



**The Irish Region of the Gentili Province
of the
Institute of Charity**

Policy Statement on approach to Victim/Survivor Outreach

Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives

Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, we 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.

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. Our Policy on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons contains the standards to which we have committed ourselves in living out 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. The Gentili Province is spread across a number of civil jurisdictions, and our Policy on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons has been designed for all personnel in Ireland, and is tailored to the specific requirements in Ireland.

Our Policy on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons is based on the guidelines as outlined in Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2008) issued by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCI). It has been updated to take account of the national guidance set out in Children First 2011, and with the HSE guidance document "Child Protection and Welfare Practice" Handbook 2012. We undertake to fully report all concerns, suspicions, allegations, and disclosures (current or historical or anonymous) to the civil authorities and Church authorities without delay. All suspicions, concerns, disclosures (current or historical or anonymous) and/or complaints of abuse pertaining to members of our Congregation, our employees or volunteers, should be made to the DLP who will work in conjunction with Tusla and the Gardaí.

1. The Congregation is committed to ensuring that those who have suffered child abuse receive a compassionate and just response and are offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives. Information is provided in our Policy, via the "Safeguarding icon" on our website (www.rosminians.ie) on how those who have experienced abuse can seek support.
2. Where a person reveals that he or she has abused a child, it is necessary to tell that person that you cannot keep such information secret, even if it relates to an incident many years previously. You must inform the person that you are required to refer the information to the DLP, who will follow the procedures for referral to the civil authorities.
3. Allegations or concerns about child abuse that are raised by a person who wishes to remain anonymous are to be treated carefully. Anxiety or fear may cause some people not to reveal their identity immediately. It is difficult to act on information unless at some point

the name of the person raising a concern or making an allegation becomes known. The person raising the concern should be informed that anonymity will restrict the ability of professionals to access information and/or to intervene to protect a child. As much openness as possible should be encouraged.

4. Guidance on how to respond to a child or person who makes a disclosure is set out in our Policy at Appendix 12. Each member of the Congregation, every employee and volunteer is obliged to familiarise themselves with the guidance set out at Appendix 12 and shall respond sensitively and appropriately to people raising a child protection concern.
5. Subject always to 7. below, the complainant should be offered pastoral support and given the contact details of a Counselling Service. These details are as follows:

Counselling Services:

Towards Healing Helpline	From Republic of Ireland: 1800 303416 From Northern Ireland and the UK 0800 0963315 www.towardshealing.ie
One in Four	Tel: 353 01 6624070 www.oneinfour.ie
The Samaritans	Tel: 353 01 116123 www.samaritans.org
Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)	Tel: 353 01 6767960 www.ispcc.ie
Childline	Tel: 1800 666 666 www.childline.ie
Catholic Youth Care	Tel: 01 872 5055 www.cyc.ie

Other Advice:

National Board for
Safeguarding Children in
The Catholic Church in
Ireland

01 5053124
www.safeguarding.ie
Teresa Devlin

Towards Peace

01 5053028
www.towardspeace.ie
Una Allen

Caranua

Republic of Ireland: 1800 212477
UK: 0808 2341303
www.caranua.ie
Mary Higgins

6. Subject always to 7. below, the complainant should be offered a Support Person. The role of the Support Person is detailed below:

- Appointed by the Provincial, the Support Person is to be available to those who make an allegation or disclose abuse under this Policy:
- The role of the Support Person is to assist, where appropriate, with communication with the DLP to facilitate access to information and to represent the needs and concerns of the complainant during the inquiry.
- Maintaining a positive relationship with the complainant,
- Keeping lines of communication open,
- Listening carefully to the complainant,
- Offering Counselling Services,
- **Note:** the Support Person is **not** a counsellor to the complainant, and should **not** act as their therapist.

7. The Congregation fully acknowledges the pain and hurt caused by abuse, and fully accepts that there may be some circumstances where a complainant may not wish to engage with the Congregation in a pastoral context. Our experience over the years has been that in the majority of cases where the Congregation has received disclosures of abuse, these are received via the Gardaí or via a solicitor's letter, and not from the complainant directly. Accordingly, the Congregation wishes to be sensitive to the complainant's needs, and will endeavour to engage with the complainant through a medium that suits them, and at a pace that suits them. Where the complainant wishes to engage with us via their solicitors, we will endeavour to communicate our pastoral approach via their solicitors. However we fully appreciate that it is not always easy for the complainant to engage with our offers of pastoral support when legal matters are ongoing. We will make the offer, and if the complainant wishes to engage we will endeavour to respond positively. Accordingly, the provisions of 2. – 6. above should be read in light of this.

8. Those who have harmed others are to be assisted to face the reality of their abusive behaviour and facilitated to seek healing. Appropriate support will be provided to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety. The Congregation will advise and support any perpetrator of abuse to avail of appropriate remedial and therapeutic help to enable him to confront the reality of abuse, and his progress will be reviewed on a regular basis. The Risk Management Plan and Precept/Covenant of Care (if any) in place will be reviewed on a regular basis. The NBSCCCI and/or NCMRG will be consulted when a risk assessment is required, to ensure that the assessor is appropriate. See our Policy Appendix 7 and the details in relation to the appointment of an Advisor to the respondent, and the role and responsibility of the Advisor. See also Section 2.25 of our Policy.

9. We operated our own Advisory Panel. Since 2012 this function has been fulfilled by the services of the NCMRG (National Case Management Reference Group). A Data Processing Deed to join the NCMRG was signed by the Congregation in October 2012 formalising this relationship. The NCMRG has provided support and assistance to the Provincial and the DLP. We are grateful for their advice and guidance.

10. The Congregation are committed to working in partnership with civil authorities to ensure that all aspects of child welfare are managed promptly, professionally and justly. We will adhere to best practice, notably '*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2011), '*Child Protection and Welfare*' *Practice Handbook* (2011) and to Church Guidance including "*Safeguarding Children Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*" (2008). All child safeguarding concerns must be reported to the civil authorities without delay.

11. Our Policy on Safeguarding Children sets out clear guidance on how to respond to and support a child who is suspected to have been abused, whether that abuse is by someone within the Church or in the Congregation, by a family member or by peers. See Appendix 12.

12. The roles of the Support Person and the Advisor are very different. Under no circumstances should the same Support Person be provided for the child/adult making the complaint and for the alleged abuser. Both the Support Person and the Advisor requires appropriate training, and to be supported in their role.



The Irish Region of the Gentili Province of the Institute of Charity

Policy

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.

Procedure

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 authorities using reporting procedures that meet all national legal requirements.

Contact Details

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