



Passionist Safeguarding Guidance

Children, Young People
and Adults at Risk

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Foreword to Revised Passionist Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (2025)

I am pleased to present the revised Passionist Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (2025). I want to express my sincere gratitude to Suzanne Phelan, Safeguarding Lead and Designated Liaison Person for St Patrick's Province, for her dedicated work in preparing this revised policy. I also thank Pat Duffy, Brian D'Arcy and John Thornhill who helped Suzanne with this work.

For more than thirty years, the safeguarding of young people under the age of 18 has been a central priority of the Catholic Church. The whole Church has been called to ensure that all young people entrusted to our care are safe, protected and supported in all circumstances. This revised policy is an expression of our awareness of the need for care, vigilance, compassion and responsibility, and reaffirms our commitment to safeguarding young people at all times.

Today, we are also keenly aware of other vulnerable people who need our vigilant care. These include the sick, the elderly and the frail – both those we meet in our ministry and those who live within our communities. We must also remain sensitive and caring to the needs of immigrants and asylum seekers who often live with great uncertainty and fear. We are all aware of the sad instances of different kinds of abuse and exploitation suffered by vulnerable adults.

This revised policy affirms that the Catholic Church and the Passionist Community of St Patrick's Province are committed to the sensitive pastoral care and safeguarding of all people and especially of children and adults at risk.

I encourage all Passionists, both religious and lay, to study this new edition of the policy and to participate in the training and other events that will be arranged to help us internalise the values and content of the policy.



Fr Martin Coffey CP
Provincial

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Introduction

This is the Safeguarding Policy for the Passionists, staff and volunteers working across Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales together with St Joseph's Church Paris.

In Ireland and the UK over the last number of years the Church has tried to act more pastorally, professionally and transparently as we, and other institutions and groups, have sought to continue making improvements in the area of Safeguarding. There is now a 'One Church' approach across the Province, which has established national guidelines of policy and practice in Ireland North and South, in Scotland and now in England and Wales. These developments have taken place through the joint offices of the Bishops' Conference in Ireland together with Association of Leaders of Religious and Missionaries in Ireland AMRI, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Conference of Religious and the Bishops and Religious of Scotland.

In Ireland, as constituent members of the Catholic Church we are associated with AMRI and National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NSBCCCI). In England and Wales, we are members of the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS) established to provide Religious Congregations with advice, training and case management in all safeguarding matters, and regulated by the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency. In Scotland, we are monitored and supported by the Scottish Catholic Standards Safeguarding Agency (SCSSA). The need for such background support, structures, policies and guidelines for good practice are more important than ever as we continue to respond with compassion and sensitivity to the needs of all people, especially the young and those who are vulnerable.

The following Procedures seek to improve and nurture a Culture of Safeguarding. The document is divided into sections on: outlining the structures; keeping people safe through recruitment and training; following codes of behaviour and practice; and knowing when and how to report a concern. It is essential that we are all committed to following these guidelines which will above all help us protect others from harm and ensure best practice is followed by members of the Province and our employees and volunteers.

2

Policy Statement

The Passionists are committed to observe the Safeguarding Policies of the Catholic Church in Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland and France in line with the standards, policies and procedures enunciated by; the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NSBCCCI), the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) and the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA), believing that every child, young person and adult at risk has a right to expect the highest level of care, protection, love, encouragement and respect.



The Passionists are committed to promoting the safety, welfare and protection of children, young people and adults at risk in its charge and takes all concerns, allegations, suspicions, and disclosures of abuse very seriously. Our Safeguarding Lead and Designated Liaison Person will remain in close contact with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that any allegations of abuse are promptly reported ensuring that the various relevant authorities are given the fullest cooperation.

We are committed to responding with compassion to all those affected by abuse – both survivors and their families – and to support those who have been abused with the necessary professional and pastoral support. We will ensure, to the best of our ability, that the relevant treatment plan recommended by appropriate authorities is undertaken.

3

Terminology used in these Guidelines

The word **'child'** refers to any child or young person under the age of 18.

The term **'vulnerable adult or adult at risk'** refers to an adult (person aged 18 or over) who:

- needs help to protect themselves or their interests at a particular time,
- whether due to circumstances or personal characteristics, and
- may be at risk of experiencing harm by another party.

The term **'group leader'** is used to refer to the person with overall responsibility for a group or activity.

The term **'worker'** refers to any member of the Passionists, and any employee or volunteer engaged in activities on behalf of the Passionists.

The term **'Regulated Activity'** is defined on the Disclosure & Barring Service website. In the UK, reference should be made to this site to ascertain if an activity falls into this category.



4

Developing Safeguarding Awareness

4.1



Church Premises

Church premises are likely to be used for a range of activities including preparation for the sacraments, children's liturgy, youth groups, prayer meetings, fundraising events, the sacrament of reconciliation and all services. It is expected that church premises should be welcoming places where those who use them feel safe, respected and loved. There is a need for clear boundaries between the private areas where members live and those public areas already identified. This separation is necessary to keep everyone safe and for the maintenance of privacy.

4.2



Communication

Children and guardians should be actively engaged in Church child safeguarding initiatives, where possible and appropriate. Participation by children and guardians helps to empower them to promote awareness of child safeguarding, and helps to create safe environments where children have 'permission to tell'. Children's perspectives and experiences help to support efforts to consolidate effective child protection systems and uphold a culture of respect for children's rights in society.

The Safeguarding Statement should be available on all public noticeboards together with the contact details for local Safeguarding Teams, Police, the Safeguarding Lead and the Local Safeguarding Rep.

4.3



Training

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to ensure that training and development opportunities are made available to all working in the Province. Training days for all Province members will be conducted at least every three years, and at an appropriate level for all new employees and volunteers on induction after appointment, ensuring that all workers are up to date on Safeguarding matters and have the necessary confidence and skills in promoting a Culture of Safeguarding within the Province.

5

Guidelines for Working Safely

5.1

Code of behaviour for members, staff and volunteers

The Passionists are committed to working with all people in a fair and equitable way. All those working and volunteering with our mission are expected to follow this guidance. In our work we are all committed to:

- Being respectful to all those to whom we offer support.
- Avoiding discrimination or harmful dependency among those with whom we work.
- Honouring the equality of all.
- Resolving disputes by means of dialogue and negotiation, and not by the misuse of power.
- Avoiding behaviour which could be construed as harassment, either in a single incident or a pattern of behaviour, which creates a hostile, offensive or intimidating environment.
- Commitment to a fair and equal employment environment and one that is free of intimidation, bullying or harassment.

5.2

Code of behaviour when working with children and young people

It is important that everyone working with children & young people know what is expected of them. A **Code of Behaviour** identifies what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour within the Passionists.

Our Code of Behaviour is to **never**:

- Engage in rough physical games, including horseplay – apart from the structured activity of sport
- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded

- Do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves (see below)
- Give a young person a lift in your car
- Bring a young person to your home
- Engage with young people on social networking sites

■ **Tasks of a personal nature should only be carried out:**

- For very young children or children with disabilities
- With the full understanding and consent of the parents
- In an emergency situation – where parents should be fully informed

Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child, young person or adult at risk who is harming her/himself or others. Use the least possible force and inform the parents/carers as soon as possible. All such incidents must be recorded and the information given to the Safeguarding Lead, and in the case of a parish activity to both the Safeguarding Lead the Parish Safeguarding Representative.

All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child, young person or adult at risk's needs, not the needs of the worker. Colleagues must be prepared to support each other, and to act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.

