary investigation, the Prior Provincial concludes there is no semblance of truth to the allegation and no case to answer, he informs the respondent of this decision, deeming that he is considered a friar in good standing. It is important all outstanding matters be dealt with to allow the friar to move forward with their life and ministry. Therefore, in preparation for return to ministry, the Respondent should be provided with professional and pastoral support, including counselling and spiritual direction.
- If, as a result of the preliminary investigation, the Prior Provincial concludes there is no semblance of truth to an allegation of sexual abuse, but there is concern about the appropriateness of the respondent's behaviour, the Prior Provincial will determine the course of action.
- However, if the Prior Provincial finds there is a semblance of truth to the allegation and there is a case to answer, the Prior Provincial must forward a file to the Master of the Order who in turn submits the file to the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF).
- The DDF will authorise the appropriate canonical process to be followed.
- It is the responsibility of the Prior Provincial to ensure that the direction of the Dicastery or the outcome of the canonical process is implemented.
- In accordance with NBSCCCI policy and standards, risk management arrangements must be in place for the respondent until and if the Church authority no longer has responsibility for managing the respondent, as guided by civil and canonical requirements.

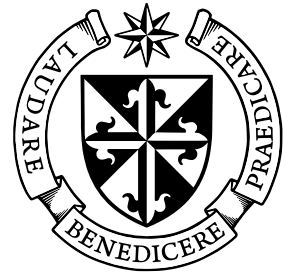


Guidance and Forms



Guidance 1

Recruitment & Selection Checklist

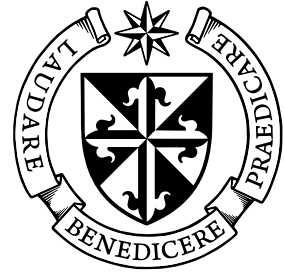


Contact with children and young people	<p>What contact with children and young people will the position involve?</p> <p>Will the position involve unsupervised contact with children or young people, or does it involve a position of trust?</p> <p>What other forms of contact will the person have with children or young people, e.g., email, social media, telephone?</p>
Defining the role	<p>Have the tasks and skills necessary for the position been considered?</p> <p>Does the task description make reference to working with and having responsibility for children or young people?</p>
Key selection criteria	<p>Has a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience been developed?</p>
Written application	<p>Have all applicants been asked to supply information in writing, including personal details, past and current work or volunteering experience?</p> <p>Have application forms been developed?</p>
Interview	<p>Have at least two representatives been identified to meet with the applicant to explore information contained in their application?</p> <p>Have the applicant and application forms been carefully considered, highlighting points to raise at interview, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant's attitudes towards working with children and young people. • Areas you want to explore in more detail. Gaps in employment history. • Vague statements of unsubstantiated qualifications. • Frequent changes of employment?
Declaration	<p>Has the successful applicant been asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children and young people?</p> <p>Has the successful applicant been asked to declare any past criminal convictions and cases pending against them?</p>
Identification	<p>Have applicants been asked, where necessary, for photographic documentation to confirm their identity and place of residence?</p> <p>Will documentation relating to the applicant's identity and relevant qualifications be checked at the interview?</p>

Qualifications	Are applicants asked for documentation to confirm their qualifications?
Garda Vetting Procedure and Access NI	<p>Does the position require the applicant to be Garda vetted or Access NI checked?</p> <p>Has the applicant been informed that they may need to undergo Garda vetting or Access NI before taking up any appointment?</p> <p>Does this applicant require a certificate of police clearance from other countries in which they have worked or volunteered?</p>
Records	<p>Are details of the selection/induction process retained in the personnel file of the successful applicant?</p> <p>Are references kept on file as part of the record of the recruitment process?</p> <p>Are personnel informed that information such as application and declaration forms are held on file?</p>
Confidentiality	<p>Is information about the applicant seen only by those directly involved in the recruitment process?</p> <p>Are applicants reassured that information about them, including information about convictions, will be treated in confidence and not used against them unlawfully?</p>
References	<p>Are applicants asked to supply the names of two referees who are not family members, or who are not involved in the recruitment process, and ideally who have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's experience of work or contact with children?</p> <p>Are referees asked specifically to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children?</p> <p>Are all references provided in writing and verified by a follow-up telephone call?</p>
Suggested questions for referees	<p>The post involves substantial access to children. As a church authority, we are committed to the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children and young people? How long have you known this person? • In what capacity? • Would you have any hesitation in them taking up this position?

FORM 1 Induction Form

(Dominican Friars)



I confirm that:

- I have received, read and understood the *Dominican Safeguarding Handbook, 2026*.
- I have been given an opportunity to have any questions in relation to the Handbook addressed by Safeguarding Personnel.
- I agree to abide by the safeguarding policy and procedures contained within the Handbook regarding working with children and young people.
- I understand my responsibility and duty, as a priest/brother/novice working in the Dominican Province of Ireland, in working to safeguard children and young people.
- I will honour and respect their right to safety and protection from harm and abuse.
- I will attend necessary safeguarding training as required.

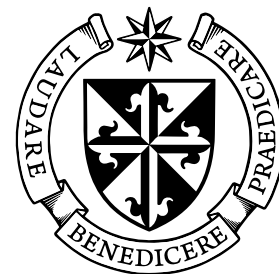
Full Name (print) _____

Signed _____

Witness to signature _____

Date _____

FORM 2 Staff/Volunteer Application Form



Who should complete this form?

The Dominican Province of Ireland asks that everyone working for or volunteering with the Dominicans, who will come into contact with children or young people and/or the personal details of children/young people, abide by good practice by completing and signing this declaration.

Personal Information

Forename _____

Surname _____

Church body _____

Have you been previously known by other names? _____

Address _____

Telephone number _____

Email _____

If you have previously been involved in voluntary work or working with children, please give details

Please give details of qualifications or training you have undertaken that you think may be relevant to this post:

Form 2 Staff/Volunteer Application Form

(2 of 3)

Please detail if you have medical conditions that we need to be aware of, which may affect you carrying out some of the requirements of this post.

Do you have any prosecutions pending, or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution or binding over order?

Yes

No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s).

Date of offence _____

Nature of offence _____

Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards a child or young person?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details including date (s) _____

Full name (print) _____

Any previous surname _____

Address _____

Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

What role or position are you currently applying for?

Referees

Please provide the names and contact details of two people whom we could contact for a reference (these people should not be relatives) who have known you well and would be able to comment on your suitability for this post.

Referee 1

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Referee 2

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Declaration

I declare that I have completed this form truthfully, and I agree that you may contact the people whose names I have given as referees. In accordance with Data Protection legislation, I give my consent that the information contained in this form be processed and stored for the purposes of recruitment and employment.

I agree to abide by and accept the terms and conditions of my involvement, if successful in the application process.

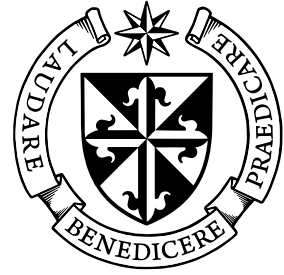
Signed _____

Date _____

The information contained in this form will be stored securely by the Dominican Province of Ireland. Legislation in both jurisdictions in Ireland has, at its core, the principle that the welfare of children and young people must be the paramount consideration.

Guidance 2

Garda Vetting (Republic of Ireland)



The National Vetting Bureau Act (Children and Vulnerable Adults) 2012 to 2016

The National Vetting Bureau Act (Children and Vulnerable Adults) 2012 to 2016 sets out the circumstances that require vetting as:

*“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 adults.**”* The Act also requires vetting in respect of any work or activity as a **minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of religious beliefs, to children and vulnerable adults**, unless such work or activity is merely incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs to persons who are not children or young people or vulnerable adults.

A person is also required to be vetted if their ministry, work or activity is deemed relevant to children or young people or vulnerable adults. Relevant work includes the provision of training, education, treatment, supervision, therapy, counselling, transporting or conveying, giving advice or guidance, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities.

Interpreting the Act for the Church Context

From the sections of the Act cited above, persons requiring vetting fall into three main categories. It should be noted that anyone who is 18 or over and has any contact with children or young people or vulnerable adults which is more than incidental as part of their ministry must be vetted (see also Note 1 below).

- Category 1** A person must be vetted if they are a minister, priest or other who engages in the advancement of religious beliefs to children or young people and vulnerable adults.
- Category 2** A person must be vetted if he/she has necessary and regular contact with children or young people or vulnerable adults through his/her ministry, work or activity in a diocese, parish, school, or diocesan agency, or an agency of the Order.
- Category 3** Vetting is also required for those whose ministry, work or activity includes the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children or young people or vulnerable adults. This applies regardless of whether this ministry, work or activity is occasional or regular and necessary.

Note 1 Those who are aged 16 and 17 years may be vetted, but this can only be carried out with the written consent of their parent/carers and/or guardian and the young person's themselves.

Minors

The legislation is directed at applicants aged 18 years or over at the date of signing the form. However, applications can be made for those aged 16 and 17 years of age. The decision to vet 16 and 17 year olds is a policy decision for the organisation in question and this is not a legal requirement.

Where an application is being made for a 16 or 17 year-old the consent of the parent/carer/and/or legal guardian must also be obtained. This is done by asking them to fill out the form, Parent/Guardian Consent Form (NVB 3). In addition, the email address and telephone number provided on the e-vetting invitation form is the email address and telephone number of the parent/carer and/or legal guardian (not the young person). Proof of identity must also be obtained for the parent/carer and/or legal/guardian and the young person.

Note 2 Vetting is not required for a person if his/her ministry, work or activity with children or young people is merely incidental to his/her ministry, work or activity with others who are not children or young people or vulnerable adults. In other words, vetting is not required for church personnel who may come into contact with, but do not minister or work directly with, children or young people or vulnerable adults, excluding those who fall into Category 1-3 above.

