

INSTITUTE OF CHARITY

GENTILI PROVINCE

REGION OF IRELAND

POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING

PROCEDURES

Foreward

The Irish Region of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity is deeply committed to the protection and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. This booklet contains the updated policies, procedures and codes of behaviour to which we have committed ourselves in our living out of our Rosminian vocation.

We will strive to constantly support and safeguard those whom we encounter in our ministry and in our daily interactions, especially children and vulnerable adults. We will work to create communities and workplaces that are safe and which respect the dignity of every person at every stage of their lives.

Our safeguarding policy is compliant with civil legislation (*Children First 1999*) and Church guidelines (*Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2008*).

It is essential that each member of the region studies the policies and procedures contained in this booklet so that they become woven into our consciousness and find expression in our lives and in our care of others especially children and vulnerable adults.

Fr. David Myers i.c
Provincial.

The Seven Standards

These seven standards identify those issues that are regarded as essential for the protection of children and are listed as follows:

1. A written policy on keeping children safe.
2. Procedures – Responding to Child Protection complaints.
3. Preventing harm to children
 - Recruitment and vetting
 - Running safe activities for children
 - Codes of behaviour
4. Training and education.
5. Communicating the Church's safeguarding message.
6. Access to advice and support.
7. Implementing and monitoring the standards.

These Standards all find expression in the safeguarding policies outlined in this document. Knowing them, making them known, and giving them their fullest possible expression will ensure that our Institute and our Region of the Gentili Province will provide the safest possible environment for children to experience and grow in their faith and in their human development.

A written policy on keeping children safe

Our lives and ministries involve contact with others. As part of the Church community, the Rosminians, and our colleagues in ministry give support to parents and carers who have the primary responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.

As a condition of service, all brethren, staff, and volunteers within each place of ministry will accept that this policy for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is binding on them and they will be made aware that everyone has a part to play to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding and child protection. No one in our houses or places of ministry can abdicate the responsibility to be vigilant and report any suspicion or concerns about the welfare of a child in the manner required by legislation and best practise.

As part of their induction and training, all staff/volunteers will be made familiar with our safeguarding policies and with the definitions and understanding of abuse as outlined below.

A process of review will be conducted every year to monitor the level of implementation of the policies and procedures and to update their content in line with legislation and growing public sensitivity to the issue.

Definition of child abuse:

Neglect - where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, medical care, or attachment to and affection from adults.

Sexual Abuse – when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

Physical Abuse – any form of non accidental injury, which results from the wilful or neglectful failure to safeguard a child.

Emotional Abuse – occurs when the child’s needs for affection, approval, consistency, and security are not met.

(A more detailed definition of abuse is given as Appendix 1)

*Children First, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children,
Dublin Stationery Office, 1999, pp125-131*

*Safeguarding Children Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic
Church in Ireland,
2008, p. 73-76
Nation Office for Safeguarding Children.*

Responding to Child Abuse Allegations and Suspicions

Children have the right to be listened to and heard, and in particular they have the right to a prompt and effective response to allegations of abuse and suspicions about their safety and welfare. Our policy is to report these allegations and suspicions to the appropriate authority both within the Church and the State, using reporting procedures to meet all national legal requirements.

The Irish region of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and takes all allegations, suspicions and disclosures of abuse very seriously.

The statutory authorities state, as a general principle, that any person who suspects that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse has a responsibility to report their concern to the appropriate authorities.

In relation to information received, those making allegations /complaints are advised from the beginning that the protection of the child is the most important consideration, and that it takes priority over an individual's request for confidentiality.

Local Safeguarding Representative

Each house/centre will have a named safeguarding representative who will:

- a) Raise awareness of what safeguarding of children is, through facilitating information sessions.
- b) Disseminate information on *Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document of the Catholic Church*, and our own Policies and Procedures to staff and volunteers.
- c) Ensure that activities happening at the house/centre are provided for in a manner that ensures the safety and wellbeing of all concerned especially children and vulnerable adults.
- d) Ensure the contact details of the Irish Region Designated Safeguarding Officer are widely publicised.
- e) Implement basic procedures that will show the policy statement is being implemented.
- f) Put in place clear codes of conduct for our members/staff/volunteers.
- g) Liaise regularly with the Designated Safeguarding Officer to ensure that we are up to date on any new developments in safeguarding and to arrange training and up skilling as appropriate.