In addition to the above, workers should:

- Ensure health & safety requirements are adhered to.
- Undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and records kept.
- Keep registers and consent forms up to date.
- Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present.
- Create space for children, young people and adults at risk to talk – either formally or informally.
- Keep up to date with safeguarding training.

5.2 ■ **Code of behaviour for children**

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.



5.3 ■ **Good practice guidelines for activities with children, young people and adults at risk**

■ **Special Needs**

Advice from parents/carers should be sought when any activity involves work with children, young people or adults at risk with special needs. Staffing ratios may need to be raised in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all in the group, including the leaders. It may be necessary to provide special equipment or aids, and this should be done in consultation with parents/carers.

■ **Consent**

Consent from parents/carers should be obtained for one-off events and activities (e.g. swimming) and also for outings, residential activities, etc.



Registration

A registration form should be completed for every child, young person or adult at risk who attends groups or activities, mindful of the requirements of GDPR. The form should be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Emergency contact details
- Medical information
- Any special needs – including activities where the person is unable to take part
- Consent for emergency medical treatment
- Consent for photographs/videos if relevant
- A record should be kept of all children's attendance and the adults who are supervising them.



Recommended staffing levels

The recommended minimum staffing levels for children's groups are given below. More help may be required if children are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or have special needs.

2–3 Years	1 person for every 4 children	1:4
3–8 Years	1 person for every 8 children	1:8
8+ Years	1 person for the first 8 children, then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children	

Each group should have at least 2 adults, and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female.

5.4

Safe Environment

In a prominent place, where children, young people and adults at risk can see it, either a Passionist or Diocesan Safeguarding poster must be displayed giving contact details of Safeguarding Representatives and statutory bodies.

Insurance, First Aid and Fire precautions should be checked, and a regular Health & Safety check should be undertaken with particular regard to the following points:

- Electric sockets should be covered.
- Groups should have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults should be aware of fire drills.
- Fire extinguishers should be regularly maintained, and smoke detectors must be fitted throughout the premises and must be checked regularly.
- A First Aid kit should be available on the premises, and its contents should be regularly checked.
- An Accident Book should be accessible, and all accidents must be recorded.
- A list of qualified First Aiders should be displayed.



E-safety

Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional.

If using e-technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands that is happening within the group.

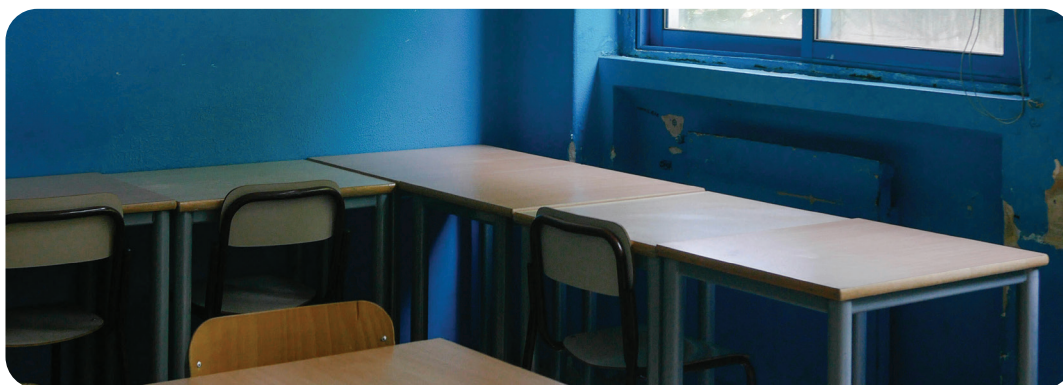
Do not make any relationship with a child, young person or adult at risk (other than family members) through a social networking site.

Copies of all electronic contacts with individuals or groups, including messaging and texting, should be kept or forwarded to a designated worker.

5.5

Policy for groups using church property

It is a requirement that all groups working with children or adults at risk of abuse on Passionist property and/or using facilities owned by the Passionists are insured, and that they have a Safeguarding Policy in place.



The general principle is that there is an obligation to comply with the statutory requirements relating to safeguarding and insurance, which rests with the group using Church property, and with the Church body.

1. Any group using Church property to run activities involving children or adults at risk has the responsibility to ensure that they comply with all applicable relevant safeguarding and protection legislation and guidelines.
2. The group are required to have a Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. The group is also responsible for liaising with the relevant authorities to ensure that the policy and procedures meet the statutory requirements.
3. The group should also have appropriate insurance for the activity they are running.
4. The local manager or administrator must ensure that the group complete the Annual User Information Form (see appendices), and a copy must be retained securely in the location. It is not the role of the manager to validate the adequacy of the policy; that is the responsibility of the statutory authorities.
5. On the group's completed Property User Information Form, the local manager must have confirmation that the group have appropriate insurance in place, which includes the following:

- The Name of the Insurers
- The policy number
- The period of cover of the policy
- Limit of Indemnity

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

6. Each location will be required to complete an annual inventory of all the groups using Passionist Property where children or adults at risk are present.
7. Parish Groups (such as choir, Altar Servers and preparation for the Sacraments) are Diocesan activities and are subject to the Diocesan Guidelines.



Transporting children, young people and Adults at Risk

■ Drivers

- All those who drive children, young people or adults at risk on activities must have held a full driving licence for 5 years.
- Any driver who has more than 6 penalty points on their licence must not transport children or young people or adults at risk.
- It is the responsibility of the leader of the activity requiring transport to check the licence of all drivers.
- Children, young people or adults at risk must not be transported in a private car without the consent of their parents/carers. This also applies to formally arranged lifts to and from any activity.
- All cars that carry children, young people or adults at risk must be comprehensively insured.
- The insured person should ensure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to Passionist activities.
- All cars that carry children, young people or adults at risk must be in a roadworthy condition.
- All passengers must wear suitable seat belts and children must use appropriate child car seats or booster seats.
- At no time should the number of passengers in a car exceed the usual passenger number.
- There must be a non-driving adult escort as well as the driver. If, in an emergency, a driver has to transport a child, young person or adult at risk on his or her own, that person must sit in the back of the car and this should be reported to the appropriate Safeguarding Representative as soon as possible after the event.

■ Minibus/Coach

- Workers/helpers should sit amongst the group and not together.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, stop the vehicle until calm is restored.
- Before using a minibus, ensure you know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive.
- Drivers are required to have undergone appropriate minibus driver training.

6

Guidelines for Use of Technology and Social Media

6.1



Safe Communication

Those working with children, young people and adults at risk often communicate with them using email and text messages. It is therefore important to adopt, alongside our 'Safeguarding Policy', good practice in these areas to ensure that these modern technologies are used safely and responsibly by all, thereby protecting children, young people and adults at risk and safeguarding the integrity of all who work with them.

Social Media and IT policies and Staff Job Descriptions, where relevant, should include an acknowledgement and approval of these technologies as a legitimate means of communicating with children, young people and adults at risk, but also the expectations with regards to their use.

In any general consent form that parents/carers sign (when a child or young person joins in any Passionist activity) a rider should be included that the leadership endorses this mode of communication and that a parent/carer agrees to this.

6.2



Communication with Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

All children, young people and adults at risk need to be aware of the protocols that teachers/leaders follow in relation to email, social networking and mobile technology, including texting. It is important to remember that as well as the parent/carer, children, young people and adults at risk have the right to decide whether they want us to have their contact details, and should not be pressurised into divulging information they would rather keep to themselves.