Examples of Roles that typically WILL Require Vetting (This list is not exhaustive)

- Clergy (bishops, priests, brothers, deacons, visiting clergy who provide short to long-term cover).
- Sacristans.
- Youth group leaders such as those responsible for youth choirs, youth clubs, Pope John Paul II Award leaders, youth liturgy groups.
- Supervisors of altar servers.
- Ancillary staff in schools, e.g., SNAs, caretakers.
- Leaders of the *Do This in Memory* Communion programme who have contact with children outside of the public Sunday liturgy.
- Leaders of the *You Shall Be My Witnesses* Confirmation programme.
- Eucharistic ministers who have been commissioned to bring the Eucharist to homes, hospitals, care homes and other institutions where there may children or young people and/or vulnerable adults present.
- Other roles that bring a person into direct contact with children or young people or vulnerable adults through his/her ministry, work or activity.

Examples of Roles that Typically WILL NOT Require Vetting:

- Church/Parish secretaries.
 - Collectors.
 - Car park attendants.
 - Those present in the sacristy who do not have an official role with children or vulnerable adults.
(however, these adults should never be left unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults).
 - Readers of the Word unless they have a dual role which directly involves contact with children or young people or vulnerable adults.
 - Eucharistic ministers who only distribute the Eucharist within the main body of the church during public Mass or other liturgical celebrations.
 - Other roles whose contact with children or young people or vulnerable adults is merely incidental while they are carrying out their ministry, work or activities with those who are not children or young people or vulnerable adults.
-

Vetting Process

Vetting applications for individual members of the province, staff and volunteers and/or visiting Dominicans must be done through the Provincial Office.

The NVB1 Form must be completed, signed and dated by the vetting subject prior to the submission of a vetting application. The province must now validate identity documents in person to ensure the required validation process is completed in accordance with the requirements of the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána. All the relevant required documentation must then be forwarded to the Provincial Office

Applications for vetting are now submitted electronically in a process known as e-vetting. However, if the applicant does not have access to an electronic device and/or requires assistance in completing the online process, they can contact the Safeguarding Office for support in submitting their vetting application manually and/or online using an agreed email contact address.

Once submitted by the Provincial Vetting Office to the respective Diocesan Vetting Office, the vetting applicant will receive an email directly from the Garda Vetting Bureau with an online questionnaire. The Provincial Vetting Office does not have access to, nor receive a copy of, the answer provided by the vetting subject in the online questionnaire.

Vetting Disclosure

On completion of the vetting process, An Garda Síochána will issue a vetting disclosure to the respective Diocesan Vetting Office. All vetting Disclosures are stored securely in the Safeguarding Office.

Re-Vetting

Vetting is required to be completed every three years.

Proof of Identity

Two forms of identification must be produced to validate the identity of the applicant when completing the E-Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1 Form). See below Documentation Table of required ID issued by the Garda National Vetting Bureau.



Accepted Documentation Table (applicants over 18)

The Garda National Vetting Bureau will only accept the following ID Documentation when processing vetting applications.

Category	Document Type
Identification	Passport from country of citizenship
	Irish Driving Licences or Learner Permit (new credit card format)
	Irish Certificate of Naturalisation
	National Identity Card (EU/EEA/Swiss Citizens)
	Proof of Address
Credit Institutions	Bank Statement from a recognised bank (not private money lenders or Revolut)
	Building Society Statement
	Credit Union Statement
	Credit Union Passbook
Utility Providers	Utility Bill, (i.e. gas, electricity, television, broadband, waste & TV licence – issued in the last 6 months)
Government Bodies	Correspondence from government departments
Local Authorities	Correspondence from Local Council confirming residency

Accepted Documentation Table (Applicants Under 18)

Only in circumstances where an applicant under the age of 18 that does not have documentation outlined in the accepted documentation table will the following be accepted, two documents must be submitted, one document must be the birth certificate.

Category	Document Type
Identification	Birth Certificate
	Passport from a country of citizenship
	Written statement by a school principal confirming attendance (on school letterhead)

POLICE VETTING - Northern Ireland

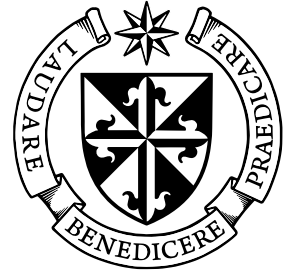
Vetting applications for individual members of the province residing in Northern Ireland, and/or visiting Dominicans to the community, and/or engaged in parish missions/retreats will be processed through the respective Diocese where the community or parish mission is located.

Police vetting is then submitted to the Northern Ireland Diocesan vetting office who submits the application to Access Northern Ireland to be processed. The Provincial Vetting Office personnel will provide the required guidance for this process.



FORM 3 Induction Form

(Staff and Volunteers – not Friars)



I confirm that:

- I have received, read and understood the *Dominican Safeguarding Handbook, 2026*.
- I have been given an opportunity to have any questions in relation to the Handbook addressed by Safeguarding Personnel.
- I agree to abide by the safeguarding policy and procedures contained within the Handbook regarding working with children and young people.
- I understand my responsibility and duty, as a member of staff and/or volunteer in the Dominican Province of Ireland, in working to safeguard children and young people.
- I will honour and respect their right to safety and protection from harm and abuse.
- I will attend necessary safeguarding training as required.

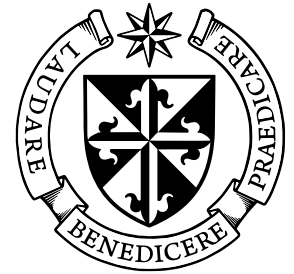
Full Name (print) _____

Signed _____

Witness to signature _____

Date _____

FORM 4 Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers



Staff & Volunteers in the Irish Dominican Province are uniquely placed to act as positive role models to children and young people participating in Church activities. Such participation provides the opportunity to promote the development of self-confidence and enhance the wellbeing of the children & young people with whom we interact.

This agreement serves to articulate the expectations of adult behaviour when working with children and young people in the Dominican Province of Ireland. It aims to provide confidence to children and young people, staff, volunteers, and parents that safeguarding children and young people is of paramount importance.

To uphold positive safeguarding practices all Staff & Volunteers in contact with children should:

- Treat all people with respect.
- Provide children with good role models.
- Operate within Church and State child safeguarding and protection principles and guidelines.
- Be visible to others when working with children and young people.
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour.
- Develop a culture where children and young people can talk openly, ask questions and express any worries or concerns they may have.
- Respect each child and young person's boundaries.
- Parish and diocesan workers and volunteers work in partnership with parents and guardians and share information with them.

Staff and volunteers must avoid actions and behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. Therefore, they should never:

- Abuse a child or young person in any way.
- Physically chastise a child or young person.
- Develop a relationship with a particular child or young person that is exclusive of others.
- Place a child or young person at risk of harm.
- Speak to a child or young person or behave in a manner that is offensive, developmentally inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or young person that he or she can do for him/herself.
- Condone unacceptable behaviour in a child or young person.
- Discriminate against any individual or group.
- Ask a child or young person to keep a secret.

Form 4 Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers

(2 of 2)

I confirm that I have read and understood the expected Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers working with children in the Irish Dominican Province.

I agree to abide by and adopt these standards in all aspects of my work with the Irish Dominican Province.

Name (print) _____

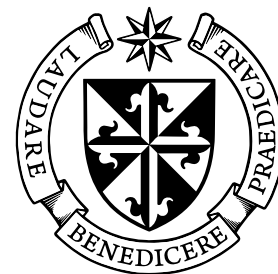
Ministry _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Guidance 3

Code of Behaviour for Children (Sample)



The most effective codes of conduct are those in which participants have input. Ownership promotes success. Hence, children or young people should be involved in drawing up a code of behaviour for themselves. It is important that in working with children or young people, an appropriate adult with relevant skills and competence participates to support them in developing the code of behaviour.

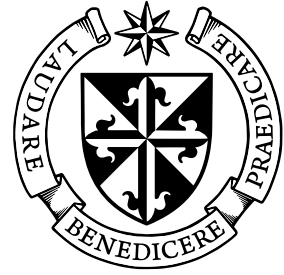
The methods used in creating a code of behaviour should be age- and ability-appropriate, with children or young people being encouraged to avoid merely drawing up a list of prohibitions. Instead, the code of conduct should be comprised of positive statements about respect and should consider what consequences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

In developing the code, consideration should be given to the following:

- ✓ Respect yourself, be mannerly and take care of your own safety.
- ✓ Always do your best.
- ✓ Act as a good role model.
- ✓ Respect others, never bully, exclude or engage in name-calling against others.
- ✓ Do not hurt others' feelings.
- ✓ Do not use rude or abusive language.
- ✓ Never use violence against another child, young person or adult.
- ✓ Respect others' property.
- ✓ Do not consume alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs.
- ✓ Do not take things without permission.
- ✓ Take care of all church equipment, putting litter in the bins.
- ✓ Tell someone you trust if you feel uncomfortable with any situation or individual.
- ✓ If anyone is harming or trying to harm you, tell an adult immediately.
- ✓ Never bully anyone or send threatening messages.
- ✓ Attend activities on time.
- ✓ Sign in and out.
- ✓ Turn off your mobile phone.

Guidance 4

Risk Assessment



When running activities with children, we have a responsibility to do what we can to make sure people do not get hurt. Completing a risk assessment can help with this.

It is important to consider potential hazards that may lead to risk to children and to the adults who work with them. Consideration of how to control or manage risks is critical. It is important to identify acceptable levels of hazards, as all risk cannot be removed.

Completing a Risk Assessment

You need to think through each element of your activity, of the equipment, and of the venue. Think about what could go wrong, and what you are going to do to avoid this. Then write down your decisions, and the reasons you have made them. Make sure you include things that you have already planned to do (e.g., if you are already planning to use soft mats in front of the bouncy castle, you should still include this in the risk assessment).