What happens when Child abuse is discovered or a complaint is received?

This procedure sets out the action to be taken if any concern, allegation, suspicion, or disclosure is made whether against religious, staff or volunteers. The welfare of children or vulnerable adults is paramount.

- If a person suspects or is told that a child is being or has been abused by religious, staff, or volunteers, he/she should inform the Designated Officer for the Irish region.
- The Designated Officer informs the Provincial, the Gardai, and the HSE immediately. A formal report is completed.
- If the Designated officer is not available, the Provincial should be contacted.
- When no one is available and there is immediate risk of abuse, the person receiving the complaint should go straight to the Gardai and the HSE. In such cases it is recommended that advice be sought from the National Office for Safeguarding Children.

The Designated Officer

It is the Designated Officer's responsibility to receive information where it is alleged or suspected that a child or vulnerable adult has been or is being abused by any religious, staff or volunteer.

The Designated Officer is responsible for managing the allegation/disclosure or concern from start to finish including:

- a) the preliminary inquiry;
- b) referral to the HSE/Garda Siochana;
- c) any subsequent internal investigations. (*Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2008 P.84*)

Role of the Designated Officer

1. Receive information about a concern or allegation.
2. Ensure that the procedures outlined in Safeguarding Children – Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland have been followed, and ensure that a referral has been made to the statutory authorities, and liaise with the National Body for Safeguarding.
3. Create a child safeguarding casefile for every referral. This must include a log of actions, events and information received. Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event but before the end of the day. They must be timed, dated, and signed.
4. Place all written records in connection with the case in the Child Safeguarding File.
5. Explain the procedures to the person who has raised the concern.
6. Inform the Provincial that a complaint has been made.
7. Inform the alleged perpetrator that an allegation has been made, the nature of the allegation and the procedures that are being followed. He/she should be offered the services of an adviser.
8. Keep the person who raised the allegation and the alleged perpetrator informed on how the inquiry is progressing.
9. Obtain a written report on the outcome of any investigation from the HSE/An Garda Siochana.
10. Conduct an internal investigation at the conclusion of any external investigation.

Confidentiality Statement

The Irish region of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity recognises the importance of ensuring people's right to confidentiality. We are committed to keeping all information about children and their families confidential. The only exception may be when child safeguarding or welfare concerns arise in relation to a child. In this situation, information will be shared on a need to know basis in the best interest of the child.

- Giving information to appropriately designated persons and/or statutory authorities is outside the limits of professional confidentiality;
- Primary carers have a right to know if personal information is being shared and a report is being made to the HSE, unless doing so would put the child at further risk.

Guidelines for Responding to a
Child making an Allegation of Abuse

A Child who is being abused will occasionally confide in an adult whom the child feels he/she can trust. The important thing to remember is that if a child does approach you he/she is doing so in the hope that you will act to stop the abuse happening, even if you are asked not to do anything with the information.

If a child begins to tell you about abuse it is important that you DO :

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully and take the complaint seriously
- Ask questions for clarification only if you are unclear what the child is saying
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Reassure the child that in disclosing abuse he/she has done the right thing
- Tell the child he/she is not to blame for the abuse
- Let the child know you will do what you can to help
- Report the child's disclosure immediately to your local safeguarding representative, to the Designated Officer, (or in the absence of the Designated Officer or if the disclosure in anyway involves any of the aforementioned persons, to the National Safeguarding Board Support Team)

As soon as possible, write down everything that you were told by the child, using his/her own words to describe the abuse. Sign, time and date this record and pass it on to the Designated Officer.

If a child begins to tell you about abuse it is important that you DO NOT:

- Dismiss the concerns
- Panic
- Probe for more information/ ask questions
- Promise not to tell anyone or say you will keep it a secret
- Make negative comments about the accused person
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Disclose details about the allegation to anyone else – even to persons named in the allegation.

Remember: It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is the task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of the concerns about the child.

Role of the Support Person

The Province Leadership Team along with the Designated Officer selects Support People to be available to those who make an allegation or disclose abuse under these procedures. The person (who can be a child or adult) making the allegation will be offered a choice between a male, or a female Support Person.

