
Policy and Standards
for the Redemptorists
in Ireland

2026



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

A ONE-CHURCH APPROACH

This document is an abridged and edited version of A Safe and Welcoming Church Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards 2024 published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.



INTRODUCTION

Dear Confreres and Colleagues,

In 2016 the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church published a “One Church” approach to Safeguarding which all Irish Dioceses and Religious Congregations, including the Redemptorists, signed up to. The policy focused on establishing consistent standards to prevent abuse and assist the Church on its journey to learn from the mistakes of the past and ensure that the safety of children is a core part of the Church’s mission.

Following a lengthy review of this One Church “Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2016)” a revised policy document was developed entitled “A Safe and a Welcoming Church – Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards (2024).” A significant change in this new policy document was the reduction of the number of Standards involved from 7 to 3.

- Leadership, Governance and Accountability.
- Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding.
- Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law.

This short booklet attempts to summarise the essential elements of “A Safe and Welcoming Church.” It highlights the basic principles on which the policy is based and articulates the 3 Safeguarding Standards which are the core of the Policy. This new Policy builds on the foundations of past learnings and experiences, It provides a new focus on leadership and governance to deepen a culture of safeguarding, in which.

- The Church has an important role to play in creating and maintaining an environment in which children and young people can grow and flourish in their humanity and come to experience the dignity that Jesus proclaimed.
- Children will be welcome and safe.
- Church personnel will uphold the rights of children in line with Gospel values.

I take the opportunity of thanking all who are involved in ensuring that we Redemptorists are doing all in our power to create a safeguarding environment in the Province. We can never let our guard down when it comes to safeguarding. We all have a role to play and a sacred responsibility in helping to create this environment where children who are involved in our ministries, or who attend our churches, can develop and be safe.

I encourage all Redemptorist personnel, religious and lay, to familiarise ourselves with the Policy and Standards in “A Safe and Welcoming Church”, and to accept our responsibility to create a safeguarding environment in which children and young people who are involved in our ministries, or who attend our Churches, are helped to develop and are kept safe.

On completion of training in the new Policy and Standards I would ask you to indicate your understanding of the policy and your intention to adhere to it by signing the statement at the back of this booklet and returning it to the Provincial Offices here in Dundalk.

Your brother in Christ,
Brendan O'Rourke, C.Ss.R.
Provincial

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT OF THE REDEMPTORISTS IN IRELAND

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.

The Dublin Province of the Redemptorists 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 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 professed and ordained Redemptorists and by all Redemptorist lay staff and volunteers.

This quote from Pope Francis focuses on our role of welcoming and supporting children in the life of the Church.

Our generation must show that it can rise to the promise found in each [child and] young person when we know how to give them space. This means that we have to create the material and spiritual conditions for their full development, to give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education to be everything they can be; to pass on to them lasting values that make life worth living; to give them a transcendent horizon for their thirst for authentic happiness and their creativity for the good; to give them the legacy of a world worthy of human life; and to awaken in them their greatest potential as builders of their own destiny, sharing responsibility for the future of everyone. If we can do all this today, we anticipate the future that enters the world through the window of the young.

(Pope Francis - 2013)

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

The “Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards 2024” developed by the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland is built on the following principles.

Ministry with children based on scripture

The words and actions of Christ guide engagement with children. Throughout his teachings, Jesus places a sacred obligation on all who minister in the Catholic Church to uphold human dignity, including the dignity of children.

Ministry with children based on national law, canon law and government regulation

The Church upholds the civil, criminal and canon laws relating to the care and protection of children, within the jurisdictions in which it ministers. Church personnel will honour and uphold their legal responsibility (in line with mandatory reporting obligations) to report all allegations, knowledge, suspicions and concerns of child abuse to civil and canonical entities, and to manage the risk to children.

Ministry with children based on the Constitution of Ireland, children’s rights and international treaties

The Church will uphold the moral and legal obligation to fulfil children’s rights commitments as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Constitution of Ireland and other relevant international treaties. This includes ensuring the safety of children in all ministries, and having children participate in the decisions and activities that affect them.

Caring for complainants

The response to complainants will be pastoral, caring and compassionate. This approach must be about listening, acknowledging the hurt experienced by the complainant and their family, and offering support that reflects the individual needs and circumstances of the complainant on their journey towards healing. The Church will engage with the complainant in order to ensure that they have a voice in deciding the appropriate support response.

Providing a fair and just process for respondents

The Church will ensure a just and fair process that upholds a fair and just process for respondents. The Church will ensure a just and fair process that upholds the rights of an accused cleric or a male or female religious under civil and canon law, maintaining a presumption of innocence unless there is an admission of guilt or a finding of guilt. Throughout all investigative and canonical processes, the Church will engage with the relevant statutory and ecclesiastical authorities to ensure that risk to children is appropriately assessed and managed.

Acknowledging the safeguarding journey of the Church

The abuse of children in the Catholic Church in Ireland happened and must never be forgotten. Children were harmed. Progress has been made in establishing and responding to the truth of what happened. Therefore, it is recognised that safeguarding is a core and important part of ministry. The Church commits to continuing this journey of justice, truth, healing, and preventing abuse.