A risk assessment for an event or activity needs to include

- The venue where it will be held
 - The equipment that will be used
 - The people who will be attending. Do they have any particular needs that might make them more likely to hurt themselves?
 - Do you need to make sure children are supervised?
 - Is there anyone attending who could hurt anyone else?
-

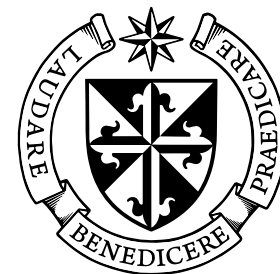
Assessing Risks

1. Identify the risks: look for hazards in the nature of the activity, and in the place where you are holding the activity.
 2. Identify who is at risk: decide who may be harmed and how. Everyone, or perhaps only certain people, may be at risk. Some groups may need special consideration as they may be more vulnerable to certain hazards.
 3. Identify what the likelihood of harm may be.
 4. Identify the consequences of injury or harm: the consequences could range from trivial to severe, or even fatal. The most severe hazards need the most urgent attention.
 5. Identify the controls that need to be put in place to limit the hazard.
-

Review

Risk should be periodically reviewed, especially in circumstances when a venue changes, a new activity takes place, or the members of the group change.

FORM 5 Risk Assessment



Name of Group	
Date of Risk Assessment	
Date of meeting to review Risk Assessment	
Name and role of person(s) completing the Risk Assessment	

Risk	Consequence	Control needed	In place Yes/No/NA	If answers 'No' what action is required, by whom and when
Checking and ensuring Group Leaders' criteria to safeguard children are completed	Child safeguarding concerns	Safe recruitment procedures followed. Volunteer application Forms completed. References sought. Garda Vetting completed. Code of behaviour for adults supervising children/young people. Clear role descriptions outlined. All leaders aware of safeguarding procedures. Two leaders for the group have attended safeguarding training.		
Ensuring appropriate preparation for activity	Child safeguarding concerns	Joint Parent/Guardian Child Consent Forms. Code of Conduct for Adults/Child/Young Person. Ensure that Group Leaders are at venue before children/young people. Rota for activity shared and agreed with leaders. Supervision ratios to be followed at all times.		
Checking and ensuring if venue is suitable for activity	Health and safety	Suitable room that is conducive to teaching and learning for children/young people. Sign in/sign out Register completed. Child Safeguarding Posters to be displayed with contact number for DLP. Group leaders to prepare facility safely for activity. Leaders to monitor/record any potential hazards and identify and notify those responsible. Leaders instructed in Fire Drill procedures. Children/young people notified of Assembly Points.		
Inadequate toilet facilities	Child safeguarding concerns	Location of toilet facilities assessed. Toilets must be fit for purpose. Leaders clearly instructed toilet procedures for children/young people during the session. Disabled toilets are available, or toilets are accessible. Toilets are not located external to building.		

Form 5 Risk Assessment

(2 of 3)

Accident/ Incident onsite	Child safeguarding concerns/ Health and safety	Parental contact details readily available. Fully stocked first aid kit. Accident/Incident forms available. Parents/guardians notified of minor incident/accident when collecting child (good practice to give copy of Accident/Incident form to parent/guardians).		
Child wandering from the group	Child safeguarding concerns	Sign in and out Register completed. Procedure agreed with parent/guardian for dropping and collecting children/young people. Children/young people understand and agree to code of behaviour. Assess number of entrances and exists in building.		
Medical issue with a child	Health and safety	Emergency contact information for parents/guardians on consent forms. Review medical information in consent forms. Fully stocked first aid kit available in building. Accident and incident form available and are completed following an accident/incident. Parents/guardians notified of incident/accident when collecting child/young person, (good practice to give copy of accident/Incident form to parents). Serious accidents/emergencies: contact numbers for emergency services/parents or guardians readily available.		
Child misbehaves	Disrupts activity. Upsets other children/young people	Children/young people are aware and agree to code of behaviour. Discuss with parents/guardians if necessary.		
Parents/guardians do not turn up to collect child.	Child/young person is upset Safeguarding concern	Two adult leaders stay with the child/young person. Procedure for dropping and collecting agreed with parents/guardians. Telephone numbers for parents/guardians recorded in consent forms.		
Activity is not inclusive for those with additional needs	Room not suitable for those with poor mobility. Minimal supervision ratios. Health and safety.	Ensure rooms used are accessible to all. Assess the individual needs of a child/young person i.e., if intimate care may be required and who is authorized and agreed. Disabled toilets are available, or toilets are accessible. Increase supervision ratios when needed. Parental consultation with group leader re: child/young person's needs prior to activity.		

Bullying	Safeguarding concerns	Code of Conduct in place for Children/ Young People. Code of Conduct for Adults/Leaders. Dominican Anti-Bullying Policy in place. All incidents of bullying to be brought to the attention of group leader immediately. Accident/Incident Forms available. Discuss incidents with parents/guardians where necessary.		
Unauthorised adult being part of the activity	Safeguarding concerns	All adults working with the young people to be Garda vetted, trained (where appropriate). New staff/volunteers to go through parish recruitment procedures. Supervision rota in place. Number of entrances and exits is limited. Sign in/sign out book complete. Drop off and collection point agreed with parents/guardians.		
Unauthorised photography/ recording of videos	Safeguarding concerns	Parents/guardians to explicitly give consent for photos/videos on consent form. Leaders aware of Dominican Social Media policy & procedures. Storage of photos/videos in line with Dominican GDPR Policy and procedures, and Dominican Social Media policy.		

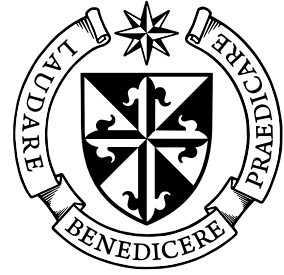
Data Protection

This Risk Assessment Form will be used in connection with a Dominican youth ministry. The form will be stored confidentially and will only be shared outside the group/Dominican Order where there is a legal obligation on the group to do so. The information will be retained for as long as necessary in compliance with Safeguarding laws and policies. Personal data on the form will be processed under Articles 6 (1)(d), 6 (1) (f) and 9 (2) (c) and 9 (2) (d) of the General Data Protection Regulation, 2016. This Form should only be used if the event/activity has the prior approval of the Prior and/or Provincial.

Signed

Date

FORM 6 Child and Parent/Guardian Joint Consent



1. Group details (to be completed by organiser)

Name of Group _____

Duration/frequency of activity from:

(Start date/time)

(End date/time)

Person in Charge/Name of organiser _____

2. Details of the child/young person

Name of child/young person _____

Address _____

Date of birth _____

Gender (circle as appropriate) **Male** **Female**

3. Other relevant information

Please mention medical conditions, special needs or dietary requirements.

Note that the organisers cannot administer any medication. Should your child require medication or intimate care, please discuss this with the organisers who will work with you to establish how your child can be accommodated, according to relevant policies and procedures.

4. Parent/Guardian contact details

Name _____

Home phone number _____

Mobile Number _____

Email address _____

Contact information for emergency use only (if different from above information)

5. Parents/Guardian's consent

I consent to the above-named child's/young person's involvement in the activity outlined above. I understand that their involvement will require compliance with Dominican Province of Ireland safeguarding policy and procedures and that there will be suitable supervision and an agreed code of behaviour while he/she is in the care of the organiser's

Signed _____

Name (block letters) _____

Relationship to child/young person _____

6. In cases of a medical emergency

In the event of an illness or an accident, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered to my child, where considered necessary by a suitable qualified medical practitioner and/or hospital. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible. In an emergency I can be contacted at the telephone numbers provided above.

Signed _____

7. Media consent for Authorised Photographs or Videos

(if relevant, please tick the boxes below)

I understand that photographs may be taken during the group activities and I give my permission for these to be used in any hard copy and/or online use by the Dominican Province of Ireland.

I understand that videos (which may include webcam) may be taken during the group activities and I give my permission for these to be used in any hard copy/online (delete as appropriate) publications by the Dominican Province of Ireland.

Signed (Parent/Guardian) _____

Date _____

Signed (Child/Young Person) _____

Date _____

8. Child/Young Person's consent

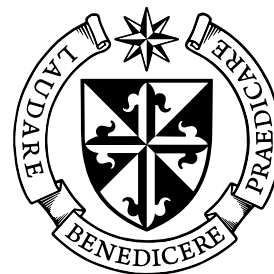
I _____ (insert full name) would like to take part in the event or activity listed above. I understand that being a reliable member of this group is important and I accept that I must follow the rules of the group as have been explained to me by the group leader/group coordinator.

Signed _____

Data protection: This form will be held on file, in accordance with the data protection policy of the Dominican Province of Ireland. The data entered will be used only for the purpose indicated on the form. It may only be accessed by those with responsibility for managing records or group activities.

Guidance 5

Supervision Ratios



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 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. This is also dependent on whether the children or young people have specific needs or requirements, and on the duration of the activity.

At a minimum, **two adults are required for each activity.**

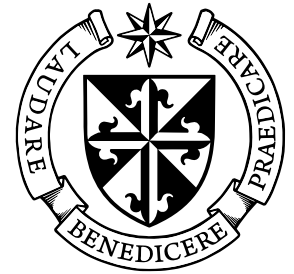
In addition, the following minimum ratios should be in place. Note: it may be necessary to review these ratios depending on whether the children or young people have specific needs or requirements and/or the duration of the activity.

Supervision Ration Table

0-1 years	1 – 2 years	2 - 3 years	3 – 6 years	7- 12 years	13 – 18 years
2 adults for the first 3 children plus one adult for every additional three children.	2 adults for the first 5 children plus one adult for every additional five children.	2 adults for the first 6 children plus one adult for every additional six children.	2 adults for the first 8 children plus one adult for every additional eight children.	2 adults for the first 8 children/ young people plus one adult for every additional eight children or young people.	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, having additional staff or volunteers should be considered.
- If the group is mixed, a gender balance should be maintained.