The role of the Support Person is to assist, where appropriate, with communication between the person making an allegation/disclosure and the Designated Officer, with a view to that person gaining access to help and information, and his/her concerns being represented during the enquiry process.

The Support Person needs to be clear about his/her role and should receive appropriate training.

The Support Person is not a counsellor to the child or adult, and must not be or act as a therapist.

Support People must be particularly attentive to the expressed needs and objectives of the child or adult, and the fact that some may be reluctant to seek help. Support People should, therefore, consider how the therapeutic or spiritual needs of a child or adult who has made an allegation or disclosed abuse may be met, and will be mindful of the complainant's ongoing vulnerability during this process.

In addition the Support Person should:

- Consider any wishes of the complainant in regard to a pastoral response by the Church to his her family
- Be available to the complainant throughout the course of the enquiry process, and thereafter as required
- Ensure the complainant is kept informed of relevant developments
- Represent the wishes and therapeutic needs of the complainant to the Designated Officer, as required
- Arrange, if considered helpful, a meeting between the complainant and the Provincial or other Church authority.

Under no circumstances should the same Support Person be provided for both the complainant and the respondent.

Adapted from Safeguarding Children p58.

Role of the Advisor

The Province Leadership shall make available an Advisor to be available to the respondent.

Advisors shall represent the needs of the respondent to the Leadership team and assist, where appropriate, with the care of the respondent and with communication between the respondent, the Designated Officer, the Leadership Team and the respondent's community and his/her place of work. The respondent's advisor shall not be the respondent's therapist or spiritual director.

Advisors should be particularly alert to the sense of isolation and vulnerability which a respondent may experience following an allegation of this nature. He or she will:

- Accompany, if so requested, and be available to the respondent after the latter's meeting with the Leadership Team and the Designated Officer
- Inform the respondent of his/her right to obtain advice from both civil and Canon Law
- Identify any therapeutic or other needs of the respondent and suggest how these may be met
- Consider the wishes of the respondent in regard to a pastoral response by the Leadership Team to his/her family
- Be available to the respondent throughout the enquiry process and thereafter as required
- Ensure the respondent is kept informed of developments in regard to the enquiry
- Represent the needs and wishes of the respondent to the Designated Officer, as required.

Advisors should receive appropriate training.

Under no circumstances should the person acting as Advisor to the respondent be the same person as the person assuming the role of Support Person to the complainant.

Parish Ministry and Chaplaincies

Where members of the region are involved in Parish ministry they will follow the safeguarding procedures of the Diocese.

In the case of Chaplains they will follow the Safeguarding Policies of the centre where they are ministering. They will ask for copies of the Safeguarding Policies and will be familiar with them. They will be aware of their job description and work within its parameters. Where there is confusion or doubt about procedures they will apply our own Code of Conduct and the policies of the National Body for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.

GENTILI PROVINCE

CODE OF CONDUCT

I the undersigned agree to abide by the following code of conduct:

- To treat all children and vulnerable adults with respect and courtesy.
- To operate within the guidelines of both Church principles and The Standards and Guidance Document.
- To provide pastoral ministry in a safe environment – one that is open and easily accessible.
- To be visible to others when working with children and vulnerable adults.
- To challenge potentially abusive behaviour.
- To report all abusive behaviour to the Delegate.
- To develop a culture where children and vulnerable adults can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly.
- To respect each child's and vulnerable adult's physical and emotional boundaries.
- Never to develop sexual relationships with children or vulnerable adults.
- Never to develop relationships with children or vulnerable adults which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Never to act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child or vulnerable adult at the risk of abuse.
- Never to act in a way that is intended to shame, humiliate or belittle any child or vulnerable adult.
- Never to communicate inappropriately with children or vulnerable adults through use of internet, e-mail, text messages or any other means.
- Never to give alcohol, tobacco, or non-prescriptive drugs to children or vulnerable adults.
- To act and behave at all times in a manner which enriches the dignity of the human person and bears witness to my Rosminian vocation.

Signed: -----

Dated: -----

Preventing Harm to Children

It is important that all possible steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people working with children in the ministries of the Region. While the vast majority of people who want to work with children are well motivated, good recruitment and selection procedures are required to screen out those who are unsuitable and to enhance the prospects of identifying the best person for the post. In all our houses and ministries, care is taken to develop a culture of safety that minimises risk to children by having reliable recruitment and vetting practises to prevent those who pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults from holding positions of trust.