COMMITMENTS

Together with the principles outlined above, the Redemptorists commit to:

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, either physically, emotionally, sexually, or 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 ministry of Redemptorists 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 Redemptorists 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* will be reported via the Designated Liaison Person 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 Redemptorist, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation will be reported to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Redemptorists, their staff and volunteers, will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to its own members, the Redemptorist Congregation 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 the respondent.

Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons

Those who have suffered child abuse by Redemptorist 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.

*Apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. 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. [Code of Canon Law, c.983.1, in Catholic Church (1983)].

An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, Congregation 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 Redemptorists, in responding 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 Redemptorists 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 religious communities. The Redemptorists will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

LEGISLATION UNDERPINNING THIS POLICY

International

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on Human Rights (UNCHR)

Republic of Ireland

Protected Disclosures Act 2014 amended by the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022

Children First Act 2015

National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998

The Constitution of Ireland

Northern Ireland

Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, updated August 2017 (V. 2)

Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

Public Interest Disclosure
(Northern Ireland) Order
1998 (amended in October
2017)

The Police Act 1997 (Criminal
Records) (Disclosure)

The Children (Northern
Ireland) Order 1995

Criminal Law Act (Northern
Ireland) 1967

Safeguarding Board Act
(Northern Ireland) 2011

The Safeguarding Vulnerable
Groups (Northern Ireland)
Order 2007

Public Interest Disclosure
(Northern Ireland) Order
1998 (amended in October
2017)

The Police Act 1997 (Criminal
Records) (Disclosure)

The Children (Northern
Ireland) Order 1995

Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967

Canon law

Sacramentorum Sanctitatis
Tutela ('Protection of the
Sanctity of the Sacraments')

Vos estis lux Mundi ('You are
the Light of the World')

Motu proprio ('As a Loving
Mother')

Code of Canon Law
(including Book VI)

REPORTING A CONCERN

Guide to reporting a concern

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children and vulnerable adults with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. We all have a responsibility to pass on any safeguarding concerns without delay (within the next working day) to the Civil Authorities (Tusla, HSE and An Gardaí) even in cases where Church Personnel are not directly involved.

The guiding principles in regard to the reporting of abuse or neglect are:

- The safety of the child or adult at risk is paramount.
- If you have a concern about a child or adult and are not sure what to do, contact the Designated Liaison Person.
- Reports should be made without delay to the Designated Liaison Person, Tusla and An Gardaí.
- If a child or adult is in immediate danger contact the Gardaí directly.

Under The Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, so long as you report what you believe is true and it is done in good faith you cannot be sued.

Reporting Procedure

The following summarises the procedure to be followed in the reporting of concerns in relation to safeguarding. If a safeguarding concern arises.

- Information relating to the concern must be passed to the Designated Liaison Person without delay. See contact numbers below.
- If the concern is external to the Redemptorists, the Designated Liaison Person will pass the concern to the Civil Authorities
- If the concern is internal, the Designated Liaison Person will ascertain if the grounds for concern are reasonable.
- If the concern is reasonable a case file is opened by the Designated Liaison Person and the concern is passed to the Church Authority and Civil Authorities without delay (next working day).
- The Designated Liaison Person will update the person raising the concern (within a reasonable timeframe) on whether the concern has been forwarded or not to the Civil Authorities.
- If the person raising the concern is unhappy with the Designated Liaison Person's response they should be encouraged to go to the Civil Authorities directly.
- In all cases the person raising the concern should be encouraged to report their concern to the Civil Authorities.
- If you are unsure about any aspect of a safeguarding concern you are encouraged to contact the Designated Liaison Person directly for advice and support.

Designated Liaison Person for the Dublin Province of the Redemptorists.

Ms Cleo Yates

Mob: 087 3553024

Email dlp@cssr.ie

Gardaí/PSNI

Garda Child Sexual Abuse Reporting Phone No; 1800 555 222

Belfast: 028-9065 0222 (139 Stewardstown Road)

Cork: 021-452 2000 (Anglesea St)

Dublin: 01-666 4000 (Santry)

Dundalk: 042-938 8400 (The Crescent)

Limerick: 061-212 400 (Henry St)

TUSLA/Local Social Services

Belfast: 0300-10 00 300 (HSC SE TRUST Gateway Team)

Cork: 021-492 3001 (South Lee)

Dublin: 01-870 8000 (Swords)

Dundalk: 042-939 2200 (Louth Hospital Campus)

Limerick: 061-607100 (St. Joseph's Campus)

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all Catholic Church bodies in Ireland and is addressed to all Church personnel. The promotion of good child safeguarding, responding promptly to concerns with compassion and ensuring a just and fair response to those accused, is the responsibility of the whole Church.

The Catholic Church in Ireland has adopted a policy of mandatory reporting of all child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge and allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. There is a legal requirement to report offences in Northern Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland, all priests and male and female religious are considered to be mandated persons, alongside persons listed in Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015.