We should be careful not to show any favouritism to children, young people and adults at risk in relation to communication technologies that might be mutually available to the leader, but perhaps only to a few of the children, young people and adults at risk. A leader should not normally offer to top up a child's phone credits.

The internet, mobile phones, social networking and other interactive services have transformed the way in which we live. The new technologies offer tremendous opportunities to reach, communicate, evangelise and engage

with those involved in the Catholic Church including clergy, youth workers, parishioners and those in our communities who may have an interest in the church.

The Catholic Church in England and Wales is keen to promote the safe, and responsible, use of interactive communication technologies within all church activities. These guidelines seek to ensure the message of safe and responsible use of communication and interactive technologies is understood and guidelines are followed. The CSSA provides detailed guidance on these matters on its website www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk in its Practice Guidance – Creating a Safer Environment. All are encouraged to consult the full CSSA guidance. What follows are extracts from this guidance.



New technologies, new risks

Along with the many benefits of modern communication technologies, there are risks. The anonymity and sense of distance inherent in online communication can make it easier for people to say things they would perhaps not say in the presence of somebody, and to feel less remorseful about online harm caused. The online world makes it easier to engage in criminal offences and abuse. It enables easy creation of, access to, use and dissemination of pornographic and abusive images and videos; easy access to children and adults who are vulnerable for the purposes of grooming; ease of presenting as someone else; and greater potential for online bullying and abuse.



Creating and managing church-related websites and social media pages

Websites or social media profile pages are useful means to engage large groups of young people. The following are recommended guidelines to promote safety online. The development of websites should be in accordance with any province policy and procedure. In the absence of such local guidance, the following good practice guidance can be followed:

- Community or province activity websites and social media profiles should be approved by the province social communications office;
- Where there is user-generated content, the site should be moderated/administered by a minimum of two adults;
- Personal sites should not be used for community or province programs; separate sites should be created for these;

6.4

- Passwords and names of sites should be registered in an encrypted document in a central location as appropriate. More than one adult should have access to this information.

6.5



Access to the internet

Where children, young people and adults have access to the internet using Passionist computers, other electronic devices and WIFI as part of Passionist activities, the activity leader has a duty to ensure that:

- use of the equipment and WIFI is supervised and/or monitored;
- measures are in place to ensure that the likelihood of accessing inappropriate materials is reduced e.g. firewalls, parental controls and software to filter out internet material.



6.6



Social media and social networking

The internet has evolved to become an increasingly dynamic and interactive medium led by social networking services. The convergence of technical and communication platforms means that users can now interact with each other across multiple platforms and devices, such as mobile phones, games consoles, watches and PCs (laptops, notebooks, tablets etc.).

6.6

Social media includes any site or forum that enables sharing of any user-generated content. These services are very popular with children and young people and bring together pre-existing interactive technologies and tools (e.g. email, messaging, chat, blogs, photographs, music, videos, gaming, discussion forums) in a single service through for example Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat and live messaging services such as Facetime, Duo and Skype, and so on. It is the way in which these different technologies are used that makes them 'social'.

6.7



Good practice in relation to social networking:

Most government guidelines recommend children should be at least 13 years before using social media;

- all users should be made aware that their personal details e.g. last name, address, school, passwords, e-mail address and telephone numbers are private and should not be disclosed unless approval is given by the activity leader;
- all users should be made aware that they should never send images of themselves or others and should be wary of people misrepresenting themselves in chat rooms;
- all users should be aware that they should advise a leader about anything on-line that makes them feel uncomfortable or concerns them;
- children and young people should be advised to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they have been asked to keep communication secret;
- children and young people should be made aware that they should advise a leader and their parent or carer of a request to meet up with someone they have met on-line, not to make plans to do so without alerting an adult and never to go alone to such planned meetings;
- children and young people should be advised of a code of conduct for using chat rooms.

'CHAT' is a simple code that can be used for remembering some rules around the use of the internet and social media.

C	Careful: People online might not always be who they say they are.
H	Hang: Hang on to your personal information. Never give out your home address or other information.
A	Arranging: Arranging to meet can be dangerous. Never arrange to meet someone unless you are sure who they are.
T	Tell: Tell your friends or an adult if you find something that makes you feel uncomfortable.



Personal social networking accounts

The following good practice guidance should be followed.

Many Passionists and others engaged in our province works and ministry may now have a personal online social networking presence via social media platforms, personal blogs and websites. The use of such platforms (e.g. Twitter [now X] or Facebook) should always contain content that is universally appropriate to any possible user. All individuals connected to the work of the province should understand that their use of social media, whether public or private, needs to reflect the values for which we stand.

Although there may be reasonable overlap between the personal and spiritual realms in communications between adults (with full capacity) within the Church, this is never the case with children, young people or adults at risk. It is never appropriate to use personal social media accounts, phone numbers or email addresses to contact children and young people without parental consent, or with adults who lack capacity to give their consent. It is not appropriate to send or accept 'friend requests' from children, young people or adults who lack capacity to consent from personal social media accounts. The strictest of privacy settings should be activated on all personal social media accounts and individuals must take personal responsibility to ensure that their content is appropriate to those that can see it e.g. language, jokes, opinions.

6.9

Sexting

In both Ireland and the UK, It is illegal to take, store or disseminate sexually explicit images and videos of a child under the age of 18. A young person or an adult is breaking the law if they:

- take an explicit image or video of a child (anyone under 18) – this could be a young person’s self-image or their friend;
- share an explicit image or video of a child (anyone under 18), even if it is shared between children of the same age;
- possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child (anyone under 18), even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

It is also an offence where a person above the age of 18 intentionally communicates a sexual communication with an individual they do not reasonably believe to be over 16, for the purposes of sexual gratification, or, alternatively, where the communication is intended to elicit a sexual communication from the recipient. There are many reasons why a young person might share a nude or semi-nude picture of themselves. They may want to ‘belong’ to a social group, interact with others and explore sexual feelings and get attention on social media. They may also find it difficult to refuse if someone asks them to send them one.

Once images are passed on electronically, control is lost over what happens to them, where they are posted and who sees them. Other people may use sexually explicit images of a minor to bully them, to blackmail them and to cause harm to them.

6.10

Response to sexting

If you become aware that children or young people may be engaged in sexting, seek to ensure that the behaviour ceases immediately, inform the young people involved and their parents of the legal status of the activity and refer to the relevant Safeguarding Representative to assess whether it ought to be reported to the police and children’s social care. If an adult is involved in sexting with a young person, the matter must be immediately reported to the police.

If someone sends an unsolicited and unwanted sext, whatever their age, report it to the relevant Safeguarding Representative in the first instance so that consideration can be given as to whether the matter should be reported to the police.

Photographs and Videos

Parental/carers consent in writing is required for the taking of distribution and publishing of any still images or video recordings of children, young people or adults at risk. Such material constitutes 'personal data' and is therefore subject to the 1998 Data Protection Act (DPA). Names should not be displayed with individual images, but a list placed beside the display, or preferably a simple label or heading with general, not specific, information should be used.

If engaging an external photographer, it is essential that a clear brief is provided as part of a signed agreement, that he/she does not have unsupervised access to children and young people, and that there is agreement as to the use of all the photographs taken.