The procedures for recruiting people require that:

1. All vacancies (paid or voluntary) should be openly advertised.
2. A clear job description is developed.
3. Applicants must complete the following forms:
 - Application form
 - Declaration form
 - Garda vetting forms
4. Applicants must provide proof of photo identification
5. Applicants must provide the names of two referees (not family members) who can provide references. References must be received in writing. Verbal contact must be made with all referees.
6. Up- to- date files in respect of all personnel must be kept in the ministry centre/house. These would include application forms, references and other relevant documentation.
7. All interviews take place with at least two interviewers present.
8. All personnel must undertake a recognised programme of Child Protection Training.

Please note that training support, and all relevant forms are provided during the courses organised by the Region's Designated safeguarding Officer for local safeguarding personnel.

Implementing and Monitoring the Safeguarding Policy

To keep children and vulnerable adults safe, policies and plans have to be implemented in our places of ministry and in all the houses of the Irish Region of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity. Checks are needed to ensure that policies are being implemented consistently. The views of those inside and outside our ministries and houses are sought to improve the effectiveness of the safeguards put in place.

The Leadership team is careful to put aside adequate funding to finance training and the implementation and evaluation of our safeguarding procedures.

The Region's Designated Officer, working in collaboration with the Province Leadership Team and the National Body for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church develops a plan of action to ensure and monitor the effectiveness of the strategies put in place to keep children and vulnerable adults safe.

In the spirit of transparency being advocated by the Provincial Leadership team, an evaluation report is made available containing, amongst other findings, the number of incidents of abuse and the number of complaints.

National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (NBSCCC)

Remember: Anyone involved in working with children or vulnerable adults can access specialist advice about protection issues from the National Board for Safeguarding Children.

Postal Address:

National Office for Safeguarding children in the Catholic Church in Ireland
New House
Saint Patrick's College
Maynooth
Co.Kildare

Tel: 01 505 3124

Fax: 01 505 3026

COVENANT OF CARE FOR MEMBERS WITH LIMITED MINISTRY

This is a Covenant of Care regarding the ministry ofwith the Provincial Superior of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity.

The purpose of the agreement is:

- To minimize the risks to young people and vulnerable adults.
- To reduce the possibility of inaccurate suspicions or accusations of abuse.
- To ensure that appropriate ongoing support and review will enable Fr./Br..... to carry out ministry in accordance with both the Child Safeguarding Norms of the Catholic Church in Ireland and in the Archdiocese/Diocese of in particular, and the Norms of the Irish Region of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity.

Fr./Br..... agrees :

- To abide by the Church’s guidelines on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults as found in The Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland, in the Safeguarding Policy of the Archdiocese/Diocese of....., and in the Norms of the Irish Region of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity.
- To abide by the Code of Conduct for all Rosminians engaged in ministry.
- Not to engage in ministry where he will find himself alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- Not to engage in ministry where he will not have access to his support people.
- To continue engaging with his Spiritual Director.
- To continue working with his psychotherapist.
- To continue to avail of the support person appointed by the Provincial.
- To meet with the Province Safeguarding Coordinator once every four months to review the Covenant of Care, to share concerns regarding what, is working/ not working/ needs to change or be different.

Confidentiality:

The sensitive information contained in this agreement will be stored securely and shared in confidence with those named to Fr./Br.as being entitled to it. The Gentili Province Safeguarding Coordinator will make a written record of review meetings and this will be held in accord with the data protection acts of 1998 and 2003. Fr./Br.will have the right to access this written information. We understand and accept that this information may have to be made available to Church/ Archdiocesan/Diocesan representatives if required

On the part of the Institute of Charity we will ensure that Fr./Br..... is given all the support and help he requires to minister safely and professionally at all times.

Signed:

Signed:

Dated:

Contract for Members Out of Ministry

1. Introduction

I,,Provost Provincial of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity, withdraw from you all faculties to preach, hear confessions or exercise any priestly ministry.

I further direct that you:

- Do not exercise the ministry of a priest in public in any form
- Do not wear clerical dress in public and I hereby dispense you from the obligation to do so
- Do not wear religious dress (such as a cassock) in public, or in community and I hereby dispense you from the obligation to do so.