FORM 8 Accident/Incident Form



Group details

Name of group _____

Name of group leader _____

Names of others present _____

Accident details

Date/time of accident/incident _____

Name of person involved _____

Date of birth of person involved _____

Emergency contact details for the person involved (usually parent/guardian)

Name _____

Phone number _____

Please describe the accident/incident that occurred (continue on separate sheet if necessary)

If medical attention was required, please note the name and address of the medical facility and the people who treated the person involved in the accident/incident

Please detail any follow-up action required

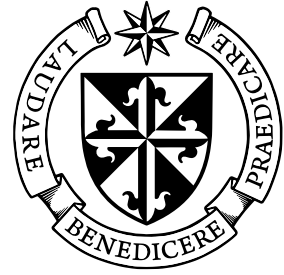
Name of person completing this form (print name)

Signed _____

Date _____

Guidance 6

Guidance on the Use of Technology – Media Policy



Irish Dominican representatives need to assess the benefits of technology and how this can be used safely and effectively, in line with rules that respect the dignity and rights of all users, particularly children and young people.

Detailed policies and procedures should be provided on the use of technology, including digital and online systems such as:

- Use of the internet
- Texting and emailing
- Photography
- CCTV and Webcams

The majority of occasions when people use mobile phones or computers or take photographs of children and young people do not provide any cause for concern. However, there are occasions when this is not the case. At the outset, it is important to identify the risks associated with the use of technology, and then to minimise the risks by putting in place measures outlined below.

Consent

The consent of parents/guardians and children and young people should always be sought prior to engaging in any activity that involves the use of IT equipment outlined above.

General consent may be sought at the outset and/or it may be decided to ask for permission for set occasions.

When seeking consent for the use of images or videos for Church purposes, the following should be considered:

- The issue of consent for photography/videography for Church purposes should be addressed with parents/guardians and the children and young people prior to the occasion, and the policy should be explained to all families who will be attending.
- In seeking consent for photos or videos, children and young people and families should be reminded about the rights to privacy and data protection of other children or young people, their families and the wider community.
- Those organising an event for Church purposes and who are seeking consent for photography or video usage, should be sensitive to the fact that parents/guardians may be reluctant to allow the general viewing of their children or young people, or of children or young people in their care, on sites such as You Tube, Facebook.

Use of Internet

It is recognised that the internet is valuable and widely used.

When used in a Dominican context, clear guidelines must be developed and inserted into the code of behaviour for each activity involving children and young people.

The following are deemed unacceptable behaviours, and must be avoided in every situation:

- ✗ Visiting internet sites that contain offensive, obscene, pornographic or illegal material.
- ✗ Using a computer to perpetrate any form of fraud or piracy.
- ✗ Using the internet or email systems to send offensive and harassing material to others.
- ✗ Using obscene or racist language in computer-assisted communications.
- ✗ Publishing defamatory or otherwise false material generated by oneself or by others through social networking.
- ✗ Introducing any form of malicious software into the network being used.
- ✗ Intentionally damaging any information communication technology equipment.
- ✗ Using another user's password or giving that password to a third party.

It is important that the following is made clear to all who use the internet:

- ✓ All Dominican friars, staff, volunteers and group leaders must be made aware of their responsibility and sign up to appropriate use of the internet as part of a code of behaviour.
- ✓ Responsibility is about safeguarding children, taking care of oneself, one's co-workers and group leader.
- ✓ Anyone using a shared computer requires their own individual password.
- ✓ Training in appropriate and responsible internet and computer use is imperative in order to follow best practice in all activities that concern children, young people, staff, co-workers and volunteers.

Texts and Emails

It is best practice to make contact with children or young people only through their parents/guardians. The most efficient way to do this via bulk texting and emailing, as texts and emails are very quick and effective methods of communication. There are certain risks associated with the safe and appropriate use of texting and email, which must be managed.

The risks of text and email messaging for children and young people include:

- Inappropriate access to, use of, or sharing of personal details (names, numbers, email addresses).
- Unwanted contact with children or young people by adults with bad intent, text bullying by peers.
- Being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate materials.
- Grooming for sexual abuse.
- Direct contact and actual abuse.

The risks for adults include:

- Misinterpretation of their communication with young people.
- Potential investigation (internal or by statutory agencies).
- Potential disciplinary action.

Using bulk (or bundled) text and email messaging

Contacting children or young people through text or email should be done through their parents/guardians/carers.

In exceptional circumstances where children or young people need to be contacted directly, bulk texting is the preferred method. This is where the same text or email message is sent to several young people involved with a particular activity or group.

The advantage of this approach is that it presents fewer opportunities for misuse and abuse than personal, one-to-one texting or emailing arrangements between staff or volunteers and children or young people. Therefore, one-to-one texting or emailing should be strongly discouraged and should only occur in exceptional circumstances. The same applies to emailing young people.

The following guidance is provided to minimise risk to all in such circumstances:

1. Consent must be obtained from children or young people and their parents/guardians/carers prior to sending children or young people text or email messages. Parents/guardians of younger children should be offered the option to be copied in on texts and emails that their child will be sent.
2. Children's or young people's mobile phone numbers or email addresses should be stored safely and securely with access only available to the staff member or volunteers identified to the young people and parents/guardians as a group leader.
3. All text and email messages must be sent via a bundle to a group of children or young people, i.e., the same standard text message is sent to every member of the group.
4. The text and email messaging system must make it clear to the young person receiving it who has sent the message.

5. Young people should not be given the opportunity to text or email back to the system. It should only be used as a one-way communication channel.
6. The text and email message that are sent must never contain offensive or abusive or inappropriate language.
7. All of the text and email messages sent should include a sentence at the bottom that provides children or young people with the opportunity to unsubscribe from receiving further text and email messages.

Use of Photography

The use of photos on websites and in other online or hard copy publications can pose direct and indirect risks to children and young people. Dominican friars, staff and/or volunteers wishing to use images of the children or young people they are working with should be aware of the following.

- Dominicans have responsibility for the use of photography only if they plan to use the photography for Church purposes.
- Photographs taken at events organised by family and schools such as communions, weddings or confirmations do not fall under the responsibility of the Church or the Dominicans, unless they are being taken for Church purposes.

Risks to children

A child or young person should not be able to be identified through a photograph. There is also a risk that the photo itself will be used inappropriately by others. Photos can easily be copied and adapted, perhaps to create images of child abuse, which can then find their way on to other websites.

How to minimise risks

- Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the activity and think carefully about images showing children and young people on the Dominican website or publication.
- Never supply the full name(s) of the child or young person along with the image(s).
- Only use images of children or young people in suitable dress and focused on the activity, rather than one particular child.
- Obtain permission: the permission of parents/guardians/carers, and of the children and young people should always be sought when using an image of a child or young person.
- The child's or young person's permission to use their image must also be recorded (depending on his/her age and ability to give consent). This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the activity.

Using photographers

Photographers are often employed in Church contexts for certain sacramental or Church activities.

When using a photographer, it is important to consider the following:

- Ascertain if the photographer requires vetting and, if they do, put them through the process.
- Provide the photographer with a form of identification that must always be worn.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or young people or one-to-one photo sessions at events.
- Do not allow photo sessions to take place away from the event, for instance, at a child's or young person's home.
- Inform parents/guardians, children and young people that a photographer will be in attendance.

Responding to concerns

Children, young persons and parents/guardians should be informed that if they have any concern regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography, these should be reported to the Dominican DLP, or the Prior or Superior, or the Dominican in charge of youth ministry, or the Prior Provincial, to ensure that reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other child protection or child safeguarding issue.

Use of CCTV and Webcams

The increasing use of CCTV and webcams has significant implications, and it is essential that unless such systems are used with proper care and consideration, they can give rise to concern that an individual's private space is being unreasonably invaded or eroded.

Security of premises or other property is probably the most common use of a CCTV system and, as such, will typically be intended to capture images of intruders, or of individuals damaging property or removing goods without permission. If a data controller is satisfied that he/she can justify the installation of a CCTV system, he/she must carefully consider what it will be used for and if these uses are reasonable in the circumstances. Cameras placed to record external areas should be positioned in such a way as to prevent or minimise recording of passers-by, or of another person's private property.

If using CCTV in the Church or on Church property, it is essential to consider the following:

- If CCTV cameras are in place, it is important to have obvious signs informing Church personnel, parishioners, volunteers and the public of this.
 - All uses of CCTV must be appropriate and fit for a specific purpose. As CCTV infringes the privacy of persons captured in the images, there must be a genuine reason for installing such a system.
-

- If installing such a system, the purpose for doing so must be displayed in a prominent place and preferably behind a locked noticeboard where it will not be damaged or removed. In a church, an obvious place would be within the porch and at all entrances.
- Images captured should be retained for a maximum of 28 days (see Section 2 [1] c [iv] of the Data Protection Act). An exception for a longer duration would be where images need to be retained specifically in the context of an investigation.
- Tapes should be stored in a secure environment, along with a log of access to them. Access should be restricted to authorised personnel. Similar measures should be in place when using disc storage, with the creation of automatic logs of access to the images.

Webcam

There are a number of Data Protection requirements that must be met in relation to broadcasting on the internet. Section 2 (1) c (iii) of the Data Protection Act requires that any data is 'adequate, relevant and not excessive' and fit for purpose for which it is collected.

Web cameras should be switched on only for the duration of Mass or other liturgy and switched off at the end. There should be no live streaming of churches when there is no Mass or liturgy taking place.

Recording people via a web camera and subsequently displaying such images over the internet is regarded as the processing of personal data. One of the key provisions regarding the processing of such data is that it must be done with the consent or knowledge of the individuals concerned.

Camera shots (images) of the congregation should be wide shots – minimising the possibility of easily identifying individuals with close-up images.

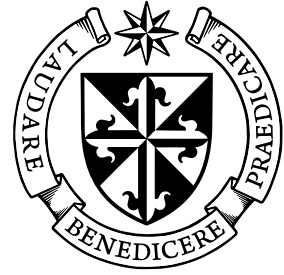
Consent should be obtained of altar servers and others taking part in liturgies (e.g., choirs, musicians, Ministers of the Word and of Holy Communion). In the case of children/young people, it is essential to have the consent of parents/carers and/or guardians.

Signs should be placed at a range of entrances to the church and in other prominent locations, informing people that web cameras are in operation.

Members of the clergy and pastoral workers should sign forms consenting to their image being used for web broadcasting in the course of their regular duties. Copies of consent forms should be kept in the church records.