For the Church to use images of people that enable those people to be identified, they need a lawful basis – see Article 6 of the General Data protection Regulations (GDPR):

- the person (or parent) has provided their consent to the processing of his or her personal data for one or more specific purpose;
- the processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller (e.g. preventing or detecting a crime or catching an offender (this is relevant when using CCTV cameras);
- the photographs are necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller (e.g. educational purposes) or by a third party, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the person which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child or vulnerable adult.

6.12

Use of CCTV and Webcams

Proper care must be exercised in the installation of any necessary CCTV or webcam systems to ensure that no individual's 'private space' is being unreasonably invaded or eroded. Data Protection legislation and GDPR apply to the use of CCTV where the images identify individuals. The use of CCTV must be appropriate and fit for a specific purpose. Safety and security of premises may require such systems.

Cameras placed so as 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; and signs should be placed indicating that CCTV surveillance is in operation. Tapes and/or files should be stored in a secure environment, along with a log of access to tapes by authorised personnel.

6.13

Live streaming of church services

The live streaming of Mass and other services allows the Church to reach a congregation that is not able to attend Church in person. In addition to being able to reach a wider audience than that in a physical location, live streaming can give people support and companionship and help them feel more connected to their church community. To address potential safeguarding issues, the following steps should be taken:

- congregations should be told in advance (notice board, announcements, pew sheets) which services are streamed and which parts of the church of building are visible on the streaming;
- children and adults at risk should only be filmed with their consent and/or the consent of parents (for children);
- parents should be informed in writing of the intention to stream including what will be filmed, why the filming is taking place and how it will be used. This should include any intention to retain a copy of the filming for future editing or use;
- parents should be given the option of withholding consent to their child participating in parts of a service where they will be filmed;
- where consent is withheld, every effort should be made for the child or adult at risk to participate and be out of the view of the cameras.

6.13

Where a recording is made and kept, there is need to consider how it is intended to be used and the purpose; recordings will need to be stored and retained in accordance with a record retention schedule.



6.14 

Computers and Wireless Networks

We need to ensure that all computers and wireless networks have proper password protection to guard against their inappropriate access and use. Internet accountability software packages that monitor and log internet use, and relay this information to the worker's line manager, are now available and can be installed on computers which are in common use throughout the offices used for the work of the Province.

7

Safe Recruitment

Safe recruitment and selection procedures help to:

- Identify those most suitable to fill a position.
- Screen out anyone unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable persons.
- Provide a deterrent to applying in the first place.

7.1



Recruitment and Selection



Ireland

NSBCCCI policies apply equally to all employees, clergy (with a current Celebret) and religious and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk in the Catholic Church.



England and Wales

CSSA National Safeguarding Policies and Procedures apply equally to all employees, office holders (clergy and religious) and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk in the Catholic Church.

Detailed safer recruitment and selection policies and procedures are available in the Practice Guidance section of the CSSA website: www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk. All involved in Passionist staff recruitment in the Province are asked to follow this guidance, as well as that provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS): <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>. All the staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk will be selected in accordance with these policies and procedures.



France

Safe recruitment requires strict compliance with the French Labor Code and GDPR, making the hiring process highly regulated to prevent discrimination, avoid penalties, and ensure workplace safety.



Core Legal and Safety Principles:

- Background Checks: Under Article L1221-6 of the French Labor Code, you can only ask for information and documentation directly relevant to the job. Criminal record checks (Bulletin n°3) are only permitted or required for specific roles like childcare or private security.

- Anti-Discrimination: Employers cannot ask about a candidate's previous salary. Mandatory anti-discrimination training is legally required for recruiters and staff involved in hiring at companies with 300+ employees.
- Collective Bargaining Agreements (CCN): Before making an offer, verify the applicable CCN for the industry. It determines minimum pay, job level classifications, and working conditions.
- Workplace Safety: Employers have a strict legal duty of care to protect employees' safety and can be held criminally liable for health and safety breaches. A comprehensive risk assessment must be documented and updated annually.
- Employment Contracts: Permanent contracts (CDI) are the standard. Fixed-term (CDD) or temporary contracts (CTT) are highly scrutinised and only permitted for legally valid reasons (e.g., replacement or seasonal work).



Visiting Clergy

Visiting clergy should follow best practice and contact the Provincial or Superior of a religious house before undertaking ministry in that ecclesiastical jurisdiction. If this ministry is considered to be regulated activity, then the guidance regarding the vetting process must be undertaken and a letter of good standing received from the ordinary of the cleric. However, should the cleric be present for one event in a parish or diocese, such as a funeral, baptism or wedding, he should sign the register in the sacristy to declare his presence on a particular time and date. Furthermore, should the cleric not be incardinated in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that he visits, he must provide his Celebret for inspection by the parish priest or duly delegated person, and this should be noted beside the visitor's signature in the register.

■ **Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside the country wishing to minister on a short-term basis**

When clergy from outside visit with the intention of being involved in short-term ministry, evidence should be provided that confirms they are priests in good standing and that they are fit for ministry. Clergy who come from parts of the world where police vetting arrangements are not in existence may seek to minister in Ireland, the UK or France. As a consequence, the statutory route is not always available as a means of confirming that there is no adverse information known about them that would prevent them from carrying out ministry in St Patrick's Province.

- Prior to visiting the Province, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all visiting priests must write seeking permission of the Church authority, giving details about the duration of the visit, the type of ministry and the location of ministry being considered. The contact details of the Church authority of the visiting priest must be provided in advance.
- Upon receipt of a request from visiting clergy to carry out ministry, the Church authority must acknowledge the same, and then make a request in writing to the visitor for a certificate or confirmation of good standing, signed by their Church authority.
- The visiting priest must be asked to complete a 'Declaration of Good Standing' form.
- A vetting check must be carried out through the appropriate local vetting process.
- If the Church authority is satisfied that there are no concerns about the visiting religious, permission should be given in writing to the visitor, outlining the specified ministry, including its duration and location;
- A copy of this permission should be forwarded to the local superior of the visitor, and also to local superior of the location of the ministry outlined in the letter;
- A copy of the permission should be stored in the offices of the Church authority, in line with confidentiality and storage of information.



7.3

Practical Steps When Appointing Employees and Volunteers

It is not easy to identify those who are likely to abuse children, young people or adults at risk. Any procedure that helps to clarify details of a person's background and experience can help with identification and can raise awareness levels in the organisation generally. The same procedures should be applied regardless of the level of responsibility or the duration of appointment of a role involving contact with children, young people and adults at risk.

Safer Recruitment procedures, including verifying identity and eligibility to work, apply to all applicants including clergy, religious and those who are well known to the Church for many years. This approach ensures fairness and consistency and avoids potential breaches of the Disclosure and Barring Services Codes of Practice.

Appointments will be made on the basis of a person's experience and ability to perform the role rather than on the urgency of the need, or the availability of the applicant.

It is essential to treat all documentation relating to these application processes in strict confidence.

7.4

Vetting Information

■ Republic of Ireland

▶ *Garda Vetting Information*

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016 make it mandatory for people carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults to be vetted.

The Compliance Unit in the Garda National Vetting Bureau ensure that relevant organisations are adhering to their statutory obligations. One of these obligations is to only vet people who carry out relevant work. The roles for which vetting is required are described below.

An individual cannot make a vetting application on their own behalf. Vetting is always carried out by the relevant organisation for which you work.

7.4 ► *Vetting Applications*

Applications for vetting are submitted electronically in a process known as E-Vetting. The National Vetting Bureau (NVB) no longer accepts paper applications.