2. Safe Behaviour

This written agreement sets out the parameters of the expected conduct which have been established to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

Fr./Br. will live atand will:

- Agree in writing with Designated Safeguarding Officer of the Irish Region of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity, any time, including destination and accommodation details, away from this address e.g. overnight stays/ holiday. Any unforeseen time away from this address will be notified immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Avoid being alone with children or vulnerable adults and take responsibility for behaving appropriately and removing himself from any such situations unforeseen or otherwise
- Avoid, in all circumstances, direct or indirect contact with the alleged victims and their families without prior arrangement with the Designated safeguarding Officer
- Before leaving the confines of his place of residence will inform a responsible member of the community, by word of mouth or written note, where he intends to go and at what time he will return
- Will, when leaving his place of residence, always carry his mobile phone.

3. Support

Fr./ Br.will be supported by the Leadership of the Gentili Province in keeping to these conditions in accordance with our own safeguarding policy and the norms of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church and in compliance with relevant civil legislation, through the making available a suitable person to act in the capacity of Advisor, a Spiritual Director, and a Counsellor/Psychotherapist.

4. Review/Amendment Process

Fr./Br. And the Designated Safeguarding Officer, will review this contract as a minimum every twelve months, and will recommend any amendments to the Provost Provincial, so as to ensure what is best for the safeguarding of children

and vulnerable adults and to ensure adequate care and support for fr./Br.....

At any time during this the twelve month period, Fr./Br.can request a meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Provost Provincial to address any perceived or real breach of the contract by either party.

In the event of child/vulnerable adult protection concerns being identified we will follow the reporting policy of the National Body for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church and Civil Legislation.

5. Confidentiality

The sensitive information contained in this agreement will be stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation and shared in confidence only with those entitled to it.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will make a written record of review meetings and these will be held in accordance with all relevant data protection legislation. Fr./Br.as the subject of this contract will have access to this written information.

6. Signatures

This agreement is the basis of the ongoing relationship between Fr./Br and the Institute of Charity.

Signed:

Signed:

Signed:

Date:

Seal:

Appendix 1

The following definition of child abuse is taken from the Safeguarding document of the archdiocese of Armagh.

What is Child Abuse?

Recognising the various types of Abuse

The recognition of child abuse is never easy or straightforward even for those professionals who work in this area. Nevertheless it is important that those working with children are aware not only of the different types of abuse, that a child may experience, but also that a child may suffer more than one type of abuse. Abuse is normally categorised under four broad headings: physical abuse; emotional abuse; sexual abuse and neglect. Those working with children need to be aware of the general indicators of abuse, which can be divided into both behavioural and physical signs.

General indicators of abuse

Physical

Abuse

Where children are hurt by ill-treatment or deliberate or neglectful failure to prevent injury or harm. Common indicators may include:

- unexplained recurrent injuries or burns;
- unlikely or improbable explanations for injuries or a refusal to explain;
- self destructive tendencies;
- fear of physical contact, or shrinking back if touched.

Emotional

Abuse

Where children are persistently or severely emotionally neglected or rejected, for example, by not being shown enough love and attention, made to feel worthless, or being intimidated by threats or taunts. Signs of emotional abuse include:

- delays in physical, emotional and social development;
- extreme fear of new situations;
- poor self esteem and sense of own worth;
- over reaction to mistakes;
- inappropriate response to pain;
- neurotic behaviour.

Sexual

Abuse

Where children are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity ranging from exposure to pornographic literature, pornography on the Internet, to inappropriate touching for the purposes of arousal or gratification and sexual intercourse.

Symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- sexual knowledge inappropriate for the child's age and level of understanding;
- sexualised behaviour towards self or others;
- regression to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking;
- self mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia;
- sudden loss of appetite or over eating.

Neglect

Where children's physical and/or psychological needs are persistently and/or severely neglected, with a failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger. Signs of neglect include:

- constant hunger;
- inadequate clothing;
- constant tiredness, pale and generally unkempt appearance;
- poor personal hygiene.