Guidance 7

Lone-Working Guidance



Introduction

The nature and range of ministries provided by Dominican members, staff and volunteers may mean that they could be required to work alone as follows:

- Visit to the sick.
- Counselling.
- Spiritual guidance.
- Vocation work.
- “Parlour” meetings.

The range of activities or services can require Dominican personnel to lone work.

Definition of lone working

“Work that is specifically intended to be carried out by unaccompanied persons, without direct supervision or immediate access to another person for assistance.”

Lone working can generate additional health and safety risks. Significant risks will be identified through the process of risk assessment as detailed later. It is essential that all Dominican friars, clergy, staff and volunteers cooperate fully to implement safe systems of work.

This document should be read in conjunction with health and safety legislation and child and adult safeguarding policies and procedures.

Policy Aim

To ensure the following:

- That the lone worker has informed a colleague, brother, staff or volunteer of their whereabouts, where the lone working will take place, and that the client is fully informed of the nature of work.
 - The lone worker knows the procedural steps if issues or concerns arise.
 - The lone worker understands the risks to which he/she is being exposed and an emergency response is planned.
-

Scope of the Policy

The Policy is applicable to all Dominican personnel who have potential to work alone as part of their ministry.

Dominican personnel do not offer lifts to, or carry children, young people and/or vulnerable adults **unless by arrangement with parents/guardians and with a second adult present.**

Responsibilities and guidance for all Dominican personnel on lone working

- Ensure that all personnel understand the steps in reporting incidents in the event of an incident or of a child/young person and/or adult-safeguarding concern.
 - Ensure a risk assessment or safe system analysis is carried out and is reviewed frequently.
 - Ensure staff training refers to lone working policy arrangements to minimise the risks of lone working.
-

Risk Assessment and safe system analysis

A risk assessment is carried out by considering the following:

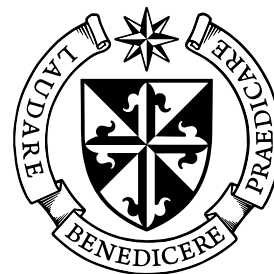
- Is remoteness or isolation a factor?
 - Is the room part of a public building?
 - Are there glass panels in the door?
 - What times are the rooms free, or are there other people working at the same time or in the same building?
 - Who knows you are lone working?
 - What is the specific need of the client that prompts need to work one to one?
 - What are the communications plans in place?
 - Know the building you are working in.
 - Is there a known history of physical or sexual or verbal or threatening behaviours?
 - Are there known triggers, or signs of health and wellbeing deterioration?
 - Have you access to first aid and to toilets and to fire exits in the building?
 - Do not meet with client if they present under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
-

All staff must promote safe working practice

- All Dominican friars, staff, volunteers are obliged to introduce themselves and show ID if required.
 - Be aware of current risk assessment and be alert.
 - Demonstrate professional boundaries when lone working.
 - Report any concern or incident immediately.
 - Ensure an accurate record is kept of any concern or incident.
 - Consult with Superior/Manager/DLP/Deputy DLP as appropriate.
-

Guidance 8

Procedures for use of Property of the Irish Dominican Province by External Groups



It is a requirement that all external groups working with children and vulnerable adults in Dominican owned churches and/or using facilities such as church halls, day centres, retreat or counselling centres owned by the Dominican Province of Ireland, are insured, have a Child Safeguarding Statement, policy and associated procedures in place.

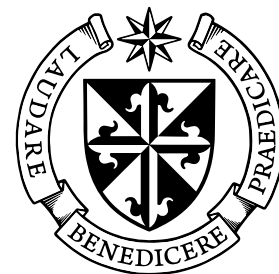
The general principle is that the obligation to comply with requirements relating to insurance and child safeguarding rests with the external groups using Order property and not with the Dominican Order.

1. It is the responsibility of all external groups using Dominican Property to ensure that in their activities involving children and vulnerable adults they comply with all applicable child safeguarding and child protection legislation and guidelines.
2. All external groups working with children and families must have their own child safeguarding policy and procedures in place. In addition, all organisations defined as 'relevant services'* under the *Children First Act 2015* must also have a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is a legal requirement.
3. External groups are also responsible for liaising with the Compliance Unit in Tusla (Child and Family Agency) to ensure their Child Safeguarding Statement is in accordance with statutory requirements.
4. Dominican personnel must not assist external groups to develop a child safeguarding statement or child safeguarding policy and procedures; but can advise all such groups to seek advice of Tusla personnel or on the Tusla website in developing the required policies.
5. It is recommended that external groups working with vulnerable adults have a safeguarding vulnerable adult policy in place.
6. All external groups must have the appropriate insurance for the activity they are running.
7. The Dominican Order must have written confirmation (*Form 9 was 13*) from all external groups working with children using Dominican Church property that they have the required statement, policy and procedures in place. It is not the role of the Dominican Order to validate the adequacy of these statements, policies and procedures.
8. The Prior or Superior of the Dominican Priory or House should receive confirmation in writing from all external groups that they have appropriate insurance in place which includes the following:
 - Name of insurers
 - Policy number
 - Period of cover of the policy
 - Limit of indemnity
9. The Dominican Order will not request sight of nor retain a copy of any external group's policies or procedures.

It is not the role of the Dominican Order to validate the adequacy of this insurance policy.

* As listed in Schedule 1 of the Children First Act 2015.

FORM 9 Use of Dominican Property by External Groups



The Dominican Province of Ireland welcomes other organisations, groups and individuals within the community to use our facilities. While you are using the Order's facilities, we want to be assured that all reasonable steps have been taken towards safeguarding children. The responsibility for complying with good safeguarding practice rests with the group or individual using our property and not with the Dominican Order.

The Dominican Province of Ireland requires detailed information in respect of your application to ensure that the safety and well-being of children are maintained at all times. This form must be completed by all external groups and given to the Prior or Superior before any activity in, or use of Dominican church property, hall, retreat, or day centre can be agreed and approved.

Name of the group/organisation/activity _____

Purpose or proposed activities _____

User group, e.g., children, adults _____

Date of commencement of use _____

Date of completion of use _____

Frequency of use _____

Names, address, contact details of person/s in charge during use:

1. _____

2. _____

Does the group have its own Child Safeguarding Statement in place (legal requirement for 'relevant services' under the Children First Act 2015)?

Yes

No

Does the group have a Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in place?

Yes

No

Form 9 Use of Dominican Property by External Groups

(1 of 2)

Does the group have appropriate (public liability and/or employer's liability and professional indemnity, if appropriate) insurance cover for the activity?

Yes

No

Name of Insurance Company _____

Policy Number _____

Period of cover of the Policy _____

Limit of Indemnity _____

I/we declare that the information provided is accurate and that changes in circumstances, if any, will be communicated to the Prior or Superior. I/we declare that the activity will be terminated if there is any breach of the above conditions.

To be signed by official co-ordinator of the external organisation or group.

Name _____

Position _____

Date _____

I give/do not give permission for this activity to go ahead.

Signed _____

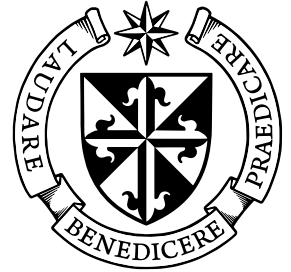
Prior/Superior _____

Date _____

Note

- a. This activity will be reviewed by the Prior/Superior and/or his Designated Representative annually.
- b. The Dominican Order will not require sight of nor retain copies of external groups' policies or procedures.

FORM 10 Complaints



If complaints arise during an Order-related activity (with the exception of complaints about child safeguarding issues) attempts should be made to resolve them by discussion between the parties involved. If this is not possible, this form should be completed and sent to the Prior, or the person in charge of the activity, or the Prior Provincial.

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone number _____

Details of complaint (continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Signature _____

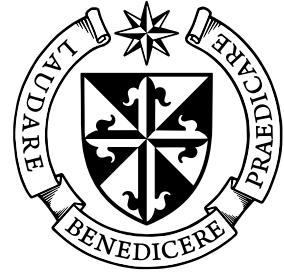
Date _____

Action to be taken, by whom

Date _____

Guidance 9

Sacristy Safeguarding Protocol



It is the responsibility of the Prior or Superior to ensure that in every sacristy an identified person is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Protocol and the maintenance of the Sacristy Register.

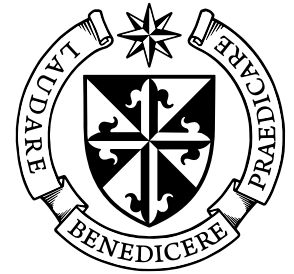
Children are welcome and encouraged to participate in the life of the Dominican Community and their welfare is promoted by observing the following protocol:

- All Dominican friars, sacristans, altar servers and other persons involved in any form of ministry must sign the Sacristy Register Book.
- Visiting priests must show a valid celebret and a letter of good standing from their Ordinary (such as Bishop or Prior Provincial) to be recorded in the Sacristy Register.
- Other visiting religious or lay people involved in ministry will also have secured permission from the Prior Provincial and/or relevant diocesan bishop's office to be involved in ministry within that diocese.
- Visiting priests and any other persons involved in any form of ministry will show confirmation that they have been vetted by the Dominican Province through the diocese where the house is located.
- Other persons should not be left alone with children in the sacristy.