Please see Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1 Form or Parish NVB 1 Form) You should give this to the applicant and ask him or her to complete Section 1 & 2. Section 3 is to be completed on behalf of the organisation requesting the vetting (parish/school/diocesan agency/etc). At this point in the process, you must validate the identity of the applicant.

► *Roles that require vetting in parishes and religious setting*

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 states that all those who engage in 'relevant work or activities' with children or vulnerable persons must be vetted. Included in the definition of 'relevant work or activities' is "Any work or activity as a priest or minister or any other person engaged in the advancement of any religious beliefs to children or vulnerable persons unless such work is incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs to persons who are not children or vulnerable persons" (Schedule 1, Part 1, Section 7 and Schedule 1, Part 2, Section 7).

The applicant must provide a valid email address. If the applicant does not have their own email address, they can use the email address of a family member or friend, if they are happy to do so, or use an email address provided by the organisation for whom they wish to be vetted.

■ **Northern Ireland**

Vetting in Northern Ireland (pre-employment). 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 volunteer is to engage in a regulated activity (explained below). 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 is part of barred lists of people who are prevented from doing certain types of work.



England and Wales

Vetting DBS checks are carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service, also known as DBS. A DBS check is a record of a person's criminal convictions and cautions. Outside of Parishes DBS checks are completed through the RLSS. The RLSS use a system called Ucheck to process Disclosure and Barring checks (DBS). It is fast, easy to use and reasonably priced. The majority of checks are returned to RLSS in just 3 days.

Key points regarding DBS checks in the Catholic Church:

- **Renewal Policy:** It is the policy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales to renew DBS checks for eligible roles every 3 years.
- **Mandatory Checks:** Roles requiring a check typically include Altar Server chaperones, catechists, children's liturgists, parish safeguarding reps, sacristans, youth ministry workers, and Eucharistic Ministers who perform home visits.
- **Procedures:** Parishes are responsible for carrying out these checks, using the diocesan "umbrella arrangement". Centres of Mission where there are no Diocesan arrangements must liaise with the Director for Safeguarding for the checks.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteers must complete a confidential declaration form and undergo identity verification (usually requiring three original, in-date documents).
- **Handling Blemished Disclosures:** If a DBS check comes back with a conviction or caution ("blemished"), the parish must not automatically discard the applicant. Instead, they must contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team or Director for Safeguarding to conduct a risk assessment.
- **Overseas Checks:** DBS checks cannot access international records. Therefore, if an applicant has lived outside the UK, foreign police checks may be required.

Update Service: Volunteers are encouraged to register their DBS certificate with the government's Update Service within 30 days of issue, which can simplify the 3-year renewal process.



Scotland

The Catholic Church uses the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme for vetting individuals who work with or have contact with vulnerable groups, including children. The PVG scheme, managed by Disclosure Scotland, checks an individual's criminal record to ensure they are not unsuitable for working with vulnerable people.

Key aspects of the PVG scheme in the Scottish Catholic Church context:

- **Application:** Individuals who work with vulnerable groups in a church setting, whether paid or unpaid, are required to apply for a PVG check.
- **Disclosure Scotland:** The application is processed by Disclosure Scotland, which checks the individual's criminal record.
- **Vetting Service:** The Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service (or similar diocesan office) typically manages the application process and receives the disclosure from Disclosure Scotland.
- **Purpose:** The PVG scheme aims to protect vulnerable individuals by excluding those who are unsuitable from working with them.
- **Not limited to employees:** The PVG scheme applies to volunteers, including those who are not employees of the church.
- **Vetting for children:** Individuals who are 18 years or older and involved in ministry with children are required to be vetted.
- **Vetting for adults:** The same vetting procedures apply to individuals working with adults in need of safeguarding.
- **Barred from work:** A person who has been barred by the PVG scheme may be restricted from working with vulnerable groups in the church setting.

■ France

In line with the Safeguarding Policy of the Passionists of St Patrick's Province it is a requirement that anyone who has sustained contact with children or an adult who may be at risk must be subject to police clearance. In France, a Police Clearance Certificate is known as an *Extrait de Casier Judiciaire* or *Bulletin No. 3*. This certificate provides a record of an individual's criminal history, if they have any. The roles which require police checks include; anyone supervising altar servers; anyone providing catechesis to children or organising children's activities

All staff, trainees, and volunteers must provide:

- Criminal background check (*Casier judiciaire* – bulletin n°3).
- Professional references attesting to suitability to work with children.
- Contracts and agreements must include a clause requiring compliance with this policy.
- No individual may work directly with children without clearance.

► *Extrait de Casier Judiciaire: Who Can Apply?*

- Residents of France: French citizens and residents in France.
- Non-Residents: Foreigners who previously lived in France.

7.4 ► *How to apply?*

a. Online Application

You can apply online through the official website: casier-judiciaire.justice.gouv.fr

Steps to follow:

- Visit the above website.
- Select your category (French citizen, resident, or non-resident).
- Enter your personal information (name, birth date, place of birth, etc.).
- Submit the online application.
- The police clearance certificate will be sent to you by email or post within a few days.

b. Postal Application

If you prefer, you can apply by post.

In this case, you should send your application form Cerfa n° 10071*16 along with a copy of your identity proof and your full name, date of birth, place of birth, and current address to, Address: Casier Judiciaire National, 107 rue du Landreau, 44317 Nantes Cedex 3, France.

► *Processing Time*

The time taken to receive a criminal record extract (bulletin no. 3) varies depending on the method of application.

- Online using FranceConnect: From one hour to 24 hours.
- Online without FranceConnect: Around 2 working days.
- Postal Applications: Around 2 weeks if sent by post. This may take longer, especially for non-residents.

► *Cost of Application*

Obtaining a Police Clearance Certificate in France is free of charge.

A copy of the clearance certificate must be submitted to the Parish Office in advance of participation in any regulated activity with children or adults at risk. This certificate should be kept in line with GDPR regulations and a register kept of all those submitted. Police clearance should be renewed every three years as appropriate or if there has been an absence of the person for more than 1 year. If a check comes back with a conviction or caution ("blemished"), the parish must not automatically discard the applicant. Instead, they must contact the Director for Safeguarding to conduct a risk assessment.

8

Responding to Concerns

8.1



Imminent Risk



If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is deemed at immediate risk:

- **For Province work, activity or context** the Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately, and he/she will make a referral to the Police/Garda for that region
- **For a Passionist Parish, work, activity or context** the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately and also the Passionist Safeguarding Lead for the Diocese. The Parish and Diocesan safeguarding personnel will have responsibility for the case.
- **In case of emergency the Police/Garda should be contacted on 999 or 112.** The Passionist Safeguarding Lead should be kept informed.

8.2



What to do if you receive information about a concern or allegation

Your duty is to listen, report and to refer.



If another adult informs you that a child, young person or adult at risk has disclosed that they have been abused, advise that adult to write the information down immediately, including date, time and place. Advise them to sign this and refer them to the relevant Safeguarding Lead or Representative (as described above) or statutory agencies. It is important that you follow up this advice with the person concerned in case the referral is not made. The Passionist Safeguarding Lead should be contacted and kept informed of the process and outcome.

When someone discusses with you their suspicions or experiences remember they may be surrounded by fear and confusion. Both the persons telling their story and those receiving it will experience some of these feelings.

Do not dismiss your concern. Contact the Passionist Safeguarding Lead for advice and support. If your concern is related to a parish, you will be advised to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead. If in a school, you must follow the school's procedure.



