

## **Child Safeguarding Statement of the Irish Province of the Capuchin Franciscan Order**

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the *Children First Act 2015*.

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, we, the Capuchin Franciscan Friars, recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with parents/ guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

### **Nature of Services:**

The Capuchin Franciscan Order exists to live the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, which we promote by our life and our ministries. Our ministries include:

- Providing Church services for children as well as adults
- Serving as Chaplains to hospitals and schools
- Conducting retreats attended by children
- Providing facilities to external groups which include children

### **Principles:**

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland we are committed to the following principles:

- **Mandatory reporting.**

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:

  - physically
  - emotionally
  - sexually
  - through neglect

Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of Church personnel, but they can also relate to incidents in the child's family, or elsewhere in the community.
- **Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them. .**

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training support, communications and quality assurance.

- Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

- Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons.

Those who have suffered child abuse by Church personnel will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support as they seek to rebuild their lives. An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order and to the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

- Caring pastorally for respondents and other affected persons.

The Capuchin Order in its response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child sexual abuse will respect the rights under civil law and canon law of an accused cleric or religious or other Church personnel. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered to the respondent.

The Church authority will take responsibility for ensuring that any cleric or religious who is considered to constitute a danger to children is managed according to a risk management plan.

All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child.

Respondents belong to families and diocesan or religious communities. The Church authority will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

## Risk Assessment

The table below sets out identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities that take place under the auspices of the Capuchin Order, or using facilities provided by the Order; and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse. We are committed to observing the Standards and Guidance of the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI).

[cf. <https://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance> – hereafter, *NBSCCCI*]

Identified Risks	Procedures in Place to Manage Risks
That those working with children may be unsafe or unsuitable to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Safe Recruitment Procedures for employees and volunteers, following the Guidance of the NBSCCCI: involving screening, appropriate references,</li> <li>○ For all Clergy and Religious: Certificate of “good standing”, and (for clerics) a <i>Celebret</i>.</li> <li>○ Appropriate Training in Child Safeguarding.</li> <li>○ Garda Vetting for relevant personnel ...</li> </ul> <p>Cf. <i>NBSCCCI Guidance</i>: Standard 1.pdf, pp. 9–11, 21; Standard 5, pp 3–22</p>
That those working with children may behave inappropriately towards them	<p>Codes of Behaviour for Adults who deal with Children</p> <p>Cf. <i>NBSCCCI Guidance</i>: Standard 1.pdf, pp. 50-51, 54, 74</p>
That children who use our services may behave inappropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Codes of Behaviour for Children</li> <li>○ Anti-Bullying Policy</li> </ul> <p>Cf. <i>NBSCCCI Guidance</i>: Standard 1.pdf, pp. 52-54</p>
That the environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to meet effective safeguarding practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintenance of Attendance Registers and adequate supervision ratios;</li> <li>○ Consent from Parents/Guardians and (where appropriate) from children</li> <li>○ Contact Details of Parents/Guardians</li> <li>○ Recording of Incidents/Accidents</li> </ul> <p>Cf. <i>NBSCCCI Guidance</i>: Standard 1.pdf, pp. 57-74</p>
That external groups who use Church property may not have appropriate Safeguarding Standards	<p>Ensuring that all external groups which include children have appropriate Child Safeguarding policies in place.</p> <p>Cf. <i>NBSCCCI Guidance</i>: Standard 1.pdf, pp. 76-82</p>
That those who wish to behave dangerously or unethically towards children may be able to do so	<p>Procedures governing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adequate supervision</li> <li>○ “Whistle-blowing”</li> <li>○ the reporting and recording of concerns and complaints.</li> </ul> <p>Cf. <i>NBSCCCI Guidance</i>: Standard 1.pdf, pp. 64, 83-87</p>
Those who wish to exploit children through the use of digital media in our ministries might be able to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensuring control of access to media</li> <li>○ Securing parental permission for access to media</li> <li>○ Providing guidance in training re internet use.</li> </ul> <p>Cf. <i>NBSCCCI Guidance</i>: Standard 1.pdf, pp. 91-99.</p>

<p>That Church personnel may fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Procedures for the reporting to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of concerns, suspicions, knowledge or allegations regarding the safeguarding of children;</li> <li>○ Procedures for the maintenance of records of such reports.</li> </ul> <p><i>Cf. NBSCCCI Guidance: Standard 2.pdf, pp. 3-33.</i></p>
<p>That Church personnel may fail to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appropriate training for all personnel, including employees and volunteers.</li> <li>○ Role-Specific training for those with special responsibilities in the area of Child Safeguarding</li> <li>○ Regular training needs assessment at local and provincial level by superiors and safeguarding committees</li> </ul> <p><i>Cf. NBSCCCI Guidance: Standard 5.pdf, pp. 3-19.</i></p>
<p>That Children and their parents may not understand the Church’s policy, procedures and structures for the safeguarding of children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Publicising of the Church’s Safeguarding Policy by (e.g.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Age-appropriate posters for adults and children</li> <li>– Information leaflets</li> <li>– Information/consultation sessions with parents</li> <li>– Special celebrations drawing attention to the safeguarding of children (“Safeguarding Sundays”)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Cooperation with other organisations that promote the safeguarding and welfare of children.</li> </ul> <p><i>Cf. NBSCCCI Guidance: Standard 5.pdf, p. 20; Standard 6.pdf, pp. 5-31.</i></p>
<p>That the procedures for safeguarding children may fail to be implemented</p>	<p>Procedures are in place to ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is a Provincial Safeguarding Committee who with the Safeguarding Coordinator advises on the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>○ There is a Child Safeguarding Committee in each friary to oversee and monitor Child Safeguarding locally;</li> <li>○ Audits are carried out in each friary and reported to the Provincial Safeguarding Committee, which in turn reports to the Provincial Minister and Council;</li> <li>○ A Three-year Safeguarding Plan is drawn up by the Provincial Safeguarding Committee and approved by the Provincial and Council to guide Child Safeguarding throughout the province.</li> <li>○ The Designated Liaison Person makes an annual report to the Provincial Minister and Council on the status and management of current and historical allegations of abuse;</li> <li>○ Incoming superiors are briefed by their predecessors on child safeguarding issues;</li> <li>○ Compliance with the standards required in Child Safeguarding are subject to review by NBSCCCI, and by Tusla.</li> </ul> <p><i>Cf. NBSCCCI Guidance: Standard 7.pdf, pp. 6-39.</i></p>
<p>That the Order may fail to appoint a “relevant person” to be a point of contact with Tusla and maintain a list of mandated persons</p>	<p>All required personnel are appointed: the Designated Liaison Person; the Coordinator of Safeguarding (a “relevant person”); Provincial and Local Safeguarding Committees; Local Safeguarding Representatives; support persons for complainants; and advisors for respondents.</p>

## Implementation

The Capuchin Franciscan Order in Ireland is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.

This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice expresses our commitment to ensuring that in our ministries and in any place under our control children are kept safe from harm.

The implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy is subject to oversight and monitoring by the provincial and local superiors with the assistance of the Provincial Safeguarding Coordinator, the Designated Liaison Person, and provincial and local Safeguarding Committees; and, when necessary, appropriate or desirable, in consultation with Tusla and the Garda Síochána. The possibility of risks to children or vulnerable adults is subject to regular assessment as part of our annual audit. Using the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards of the NBSCCCI, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise it, as appropriate.

Signed:



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Br. Adrian Curran OFM Capuchin, Provincial Minister

Date: March 8<sup>th</sup> 2018

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