Guidance 10

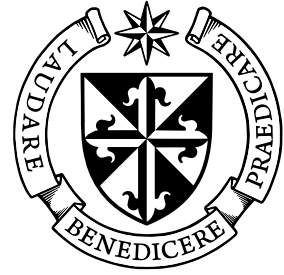
Children's Liturgy Ministry Guidelines



- Dominican brethren involved and/or lay personnel must meet to plan for the children's liturgy and must agree roles and responsibilities.
- All Children's Liturgy leaders to be Garda vetted.
- All Children's Liturgy leaders and/or volunteers must attend one-day child safeguarding training.
- Provide Leaders with a Leader's pack which includes a copy of all forms circulated, leader's role description, guidelines on registration and what is required, and a copy of the roster as relevant.
- Dominican priests to announce plans for children's liturgy at all Masses as relevant and invite parents/carers to become involved as helpers.
- Dominican priest and/or Children's Liturgy team must advise about the plans for registration and distribute a parental/carers pack which will include a joint parental/child consent form, details of the liturgy activities, and a copy of the code of conduct.
- Provide information in the Church bulletin regarding the Children's Liturgy and requirements as relevant.
- Assign a Children's Liturgy coordinator who will compile a register of the parental consent forms which will be copied weekly for the leaders to collect, complete and return to the sacristy afterwards.
- All forms to be filed in the Children's Liturgy folder which will be stored in a locked cupboard in a secure location, for example, in the sacristy.
- Supervision rates must be adhered to at all times. Whilst the numbers may vary depending on the age and ability of the children, at a minimum there must be two adults for each activity and at least one leader present – for example, if a group of 35 children are present, aged 4 to 11 years, break into two groups of children, aged 4 to 7 years and 8 to 11 years respectively.
- Parents/carers and young people who are not vetted may assist in the activities as helpers.
- An accident- or incident-form must be completed as required and filed in the Children's Liturgy folder.
- If the required complement of leaders is not available, the Children's Liturgy does not proceed.
- Leaders are not permitted to hold information about children and or young people on personal computers or hardware, or on paper in their private possession in accordance with Dominican record storage policy.

Guidance 11

Responding to Disclosure/s of Child Abuse in the Sacrament of Confession



The Sacramental Seal

All suspicions, concerns and allegations of child abuse must be reported to the statutory authorities through the procedure as outlined in this document. There is one exception to this rule, which is of abuse which is disclosed during the Sacrament of Confession (also known as Reconciliation or Penance).

The maintenance of trust in the Sacrament of Reconciliation requires the guarantee of absolute confidentiality, allowing no exceptions. This is known as the Seal of Confession and guarantees to the penitent that anything revealed to the confessor will not be divulged to anyone else. This is outlined in Canon 983 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law: "The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore, it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason."

Definition of Confession

Canon law provides a clear definition of what is deemed to be appropriate with regards to the hearing of Confession. This should be used as the definition to clarify when Confession has taken place.

The Sacrament begins when the penitent starts conversing with the confessor and ends when the confessor has granted absolution and makes the sign of the cross.

Procedures for a penitent who discloses abuse during Confession

If a penitent discloses abuse during the Sacrament of Confession, the confessor should follow these procedures. The confessor should encourage the child or young person to disclose the abuse to an adult they trust (e.g., a relative, teacher, friend) and to have that person report the abuse. If the penitent expresses a wish to discuss the issue outside the Sacrament, make it clear to them that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed regarding issues of child abuse once outside the Sacrament.

In the case of an abused penitent who is an adult

- Remind the penitent that whatever is disclosed in Confession, the confessor will not repeat outside of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - Strongly advise them to seek professional help (e.g. counselling, consultation with their GP) and to go to the statutory authorities.
 - If the penitent expresses a wish to discuss this issue outside the confessional, make it clear to them that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed regarding issues of child abuse once outside the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
-

In the case of an abused penitent who is a child or young person:

- Sensitively reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell you.
 - Remind them that whatever is disclosed in Confession will not be repeated outside the Sacrament of Confession by the confessor.
 - The confessor should encourage the child or young person to disclose the abuse to an adult they trust (e.g., a relative, teacher, friend) and to have that person report the abuse.
 - If the penitent expresses a wish to discuss the issue outside the Sacrament, make it clear to them that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed regarding issues of child abuse once outside the Sacrament.
-

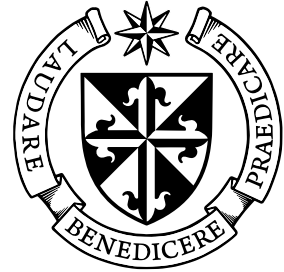
Safeguarding Children during the Sacrament of Reconciliation

When children attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation, all efforts should be made to provide a safe environment, which maintains the sacramental seal.



Guidance 12

Short Guide to Mandatory Reporting and Assisting



What is Mandatory Reporting?

The Children First Act places a legal obligation on certain persons, known as mandated persons, to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla (the Child and Family Agency). The reporting requirements apply to information that you, as a mandated person, received or became aware of since the Act came into force on the 11th of December 2017. If you have a reasonable concern about abuse prior to this date, and there is a possibility of continuing risk to a child, you should report this to Tusla under *Children First National Guidance 2017*.

Who are Mandated Persons?

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children, families or parents/carers in the course of their employment or profession, and who, because of their role, qualifications or training, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Mandated persons include employees or professionals working in the areas of health, education, justice, youth and childcare. This includes members of the clergy, pastoral care workers and safeguarding or child protection officers employed by a religious body or organisation.*

What are the obligations of Mandated Persons?

Mandated persons are required by law to

- a. report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla;
and
 - b. assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.
-

What must be reported?

Mandated persons must report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being harmed. This includes retrospective disclosures of abuse, where adults disclose that they were abused as children. The Children First Act defines “harm” as assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect, the child’s health, development or welfare; or any instance of sexual abuse of a child.

Children First National Guidance outlines four categories of child abuse as follows:

- **Physical Abuse** is when someone deliberately hurts a child or puts them at risk of being hurt.
- **Emotional Abuse** is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a parent or guardian and a child.
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal or for that of others.
- **Neglect** occurs where a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally.

* A full list of mandated persons is contained in Schedule 2 of the Children First Act.

If your concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but you still have reasonable grounds for concern about the welfare or protection of a child, you should report that concern to Tusla, but do not tick the 'mandated report' box on the report form. As a mandated person, you should be aware that the legal obligation to report mandated concerns rests with you and no one else. However, you may make a report jointly with any other person who has concerns about the same child, or with the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for your service. Where you are making a joint report, you must sign and tick the 'mandated report' box on the report form.

How do I report?

Reports should be submitted using **Tusla's reporting portal**, or, where this is not available to you, by post to the Tusla Social Work offices in the area where the child lives. The addresses of all the Tusla Social Work offices can be found at **www.tusla.ie**.

Where there is **immediate or serious risk**, contact should be made by phone with a Tusla Duty Social Worker without delay. Mandated persons may report a concern to Tusla's out-of-hours social work service by phone between 6pm and 6am every night; and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays on 0818 776 315. The report form should be submitted to Tusla as soon as practicable thereafter, and no later than three days.

Is there anyone else that I need to notify?

Yes, any child protection concern that relates to the Dominican Province of Ireland, its activities, or related ministerial personnel, must be reported to the Coordinator of Safeguarding/DLP as soon as possible – details below.

What is mandated assisting?

Tusla may request assistance from any mandated person when assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report, regardless of who made the report. Mandated assistance may include a request to supply further information over the phone, produce a verbal or written report or to attend a meeting.

Where can I go for advice or assistance?

The Safeguarding Coordinator/DLP for the Dominican Province of Ireland provides advice and support in deciding what needs to be reported and in submitting reports. You can also contact your local Tusla Social Work Office and ask to speak with the Duty Social Worker.

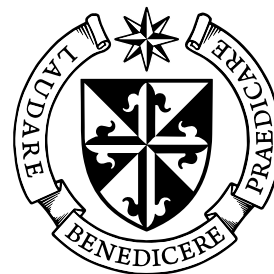
The contact details for the DLP of the Dominican Province of Ireland is:

Mobile No: (089) 708 7881

Email Address: safeguardingoffice@dominicans.ie

Guidance 13

Definitions of Abuse



Definition and Recognition of Child Abuse

The term 'child' means a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married.

Physical Abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Examples

Severe physical punishment.	Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking.
Pushing, shaking or throwing.	Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling.
Observing violence. Use of excessive force in handling.	Deliberate poisoning.
Suffocation.	Female genital mutilation.
Fabricated/induced illness.	Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement. This defence could previously be invoked in court proceedings by a parent or other person in authority, who physically disciplined a child. The change in the law now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

Emotional Abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver.

Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways.

Examples

Rejection. Lack of attachment.	Emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer.
Unresponsiveness of the parent/carer. Lack of comfort and love.	Use of unreasonable or harsh disciplinary measures.

Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his/her behaviour or actions.	Premature imposition of responsibility on the child. Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned).
Under- or over-protection of the child. Continuous lack of praise and encouragement.	Exposure to domestic violence. Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child.

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk-taking and aggressive behaviour. It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and, in some instances, occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings or friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms. It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not recognise it as abusive.

Examples

Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child. Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child.	Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child for sexual arousal or gratification.
Masturbation in the presence of the child or the involvement of the child in the act.	Sexual exploitation of the child, including encouraging the child to solicit for sexual acts, recording images for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.
Sexual intercourse (oral, vaginal, anal). An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child’s body, whether by a person or object, for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.	Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means.

Child pornography

The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998, which is amended by Section 6 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Act 2007, makes it an offence to possess, produce, distribute, print or publish child pornography. Additionally, across the Catholic Church in Ireland, canon law includes the possession of, or downloading from the internet of, paedophilic pornography as a grave delict.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation, or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

Examples

Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision.	Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding.
Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e., a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation.	Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation.
Unhygienic conditions.	Inadequate living conditions.
Lack of protection, and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age.	Inattention to basic hygiene.
Persistent failure to attend school.	Abandonment or desertion.

Northern Ireland

Legislation in relation to definitions of abuse are contained in the Northern Ireland (Co-operating to Safeguard Children Order, 2016, revised 2017)

Abuse or harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse, and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person, taking selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms – such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud, or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, 2016 - Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety).

Peer Abuse (As defined in Children First 2015)

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser; that is, it should be considered a child care and protection issue for both children. All abusers must be held accountable for their behaviour and work must be done to ensure that abusers take responsibility for their behaviour and acknowledge that the behaviour is unacceptable. If there is any conflict of interest between the welfare of the alleged abuser and the victim, the victim's welfare is of paramount importance. Abusive behaviour which is perpetrated by children must be taken seriously and it is important that such cases are reported.