If a child, young person or adult at risk discloses abuse to you, or a colleague appears to be behaving suspiciously, the guidelines for dealing with abuse must be followed. You must contact the relevant Safeguarding Lead or within 24 hours of becoming aware of any concern.

You must never confront or question the person against whom an allegation is made. Only Social Service Departments, Police/Garda or NSPCC staff may do this, because of the rules of evidence. Failure to comply with this instruction could lead to a potential legal case being thwarted.

If you suspect that another adult is abusing, or if you have been informed by another that they have suspicions of another adult abusing, share these suspicions with the Passionist Safeguarding Lead who will advise and support you.

If you are contacted by the media, do not discuss the matter, but refer the caller to the Provincial Office.



■ **When someone does make a disclosure, you should:**

- Listen with care to give the person time to talk to you.
- Take and treat what is said by them seriously.
- Re-assure them that they have the right to disclose.
- Affirm the feelings as expressed by the child, young person or adult at risk.
- Do not give a guarantee of confidentiality or secrecy.
- Do not ask any leading questions and/or push for information.
- Ask only open-ended questions that will seek to clarify the information given.
- Do not prejudge, dismiss, minimise or express an opinion.
- Remain neutral.
- Avoid displaying emotions as this may hinder the person from giving further information.
- Do not introduce any personal or third-party experiences of abuse.
- Let the child, young person or adult at risk know what you are going to do next and that you need to tell someone.
- Explain to them that you will only share this information with the person and people who have responsibility to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

8.3 **The Limits of Confidentiality**

Do not promise confidentiality. We can never commit ourselves to 'keep a secret'. Withholding information about alleged abuse may place children, young people or adults at risk in danger. Such information must be shared with the competent authorities: Social Services, Police/Garda, Safeguarding Lead, RLSS, who will advise. Anyone wanting to share information 'in confidence' should be advised on the limits of confidentiality. An informant will need to know that the abuse will stop. This can only be assured if the information is correctly passed on to appropriate authorities.

8.4 **Mandated Persons (Ireland)**

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children and/or families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. In Church contexts this refers to members of the clergy or pastoral care workers of a church or other religious community.

Criteria for reporting: definitions and thresholds for Mandated Persons

As a mandated person, under the legislation you are required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances.

All Mandated Persons including members and staff are required to Mandated Reports jointly with the Safeguarding Lead who also acts as Designated Liaison Person DLP as per Children First National Guidance. A mandated person may also report independently and provide a copy of the mandated report to the DLP.

8.5 **Actions following receipt of abuse allegations**

When an allegation is made to the Province the Safeguarding Lead will inform the Provincial and ensure that the Police and Social Services are informed as appropriate.

The Provincial will be made aware of any concerns, allegations, or action taken. The person who provided the information or made the allegation will be kept informed by the Safeguarding Lead as appropriate. The pace of these actions will depend on the perceived danger of further abuse to the original alleged victims or to others.

In the event of an allegation against one who is currently a novice or professed or ordained Passionist, the Provincial will ensure, with the advice of his Council, that appropriate legal support is available. The Province will pay for appropriate legal advice following arrest and during any police interviews. In addition, should charges follow, the accused person will receive legal representation which may be the services of a solicitor under the Legal Aid scheme. If an accused person is not a professed member of the Province, the person will be advised to obtain legal guidance which will not normally be at the expense of the Province. Should any member of the Province or an employee or volunteer working within the Province be arrested, they must advise the Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity.

Subject to consultation with the statutory authorities, the person who has been accused will be withdrawn from contact with any children, young people or adults at risk within the Church's responsibility. This removes any risk to children, young people or adults at risk, allows the investigation to proceed and also safeguards the rights of the person accused.

Where a Passionist priest or brother is the subject of any allegation the canonical process will begin immediately, and the Provincial will consult with his Council as to where the person is to reside pending the outcome of the investigations. The Provincial will appoint another appropriate person to provide pastoral care for the accused member of the Province. The Provincial may consider it appropriate to appoint the Safeguarding Lead or another member of the Province to deal with the allegations on the part of the accused. This would help to ensure that the Provincial is not overly involved in any particular aspect of the case. It is the responsibility of the Provincial to implement any removal from ministry recommended by advisory services or if requested by diocesan authorities, in consultation with the statutory authorities. This action does not imply guilt or innocence; it is the recommended procedure. If lay persons, who are employed by the Passionists, are the subject of any allegations they will be required to take leave until the investigations are complete. In the case of volunteers, they will be required to withdraw from work with children, young people or adults at risk for the duration of the investigation. During and after the investigation, full pastoral care must be readily available to the person against whom allegations have been made.

8.6

Offer of pastoral care and support to complainants and victims

Concerns about potential premature acknowledgement of liability must not hinder the offer of pastoral support to anyone who reports that they have been the victim of abuse in a Passionist context. When reports of abuse are received the initial response will include the offer of pastoral support. Additional pastoral support may be provided in accordance to need.

In Ireland personal and pastoral support is provided by two Church funded organisations Towards Healing and Towards Peace. In England, Scotland and Wales the offer of support may be via the Safe Spaces service. Further information is available in the Reference Section.

8.7

Making a Report in France

1. Any staff member, staff or volunteer, who suspects abuse must report immediately to the local Child Protection Officer CPO.
2. A written Safeguarding Report Form must be completed within 24 hours. (this can be downloaded from the Passionist website)
3. The CPO informs the Parish Priest and the Director of Safeguarding in Ireland and, where necessary, external authorities.
4. Allegations of criminal acts are referred directly to code of behaviour, or the police.

Reporting timeline: all suspicions must be reported internally within 24 hours.



External Referral Systems

The Passionists in France cooperate with:

- CRIP (Cellule de Recueil des Informations Préoccupantes).
- Child Protection Services of local authorities.
- Police and judicial authorities.
- 119 Allô Enfance en Danger hotline.

NOTE: In parishes all safeguarding concerns and allegations must be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Office. In all other Passionist locations the Designated Liaison Person is responsible for the management and coordination of the response.

Definitions

■ Children and young people

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as any person under the age of eighteen years. (The fact that a child has reached the age of consent, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offender's institution, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the relevant jurisdiction legislation).

■ Adult at Risk of Harm

An 'adult at risk of harm' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal characteristics and/or life circumstances. Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

An adult can become an "adult at risk" at any time in their life and this is not necessarily permanent. This may be due to a permanent or temporary reduction in their physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events, for example bereavement or previous abuse or trauma. An adult is a person aged 18 or over.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 defines an Adult at Risk as follows:

- An adult can be at risk in the context of the setting in which they are situated or the service they receive as follows:
- Those in residential accommodation provided in connection with care or nursing or in receipt of domiciliary care services.
- Those receiving health care.
- Those in lawful custody or under the supervision of a probation officer.
- Those receiving a welfare service of a prescribed description or direct payments from a social services authority.
- Those receiving services, or taking part in activities, aimed at people with disabilities or special needs because of their age or state of health.
- Those who need assistance in the conduct of their affairs.

Note: In December 2013, 'Adult at Risk' replaced 'Vulnerable Adult' in line with national developments of good practice and in line with the Law Commission Report into Adult Social Care (LAW COM No 326) 2011; recommendation 40.

A person's level of vulnerability may increase or decrease according to the circumstances they experience at any given time. Adults at risk could include people with:

- learning or physical disabilities;
- a sensory impairment;
- mental health needs;
- are HIV positive;
- substance misuse needs;
- dementia.