Putting the policy into action:

The safeguarding children standards

There are three core standards to the Church's Safeguarding Children Policy (the three standards are linked, and no standard is more important than another). The Redemptorists will implement this policy by ensuring that all our ministry and activities comply with applicable indicators under each of the safeguarding standards:

What is this standard?

As a leader, the Church authority embodies and imparts the Catholic Church's vision, principles and values, which are reflected and apparent in the child safeguarding culture, structures and practices at all levels and in all ministries with children and young people. This demonstrates, through words and actions, the Church authority's personal commitment to fulfil the safeguarding mission of the Church. It has a responsibility to motivate and inspire others to fulfil the vision of this Safeguarding Children Policy.

Church authorities have a key governance responsibility to embed a culture of safeguarding. They, and all those with safeguarding roles, can demonstrate leadership by modelling positive engagement with children and young people; showing a personal commitment to promoting good safeguarding practice; and demonstrating empathy and understanding to those who have been harmed in the Church. This requires an ability to listen, to respond flexibly, to be confident and transparent, and to accept the challenge of being accountable. Church authorities influence all actions, to ensure that everyone in ministry fulfils their responsibility to safeguard children.

In practical terms, leadership and accountability involve:

- Striving at all times to act with integrity, following the example of Jesus.
- Ensuring that adequate structures, personnel & resources are provided to embed safeguarding at the core of ministry & regularly reviewing these.

- Engaging in systematic review of practice (including undertaking annual self-audits and external reviews of practice) to enable learning for continuous improvement.
- Being held accountable for compliance with all child safeguarding standards, including the Church's commitment to keeping children safe and having a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.

Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding

What is this standard?

Implementing this standard ensures the creation and maintenance of a culture of safety, including a safe church environment that is welcoming of children.

Keeping children safe from harm is an imperative but, more than that, the Church will promote the well-being of children through their participation in the ministry of the Church. The Church will create and maintain environments that uphold children's rights and that create nurturing, caring conditions where children will flourish in faith and love. Through fostering a culture of care, children feel safe and looked after and, in turn, they will be supportive of and respectful to their peers.

This culture of care extends to every person. The Church will support the adults who minister to and engage with children and their carers through training, guidance and supervision to ensure that children's safety is promoted and upheld. Children and adults should feel that they can voice any concerns they have, and that these will be respected, listened to and acted on appropriately.

The Church authority will ensure that:

- Those who work with or minister to children are competent and supported in their role.
- Environments in which children's ministries are conducted are safe and risks are managed.

Responding Pastorally & Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law

What is this standard?

This standard is concerned with allegations of abuse; adherence to civil and canon law; caring for complainants; and ensuring a just process of inquiry.

The Catholic Church is committed to timely reporting of all allegations, responding with support and care to complainants of abuse and their families, and ensuring appropriate accompaniment for respondents. The Church will ensure a fair and just process of inquiry, and equip and support those tasked with responding to allegations, as outlined below:

- All allegations, suspicions, concerns and knowledge of abuse that meet the threshold will be reported to civil and canonical entities, and to the National Board, within the timeframes for reporting. Appropriate safeguards will be put in place to ensure that children are safeguarded while allegations are being investigated.
- A response that is caring, compassionate and pastoral, which acknowledges the hurt experienced and which reflects the individual circumstances of the complainant, will be offered,

in response to each person's need. The support needs of the family (however described) of the complainant may also be considered.

- The rights under civil and canon law of an accused cleric or male or female religious will be upheld. A presumption of innocence will be maintained unless there is evidence of guilt. All respondents will be offered pastoral support.
- The Church authority cooperates with statutory authority personnel, relevant independent organisations (including the Charities Regulator, if appropriate) and experts in child safeguarding to ensure independent oversight.

Further details of the Indicators (how the objectives of each Standard are to be achieved), as well as ways of Providing Evidence to Support the Implementation of the Standards, can be found in *ASAFE AND A WELCOMNG CHURCH – SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND STANDARDS*, published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church (2024). www.safeguarding.ie

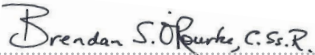
THE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY STANDARDS



COMMITMENT BY THE DUBLIN PROVINCE OF THE REDEMPTORISTS

On behalf of the Dublin Province of the Redemptorist Congregation, as part of the Catholic Church in Ireland, I commit us to safeguarding children by agreeing to follow this Child Safeguarding Policy.

I will ensure that the Province abides by and upholds the standards and the applicable indicators in our entire ministry and contacts with children.

Signed .....

Date January 2026
.....

Brendan O'Rourke C.Ss.R.
Provincial

COMMITMENT BY CONFRERES AND CO-WORKERS

I have read, understood and agree to follow this
Child Safeguarding Policy.

Name

.....

Redemptorist/Co-Worker

.....

Signed

.....

Date

.....

Please sign and return to:

The Provincial Offices, St. Joseph's Monastery,
St. Alphonsus Road, Dundalk, Co Louth, A91F3FC

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