Bullying (As defined in Children First 2015)

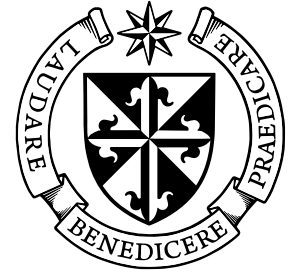
Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour which is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more children against a victim. The more extreme forms of bullying behaviour, when perpetrated by adults rather than children, would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse.

The following is a list of examples of bullying – but it is not an exhaustive list.

- Name calling
- Fighting/kicking/punching/hair pulling
- Making suggestive/sarcastic comments
- Intimidation
- Threatening
- Ignoring/excluding
- Damaging property
- Spreading rumours
- Sending abusive text messages
- Racial ethnic or cultural comments

Guidance 14

Responding to Disclosure/s of Child Abuse



Children or young people may tell an adult whom they trust that they are being abused. This happens for many reasons, but the important thing to remember is that if they do tell, they are doing so in the hope that the abuse will be stopped. This is true even if the child or young person asks that nothing be done with the information.

In responding to a Disclosure...

Do

- ✓ Stay calm and listen to the child or young person.
- ✓ Allow him/her enough time to say what he/she needs to say, to continue at his/her own pace.
- ✓ Where a child or young person is distressed, be supportive and compassionate toward the young person to help them to calm down.
- ✓ Reassure the child or young person that it was the right thing to do, i.e., to say what they had to say.
- ✓ Check with the child or young person to make sure that you have understood what they said.
- ✓ Tell the child or young person what will happen next, i.e., that the relevant persons will be informed.
- ✓ Take notes as soon as this is appropriate or possible, making efforts to remember the exact words used by the child or young person.
- ✓ Include in your notes your opinion as to the demeanour and emotional state of the child or young person.
- ✓ Tell the child or young person that they will be kept up to date about what is happening.
- ✓ Be aware that a person's ability to recount his or her concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, nationality and upon any disability which may affect use of language and range of vocabulary.

Reassure the child that, in disclosing the abuse, they have done the right thing. If a child or young person tells you about abuse it is important that you **Listen, Record and Report**.

Do not

- ✗ Make promises that cannot be kept, particularly a promise to keep a disclosure secret.
 - ✗ Do not suggest words but use theirs.
 - ✗ Use leading questions, make suggestions or prompt details.
 - ✗ Stop the child/young person recalling significant events.
 - ✗ Ask for further details or press the child/young person for more information.
 - ✗ Make the child/young person repeat the details unnecessarily.
-

- ✗ Express opinions about the child/young person or members of his or her family.
 - ✗ Make assumptions or speculate.
 - ✗ Disclose details of the allegation to anyone else, even if the allegations involve them in any way.
 - ✗ Report the child or young person's disclosure to the DLP.
-

Listening to a person who admits abusing a child or young person

It is necessary to tell a person who admits an offence against a child or young person that such information cannot be kept confidential. If such an admission is made, even where the admission relates to something which happened a long time ago, you must refer the matter to DLP or deputy as soon as possible, who will follow the procedures for referral to Tusla/HSCCT or An Garda Síochána/PSNI.

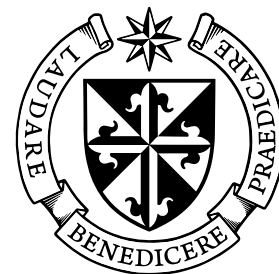
Guidance on how to respond to people making an allegation

It is often very difficult for people to talk about abuse, so it is important to make sure that you are patient, listen carefully and actively, and create a safe environment in which they feel able to tell you as much as they can remember. This will help those people whose responsibility it is to investigate the incident(s) to do so as thoroughly as possible.

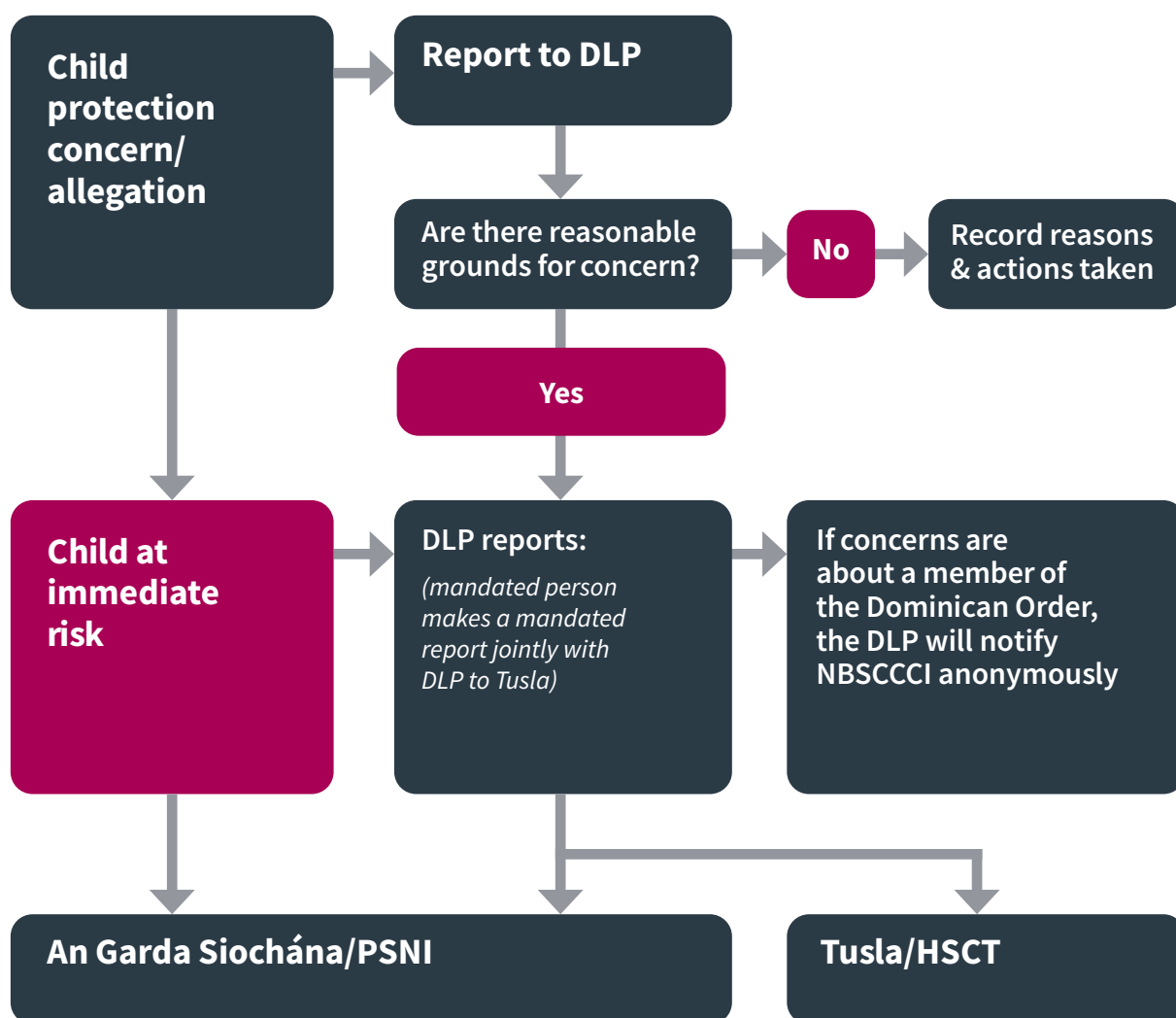


Guidance 15

Procedure for reporting an allegation of child abuse

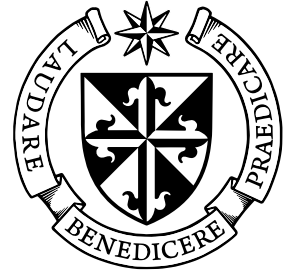


The reporting flow chart below refers **to any child protection** concern, including where the concern is about a situation or person involved in the Church. It is the responsibility of everyone in the Church to ensure that children who may need help and protection are not left at risk of abuse.



Guidance 16

Information for Complainants and Survivors of Child Abuse



Making a complaint of abuse

- People are encouraged to report information about child abuse directly to the Gardaí or the PSNI and/or Tusla or HSCT.
- Meeting the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and/or Deputy DLP; Every person will be heard with compassion and in a spirit of acceptance. The needs of the person will be prioritised in choosing the location, time and place of a meeting.
- Offering support: The person making a complaint is encouraged to bring somebody with them to the meeting for support. They will be offered a “support person” and given information on professional support services.
- Referral to the statutory authorities, (Gardaí/PSNI/Tusla/HSCT): The DLP will advise of the Dominicans’ responsibility to report information on child abuse to An Gardaí or the PSNI and Tusla or HSCT.
- Confidentiality: Any information shared is treated as highly confidential and only shared with those with a legitimate need to know, e.g., statutory authorities.
- Role of Gardaí and the PSNI: It is the responsibility of the Gardaí or the PSNI to investigate and establish if a crime has been committed. The Gardaí or the PSNI will not contact a victim or survivor with their consent.
- Role of Tusla and HSCT: It is the role of the social services provided by Tusla and HSCT to promote the welfare and protection of children. They will assess if a person presents as a risk to children.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

Contact details for the DLP and Deputy DLP are overleaf. Their role is to ensure that all child protection concerns are responded to and managed in accordance with civil law and church policy. If you decide to make your complaint directly to the Dominicans, the DLP or Deputy DLP is the person who will hear your complaint and explain the process to you.

Support for those affected by abuse

Many people have suffered throughout their lives because of abuse they experience as children. The effects can be devastating. We wish to offer supports to those who have been affected in this way and the following supports are available:

- The Catholic Church has established an independent professional counselling support service called *Towards Healing* which can be accessed free to those who experience abuse (contact details below).
- Spiritual support services are available through a support service *Towards Peace* (contact details below).
- A pastoral meeting with the Prior Provincial and/or an identified other is available at the appropriate time or venue that suits the person who has experienced abuse.
- An identified person known as a Support Person will be made available to any person who makes a complaint of abuse against a Dominican. The support person can help you to understand the process involved in making a complaint, they will listen to you, and they can help you to access professional support services.