In addition to the above, an adult may become vulnerable as a result of a variety of circumstances, for example, following a family breakup or if a person becomes a victim of abuse, stalking or harassment.

■ **Child Abuse**

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

Abuse or harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. 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**

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
- Pushing, shaking, or throwing
- Observing violence

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

■ **Emotional Abuse**

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
- Unresponsiveness of the parent/carer. Lack of comfort and love
- Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his/her behaviour or actions
- Under or over protection of the child. Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer
- Use of unreasonable or harsh disciplinary measures
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child. Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- 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**

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 (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 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.
- Sexual exploitation of the child, including encouraging the child to solicit for sexual acts, recording images 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.

- Canon law includes the possession of, or downloading from the internet of, child sexual abuse material as a grave delict.

■ **Neglect**

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.

■ **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.

■ **Peer Abuse**

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 childcare 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**

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.

■ **Spiritual Abuse**

Spiritual Abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but is of concern both within the church and in other faith communities. Aspects of spiritual abuse can be recognised under the four categories of abuse such as emotional or physical abuse.

Harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of authority or leadership or oppressive teaching or rituals, any of which may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or even sexual harm. Leaders working with youth groups may come across children or young people who have been affected by so called deliverance rituals which occur in some churches of other traditions. See reference Section.

■ **In all of the above, any concerns should be referred immediately to the Safeguarding Lead.**

10

Complaints Policy

10.1



Introduction

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 reporting of concerns policy.

This complaints procedure is not for use by Church personnel who should use the whistle-blowing procedure to raise their complaint.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. Efforts will be made to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with the parents/guardians, children/young people, volunteers/members of staff and clergy, as appropriate.

A copy of the complaints form is available on our website:

www.passionistspatr.com

10.2



Process

If a parent/guardian, young person or child is not satisfied with any aspect of the running of a particular activity, or the behaviour of any individual involved in that activity, the following steps should be taken:

1. All complaints of this nature should be resolved using an open dialogue with the Church personnel involved. If resolution is not possible, the following step should be taken.
2. The Church authority should be contacted by completing the complaints form.
 - The Church authority has eight weeks to consider the complaint.
 - A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint should be sent within seven calendar days, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure.
 - All complaints must be thoroughly investigated.
 - The Provincial may organise a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. This communication may also take place by telephone.
 - Within a reasonable time frame the Provincial will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.

10.2

- If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Church authority will issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out their suggestions for resolving the matter.

10.3

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.



Whistleblowing Policy

This whistleblowing policy is intended to encourage and enable anyone with a serious concern, to raise concerns without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

The scope of this policy covers any workers making qualifying disclosures about safeguarding matters within the Passionists.

■ Definition

Whistleblowing is a term used to refer to the internal or external disclosure of malpractice as well as illegal acts, or omissions, at work.

■ Policy Statement

The Passionists are committed to:

- conducting themselves ethically, with honesty and integrity;
- the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability;
- good practice and high standards regardless of role within the Church;
- being supportive of employees, office holders and Volunteers.

It is recognised that this might not always be achieved, and that genuine and serious concerns might need to be raised through this whistleblowing policy.

In line with these commitments, employees, office holders, volunteers and others who have serious concerns, are encouraged to come forward and voice concerns about safeguarding practice. It is recognised that some cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis. The Passionists recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of repercussion from those responsible for the failure or malpractice.

It is not necessary to have proof that such an act is being, has been or is likely to be committed. However, the worker must have a reasonable belief that the information shows that one of the categories of wrongdoing listed in the legislation has occurred or is likely to occur, and the concern must be raised in the correct way.

If a protected disclosure is made, the person making the disclosure has the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised. This is the case even if it became evident that the person making the disclosure was genuinely mistaken.

Passionist and National Safeguarding Structures



National Safeguarding Structures

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland NSBCCCI (registered as Coimirce) is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. It was incorporated in 2008 and its founding members comprise of the Archbishops and the Episcopal Secretary of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, together with the Director General of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI), a nominee of the executive of CORI, the Executive Secretary of the Irish Missionary Union (IMU) a nominee of the Executive Board of the IMU. The Directors of the Company automatically comprise the membership of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (The Board).

The main object of the company is to provide advice, services and assistance in the furtherance of the development of the safeguarding of children within the Roman Catholic Church on the island of Ireland and to monitor compliance with legislation, policy and best practice and to report on these activities annually, all as comprehensively set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland is funded through the Sponsoring Bodies: The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland.

In England and Wales, the national **Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA)** has been established by the Bishops Conference with responsibility for standards, oversight and auditing of all Church safeguarding practice.

In addition, Religious Congregations have established the **Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS)** to provide them with advice, training and case management in relation to all safeguarding matters. These new arrangements were implemented in 2021/22 as a result of the Elliott Review and the IICSA inquiry.

The **Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service (SCSS)** was established by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland to lead the Church's strategy for developing effective Safeguarding arrangements. Its primary role is to support the Safeguarding work of Dioceses, Religious Institutes and Catholic organisations that interact with vulnerable groups.

Passionist Safeguarding Committee

The Committee may be chaired by the Provincial or an appointed delegate. Its remit is to act on behalf of the Passionist Trustees in relation to the provision of safeguarding policies, procedures and practice throughout the works of the Province and its associated charities, in line with Charity Commission guidance, national legislation and the requirements of the CSSA. The Safeguarding Committee advises the Provincial on the creation and maintenance of safe environments for children. Its particular focus is to ensure that these Procedures are implemented across the different ministries. It coordinates local safeguarding representatives and activities related to child safeguarding, e.g. training. The Safeguarding Lead works to support the Committee and carry out its action plan. The Committee's remit has been extended to adults at risk of abuse in response to recent requirements under *Vot Estis Lux Mundi*.

Passionist Safeguarding Lead /Designated Liaison Person is responsible for coordinating and leading the operational implementation of the safeguarding policy and practice of Passionists. This includes the provision of training and contacts with the NSBCCCI, RLSS, CSSA and Diocesan Safeguarding Committees as required. They are answerable to the Safeguarding Committee. All parishes have a Safeguarding Representative, and all other Passionist locations a Safeguarding Representative.

For Ireland the NSBCCCI safeguarding children policy document is now available to download at www.safeguarding.ie/policy-guidance/policy-document. Further details of the national England and Wales safeguarding policies and procedures can be obtained from www.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk. A simplified Organisational Structure follows on the next page.

The Catholic Church in Scotland has a parallel but separate set of national Policies and Procedures for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk and established the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA). For further details go to www.scottishcatholicsafeguarding.org.uk.

Contact details for the Passionist Safeguarding Lead are as follows:

Suzanne Phelan

Provincial Office, St Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin 6W, Ireland

safeguarding@passionists.org.uk

00 353 851146391 (mobile)

Appendix 1: Responding to Concerns

STAGE 1:

Concerns come to your attention

Do not investigate yourself. Listen, record your actions and notify the Passionist Safeguarding Lead and where appropriate the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead.

Emergency Action

If the child(ren) are in need of medical attention or protection from harm, you must contact your local Safeguarding Representative and/or the Province Safeguarding Lead. If the child(ren) are in immediate danger, the emergency services e.g. Police, ambulance, social care must be informed.

Non-Emergency Action

If the child(ren) are not in risk of immediate harm or do not require urgent medical attention, record your observations, concerns or any allegations and contact the Province Safeguarding Lead.