The indicators outlined above should only be considered as a general guide to the types of abuse experienced by children. In all cases of abuse an assessment will need to be carried out by a range of Social and Health professionals in order to gain an understanding as to what may be happening to a child. Injuries alone are not proof of abuse. Suspicion and concerns should be raised if there is:

- a history of injuries,
- delay in adults seeking treatment for a child who has been harmed,
- inadequate or inconsistent explanations, or
- a child being blamed repeatedly for causing the injuries.

The following guidelines are taken from the Safeguarding document of the Archdiocese of Armagh.

Guidelines on use of modern technology when working with children

Use of photography and video

The use of photography and video is an issue of great concern among those working with children. The Archdiocese recognises that every parish has their own arrangements in relation to its use in schools, youth groups and for the sacraments however the guidelines have been devised below to aid parishes and diocesan groups:

- it is always good practice to seek written permission from a parent or guardian before taking any photographs or video footage of children. This written permission must be sought from the parent/guardian or the person who owns the photograph before it can be displayed on promotional materials or websites. This can be incorporated in the registration form when a child joins a group (template permission Resource 10);
- neither names nor any personal information should be displayed alongside any photographs;
- special consideration should be given where taking photographs or video footage might be misinterpreted, or the images could be seen as provocative (eg beach trip or gymnastics display etc). It is not to say, however, that with the right planning, these events cannot be recorded and enjoyed.

Photography and video recording are important methods of recording social activity and providing an historic record – illustrating and validating important moments in people’s lives. This process is a powerful and personal one, and therefore, we must respect the rights of everyone to make the choice whether or not to be photographed.

Use of mobile phones

The use of mobile phones for communication is growing rapidly and many young people use their own personal mobile. In addition to this many mobiles can be used for photography and video as well as for the internet. It is therefore important for groups to be very clear on their stance in relation to use of mobile phones for church personnel.

Use of the internet and e-mail in Church

Many parishes and diocesan groups have websites and use e-mail as a form of communication with children and families. Through these websites they give information on many things including Catholic faith and social teaching, parish and diocesan activities, activities organised by other agencies whether community or faith based and give links to other websites. Information relating to groups working with young people should only be included in diocesan/parish websites if they adhere to a child protection policy which has been sent to the Diocesan Training Team for approval.

Acceptable internet use policy

Use of the internet by church personnel to promote, inform and educate, is encouraged where such use supports the ethos of the Archdiocese. It is the responsibility of those church personnel using the internet and the Parish

Priest/Administrator/Diocesan Contact Person for each of the diocesan groups to ensure that they:

- comply with current legislation;
- use the internet in an acceptable way.

It is recognised that many young people communicate through social networking sites and personal e-mails. This method of communication is generally not shared with parents/guardians. It is therefore the responsibility of the group leader/organiser to ensure that any information shared with a child through a social networking relationship or through e-mail is shared with parents. Advice in this area can be sought from the Diocesan Youth Director. The following are some guidelines to follow:

- all e-mails sent and received from children should be retained for 2 years;
- young people should only be contacted by group e-mail and should also be forwarded to parents;
- it is the right of each individual to decide who has access to their e-mail address. All e-mail providers offer a BCC function which allows the sender to send an e-mail to many people without revealing the addresses of the other people receiving the e-mail. In order to ensure the privacy of children and parents/guardians, individual addresses from group e-mails should be sent using the BCC box. If you are unsure how to do this contact the Diocesan Office or the Youth Ministry Office and someone will advise you;
- group e-mails should give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as: "If you wish to be removed from this e-mail list please contact the administrator".

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- group e-mails should give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as: “If you wish to be removed from this e-mail list please contact the administrator”.

Unacceptable internet use

In particular the following is deemed unacceptable internet use or behaviour:

- visiting internet sites that contain offensive, obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material;
- using the computer to perpetrate any form of fraud, or software, film or music piracy;
- using the internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users;
- using obscene or racist language;
- hacking into unauthorised areas;
- publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about others on social networking sites, ‘blogs’ (online journals), ‘wikis’ and any online publishing format;
- introducing any form of malicious software into the corporate network;
- intentional damage to computers, computer systems or computer networks;
- intentional damage to any information communication technologies equipment;
- using another users password or giving their password to another user;
- using the network for unapproved commercial purposes.

If a diocesan or parish group uses the internet or emailing as part of its activities, the group leader must ensure that each leader and young person is aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable usage, using the above points as a guide. The area of cyber bullying should also be addressed in drawing up and implementing an anti bullying policy.

USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES

Church organisations can get further help and guidance about online safety from the following:

For adults – Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

www.ispai.ie

www.copine.ie

www.ceop.gov.uk

For children – Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

NSPCC

www.childline.org.uk/Info/Pages/OnlineSafety.aspx

For information on Cyber Bullying

www.bullying.co.uk/schools/cyberbullying

Bullying in schools in Ireland

- [Introduction](#)
- [What is bullying?](#)
- [Guidelines on countering bullying behaviour](#)
- [How is bullying stopped?](#)
- [Where to apply](#)

Introduction

There are rules regarding bullying between students at primary and post-primary schools. These are set down in guidelines (but not law) issued by the Department of Education and Skills. The following sets out the rules about bullying in schools and the rights of pupils and parents where bullying occurs.

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) has drawn up [Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools](#) - see below. The guidelines recommend that the prevention of bullying should be a fundamental part of a [written code of behaviour and discipline](#) in all schools.

According to [Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children \(pdf\)](#) issued by the Department of Health in 1999, teachers may have a general duty to ensure that students are not bullied by other students.

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines as repeated physical, verbal or psychological aggression directed by an individual or group against others. Bullying can occur at any age, in any environment, and can be long or short-term.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying through the internet or mobile phone, often through social networking sites used by young people. A booklet [GET WITH IT! A guide to cyberbullying \(pdf\)](#) has been produced as a joint initiative between the [Office for Internet Safety](#), the [National Centre for Technology in Education](#) and [Barnardos](#). The booklet is intended to increase awareness of all aspects of cyberbullying including how to identify it and how to prevent it.

Effects of bullying

Many children who are being bullied are afraid to speak out. They are scared of reprisals if they tell someone. Reports have shown that as young people grow older, they are less likely to tell someone. They become more and more isolated, experience depression and, in extreme cases, can harm themselves or attempt suicide.

Signs of bullying

- Fear of going to school
- Poor or deteriorating schoolwork, inability to concentrate
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Depression
- Loss of confidence
- Reluctance to go out
- Shortage of money
- Torn clothes, broken glasses, missing schoolbooks
- Repeated signs of bruising and injuries

Why do people bully?

Very often, bullies are themselves suffering from low self-esteem and lack of confidence. They may suffer violence at home. In other cases, they may be reacting to painful changes in their lives, for example, bereavement or divorce. They may want to seek attention or to appear in control. If you think your child might be a bully it is important to recognise this and help him or her to deal with it. You should talk to the class teacher about this bullying behaviour and how it could be changed.

Guidelines on countering bullying behaviour

The [Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools](#) published by the Department of Education and Skills recommend that the prevention of bullying should be a fundamental part of a written code of behaviour and discipline in all schools. There should be a school policy on dealing with bullying, within the framework of a code of discipline. This policy should include:

- The creation of a school ethos that encourages students to tell about bullying.
- Raising of awareness of bullying as unacceptable behaviour with management, students, teachers and parents
- Monitoring and supervision of school activities
- Developing procedures for reporting, investigating and dealing with bullying
- Developing a programme of support for those affected by bullying and those involved in bullying
- Working with local agencies to combat all forms of bullying in school and the local community.

The Department of Education and Skills has also published guidelines for teachers on child abuse and bullying. These guidelines reflect the particular circumstances of primary and post-primary schools and are based on the recommendations of the 'Children First' report. They are:

- [Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures \(pdf\)](#) for the primary sector
- [Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools \(pdf\)](#).

How is bullying stopped?

Intervention from adults is usually necessary. Bullying behaviour must be challenged or it will become regular and get worse. If you think someone is being bullied, you should provide opportunities for them to talk to you. It will take time, but if you send a clear message that bullying is unacceptable and does not have to continue, in time, the young person may trust you enough to tell. If you think your child is being bullied you should talk to the class teacher or the principal. If the matter can not be resolved at school you may contact the Department of Education and Skills.

If you wish to report an allegation of bullying or child abuse to the Department, please contact the Parents' and Learners' Section - see 'Where to apply' below.

Where to apply

Parents' and Learners' Section, Schools' Division

Department of Education and Skills
Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Tel:(090) 648 4099

Fax:(090) 648 4058

Email: childprotection@education.gov.ie