Useful contacts

An Garda Siochána	Free & Confidential Number: 1800 555 222	
PSNI	999 Emergencies 101 non-emergencies	
Tusla (Child and Family Agency)		www.tusla.ie
Northern Health and Social Care Trust	Telephone: (028) 9442 4000 Email: user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net	
Towards Healing	Freephone (Ireland): 1800 303416 Freephone (UK): 0800 096 3315	www.towardshealing.ie
Towards Peace	Phone Number: (01) 505 3028	www.towardspeace.ie

Contact Details

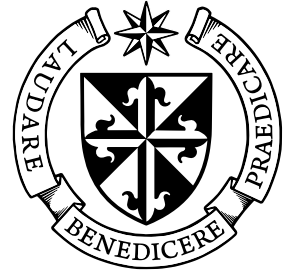
Designated Liaison Person	Mobile Number: (089) 708 7881 Email: safeguardingoffice@dominicans.ie
Deputy Designated Liaison Person	Contact Number: 083 393 4391

Appendices



Appendix 1

Further information



1. Irish Dominican communities overseas

All communities of the Dominican Province of Ireland, including those in other countries, are obliged to follow the civil and ecclesiastical laws of the country they are located in. It is also essential for all Dominican brethren to follow best practice in relation to child safeguarding.

Each community in another jurisdiction will display a Dominican Safeguarding notice with contact details for the local statutory services.

The Dominican Safeguarding Office is available to provide information and support in any aspect of child safeguarding matters.

2. Additional Dominican Polices

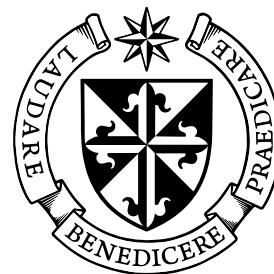
- *Dominican Province of Ireland, Vetting Disclosure Policy (12/02/2020).*
 - *Dominican Province of Ireland, Responding to Child Protection Allegations, Concerns and Suspicions against a Dominican Brother (11/04/2019).*
 - *Irish Province of the Order of Preachers, Data Protection Policy (January 2019).*
-

3. Definitions

Definitions referenced throughout the document come from a range of sources, including *Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)* and *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016, updated 2017, 2024)* and *Code of Canon Law (1983)*.

Appendix 2

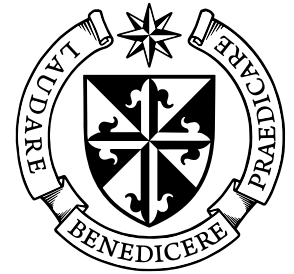
Counselling and Support Services



Name of service	Contact Details
Towards Healing	Telephone: 1800 303 416 Website: www.towardshealing.ie
Towards Peace	Telephone: 01 505 3028 Website: www.towardspeace.ie
National Adult Counselling Services (HSE)	Website: www.hse.ie (see website for local HSE counselling contact number)
Barnardos	Telephone: 1850 222 300 Website: www.barnardos.ie
Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)	Childline text support: Text 'Talk' to 50101. Childline Telephone: 1800 66 666 Website: www.childline.ie
Connect	Website: www.connectcounselling.ie
Useful websites for church personnel, parents/guardians and children and young people in relation to child safeguarding matters.	www.webwise www.hotline.ie www.internetsafety.ie www.samaritans.org

Appendix 3

Guidance on Bullying



What is bullying?

- Bullying is intentional, repeated and aggressive physical, verbal or psychological behaviour directed by an individual or group against others.
 - Bullying can occur at any age, in any environment, and can be long- or short-term.
 - Any child or young person can be a victim of bullying.
 - Bullying can be perpetuated by adults towards children or young people, as well as by children or young people towards their peer group.
 - Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour may not be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.
 - Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.
-

Bullying can be:

- Emotional or psychological: e.g., tormenting, excluding, extorting, intimidating.
 - Physical: e.g., pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, intimidating, damaging or stealing property, or any use of violence.
 - Racist: e.g., racial taunts, insults about colour, nationality, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background, or use of graffiti or gestures.
 - Sexual: e.g., harassment, unwanted physical contact, or sexually abusive comments. This may constitute actual sexual abuse, which should be reported.
 - Homophobic: e.g., taunting a person of a different sexual orientation.
 - Verbal: e.g., name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
 - Cyber: e.g., misuse or abuse of email, mobile phones, internet chat rooms, social media, text messaging, or camera and video facilities.
 - Subtle: such as an unwelcome expression or gesture that is repeated and focused on an individual.
-

Prevention of bullying

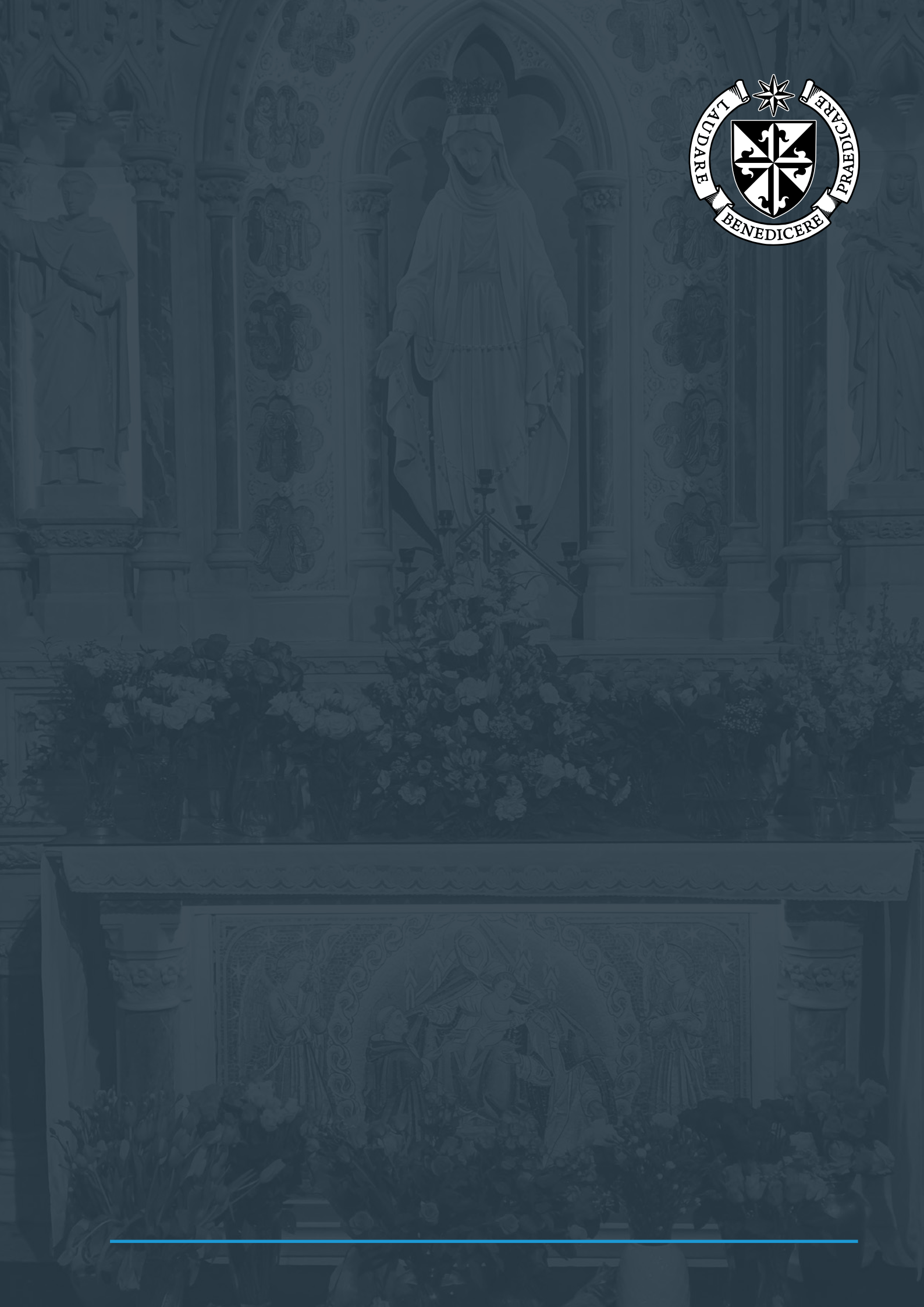
To help prevent bullying, the following strategies are suggested:

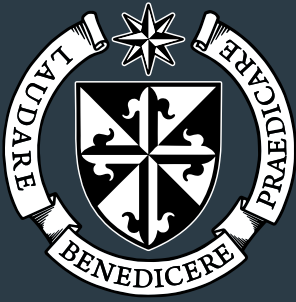
- Engage children or young people in discussions about what bullying is and why it cannot be tolerated.
 - Encourage children or young people to take responsibility and report incidents of bullying to their leader or the person in charge.
 - Review bullying guidance with children or young people and parents involved in parish or agency activities.
 - Seek to promote positive attitudes of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all personnel.
-

Procedures to deal with bullying

- All incidents of bullying should be brought to the attention of the leader or person in charge.
- All incidents will be recorded on incident report forms and kept on file.
- Leaders should report to and seek guidance and support from the friar or Dominican personnel in charge.
- Parents or carers and/or guardians should be informed of incidents of bullying and should meet with the leader or person in charge to discuss the problem.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying quickly stopped.

All parties involved should be supported and helped throughout the process. If necessary and appropriate, the statutory services should be consulted.





Dominican Province of Ireland Safeguarding Office Contact Details

Dominican Prior Provincialate,
St. Mary's Priory,
Tallaght Village,
D24, X585

Telephone (01) 404 8121

Mobile (089) 708 7881

Email safeguardingoffice@dominicans.ie

www.dominicans.ie