Timescale: Within 24 hours

STAGE 2:

Referral to Children's Services, and/or the Police/ Garda, and LADO

The Province Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to the Children's Services/Tusla or the Police and contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). When making the referral. It will be necessary to provide full information about the child(ren) and circumstances.

STAGE 3:

Possible Child Protection Enquiry

The Children's Services / Tusla together with Police/ Garda are responsible for the assessment and investigation of all allegations. They are responsible for decisions regarding Initial Assessment and may instigate a Strategy Discussion & Child Protection Enquiry.

While undertaking these assessments and enquiries, they will usually keep the Safeguarding Lead informed and may wish to interview the Referrer or others with relevant information.

STAGE 4:

Outcomes from the Assessments and Enquiries

No Further Action

No further action, if it is judged that the concerns are unfounded. In these circumstances the child or family may still receive support from Children's Services or other Agencies.

Initial Child Protection Conference

An initial Child Protection Conference is convened; this may lead to the child being made subject to a Child Protection Plan.

The Safeguarding Lead, Referrer or others may be invited to attend the Initial Child Protection Conference but should always be kept informed of actions/decisions taken.

STAGE 5:

Recording and Monitoring

The Safeguarding Lead must keep in touch with Children's Services until the assessments and enquiries are concluded.

The following people must be kept informed of actions/decisions throughout: The Referrer; The Diocesan or Congregational Insurers; The Charity Commission.

A full record must be kept.

Appendix 2: Support Services

A2.1

Ireland

■ Towards Healing

Towards Healing is an independent organisation providing professional support for people who have experienced institutional, clerical or religious abuse (Types of Abuse physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect) in Ireland. The primary client group are adult men and women who have experienced physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect in childhood, perpetrated by a priest, brother, religious sister, or volunteer or employee of the Catholic Church. The secondary group are relatives of survivors of abuse*, specifically spouses, partners, and children. In addition, siblings of survivors may be referred for therapy in order to come to terms with disclosure.

Towards Healing offers a range of counselling and support services:

- Face-to-Face Counselling
- Friendly Call
- Structured Telephone
- Counselling
- Family Counselling

The contact details; phone line is open: Tuesday to Friday 10am –4pm
Freephone 1800 303416 (Rep of Ireland) Hearing-impaired Text Line Number:
089-4556422.

Website **www.towardshealing.ie**

■ Towards Peace

The vision of Towards Peace is to provide a safe supportive space, where people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time. Safe spaces to connect with your own spirituality, with your sense of God and your journey Towards Peace.

Phone: + 353 (0) 1 5053028 Mobile: + 353 (0) 86 7710533

The service is available on Monday and Tuesday from 9am – 4pm and on Wednesday from 9am –12 noon.

Email: towardspeace@iecon.ie Website: www.towardspeace.ie

Safe Spaces is a joint Catholic and Anglican Church initiative to provide a vital support service for survivors of church-related abuse. Although the churches fund the service, it is run by First Light which is one of the leading charities providing specialist support to survivors of domestic and sexual abuse in England and Wales.

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England or the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Safe Spaces comprises a team of trained support advocates who have undergone specialist training in supporting survivors of sexual violence with specific additional training in how the churches respond to abuse cases, the way in which faith and church-related settings have been used to carry out abuse, and the particular issues affecting people who have had or still have, a relationship with the church.

Safe Spaces is a national service providing remote support through its helpline, live chat service and website. Remote support is provided for as long as the survivor needs this. This can be advocating for the survivor, giving them support, providing information (including information on church and police procedures), understanding individual needs and jointly working on individual support plans. If face-to-face support is also required, contact and referrals will be made with appropriate local organisations depending on need.

Safe Spaces is for anyone who feels they have experienced church related abuse of any form in England or Wales. It is for people aged 18 or over, but the abuse can have happened at any time in the past. The Safe Spaces team are available through their helpline.

Support Advisors and Survivor Advocates can provide emotional and practical support Mon–Fri 0900–1700. An Out of Hours Helpline can provide further emotional support and discuss needs Mon–Fri 1700–2100 and Sat 0900–1300 and Sunday 1300–1700. Contact: Tel: 0300 303 1056 (answerphone outside of opening times).

Email: safespaces@firstlight.org.uk

Website: www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk

A2.3

France

- **Plateforme des violences conjugales, sexuelles et sexistes**

Anonymous chat with law enforcement, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, dedicated to reporting domestic, sexual or gender-based violence.

- **The national victim support helpline**

116 006 (accessible from France), free of charge and available 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. This is an EU-wide number which can be reached from abroad by dialling +33 (0)1 80 52 33 76.

Appendix 3: Recruitment and Selection Checklist

Contact with children

- What contact with children will the position involve?
- Will the position involve unsupervised contact with children, or does it involve a position of trust?
- What other forms of contact will the person have with children, e.g. Email, telephone?

Defining the role

- Have the tasks and skills necessary for the position been considered?
- Does the task description make reference to working with and having responsibility for children?

Key selection criteria

- Has a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience been developed?

Written application

- Have all applicants been asked to supply information in writing, including personal details, past and current work/volunteering experience?
- Have application forms been developed?

Interview

- Have at least two representatives been identified to meet with the applicant to explore information contained in their application?
- Have the applicant and application forms been carefully considered, highlighting points to raise at interview, including:
 - The applicant's attitudes towards working with children;
 - Areas you want to explore in more detail;
 - Gaps in employment history;
 - Vague statements of unsubstantiated qualifications;
 - Frequent changes of employment?

Declaration

- 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?
- Has the successful applicant been asked to declare any past criminal convictions and cases pending against them?

Identification

- Have applicants been asked, where necessary, for photographic documentation to confirm their identity and place of residence?
- Will documentation relating to the applicant's identity and relevant qualifications be checked at the interview?

Qualifications

- Are applicants asked for documentation to confirm their qualifications?

Vetting procedure

- Does the position require the applicant to be vetted?
- Has the applicant been informed that they may need to undergo vetting before they take up any appointment?
- Does this applicant require a certificate of police clearance from other countries in which they have worked/volunteered?

Records

- Are details of the selection/induction process retained in the personnel file of the successful applicant?
- Are references kept on file as part of the record of the recruitment process?
- Are personnel informed that information such as application and declaration forms are held on file?

Confidentiality

- Is information about the applicant only seen by those directly involved in the recruitment process?
- Are applicants reassured that information about them, including information about convictions, will be treated in confidence and not used against them unlawfully?

References

- 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/contact with children?
- Are Referees asked specifically to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children?
- Are all references provided in writing and verified by a follow-up telephone call?

Suggested questions for referees

- The post involves substantial access to children. We are committed to the welfare and safeguarding of children. Have you any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children?
- How long have you known this person?
- In what capacity?
- Would you have any hesitation in them taking up this position?

References

Working Together to Safeguard Children

Published by Her Majesty's Government 2018

Children First National Guidance for the Protection of Children

Irish Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2017

A Safe and Welcoming Church

Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024

In God's Image (version 2) Instruction on Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Scotland updated: 06.07.22

Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service CSSA standards/national safeguarding policy — CatholicSafeguarding.org.uk 2025

Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession,

Department of Education and Skills, 2007. Further guidance is given in the

National action plan to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief by The

National Working Group on Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief, Department for Education, 2012.

Resources Available for downloading from **passionistspatr.com**

These and other resources may be downloaded:

- Reporting Form
- Property User Information Form
- Application Form (Volunteers)
- Reference Form (Volunteers)
- Disclosure Form
- Complaints Form