



# SAFEGUARDING Children

Newsletter for the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora — Autumn 2019

## *'Let the little ones come to me: do not stop them...'*

Last February, Pope Francis asked that the President of every Bishops' Conference in the world join him in Rome for a Meeting on the Protection of Minors in the Church. That meeting was the first of its kind ever held by the Church, and it brings home to us that the matter of the protection of young and vulnerable people is a world-wide issue. It also brings home to us that safeguarding children and vulnerable people of every age is, and must always be, a central concern for Catholic communities at every level throughout the world. We therefore continue in the diocese to constantly review our safeguarding work and procedures. We can never relax in this regard.

Each year we renew our determination to make our parishes and all church activities safe for children and vulnerable adults. In doing so, we are simply taking seriously Jesus' strong and indignant rebuke to his disciple: 'Let the little ones come to me', he said, 'do not stop them!' (Mt. 19.14) It is the business of every disciple of Jesus to bring others to him, particularly the 'little ones' – be that 'littleness' because of youth, age, illness or whatever vulnerability is theirs. Abuse has literally stopped many coming to him. Now that we are so aware of

this terrible fact, it is for all of us in the church as a first step to bring to Jesus in prayer those who are estranged from him and the faith because of what was done to them when 'little' and powerless.

Our parish safeguarding representatives are our frontline in ensuring all church activities today are safe and welcome places for all our people. A parish today must be defined as a place and community where all who come, particularly the 'little ones', will be safe and can blossom, and so make their unique and essential contribution to making 'thy Kingdom come' in our world today, as Jesus himself taught us to pray. We all owe a deep debt of gratitude to these volunteers in our parishes – as we do to all who work so diligently at the diocesan level in the matter of safeguarding. They enable our church ensure that all the 'little ones' can indeed 'come to Jesus'.

Faoi choimirce Muire Máthair go raibh an obair riachtanach seo i gcónaí.

✠ *Jreuda*

Bishop of Galway & Kilmacduagh &  
Apostolic Administrator of Kilfenora

## **PROTECTING PERSONAL DATA: ALL DAY, EVERY DAY.**

GDPR and data protection have become bad words in the media since the arrival of the new legislation last year. However, it's important to remember that in spite of the inclination towards eye rolling, protecting personal data is of real importance to us all. In addition, becoming data compliant has operational benefits for every organisation and institution.

An example of where protecting personal data is important can be seen with medical records. Would you be happy to go into your GP's surgery and see your medical file left out on a coffee table alongside last year's copy of *Hello* magazine? Very unlikely. To that end, we must put ourselves in the shoes of those whose personal data we work with or store. We should also remember that "personal" is as subjective as it sounds. You might not consider certain types of information about yourself to be private, but your friend or colleague or parishioner might. We cannot dictate what is personal, which is why the scope of data protection has become so broad.

Simple habitual changes will set the wheels in motion. Locking offices which aren't occupied is a step forward, as is the introduction and use of a shredder. Create appropriate passwords on computers, files and email accounts. Ensure that employees, colleagues and volunteers only have access to information which is relevant to their role. Underpin the importance of data protection with confidentiality agreements and consent forms. Everyone has a part to play in achieving data compliance.

Now, to the benefits. As someone who was a serial administrative hoarder, data protection has provided an obligatory but welcomed rehabilitation. It's time to rev up your shredders and purge the filing cabinets. So, so much of what is retained in every office or workspace is unnecessary, and now is the time to utilise the new law to clean up, redefine your workspace and familiarise yourself with what data you are actually retaining and taking responsibility for. It's always easier to work when you can easily put a hand to what you are looking for and can stand over the information for which you are responsible.

Last, but most certainly not least, history. We should not get so caught up in this current legal whirlwind as to leave ourselves with no past in the future. Acknowledge the importance of certain events and records to form a picture of our present for those curious in the future. Meeting minutes, records of significant construction and expenditure, publications and certain photographs can be retained and securely archived. Trust your own common sense and judgement when deciding what to feed to your shredder.

Whilst it is probably hard to believe, data protection largely boils down to good administrative management and acknowledging the subjectivity of what "personal" might mean to those with whom we work and interact. Compliance is absolutely achievable, and every step you take forward is a step in the right direction.

*Darina Ryan-Pilkington, Data Protection Officer.*

## PATHWAYS TO PROTECTION / STEPS TO SAFETY

As everyone is aware, the welfare and protection of every child is of paramount importance. A child who is being abused under the four main threshold categories – neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse or sexual abuse – has the right to be protected, the right to have their voice heard, the right to be believed and for the significant impact of the abuse to be stopped. If we become aware of such abuse taking place, we have a legal obligation as a Mandated Person to report this harm that *is* taking place, or *has* taken place.

What will help this process for the person reporting, to ensure the child's safety as quickly as possible? What happens once the referral is made?

### MANDATED PERSON

- Report concern to Tusla Child & Family Agency immediately (091 546235). It is appropriate to contact the Duty Social Worker to discuss the case or to seek advice.
- If urgent, contact Tusla immediately and submit a report form within 3 days.
- Mandated Persons cannot remain anonymous when reporting a concern.
- Best practice is to inform the family that you are reporting this concern, unless doing so creates a further risk to the child or to you, or impacts on Tusla's assessment procedure.
- The Social Work Department needs as much information as early as possible, including:
  - » names, addresses and ages;
  - » other children in family;
  - » parents' details;
  - » who is causing the harm;
  - » detailed accounts of grounds for concern;

- » dates of allegations, incidents;
- » description of injuries;
- » your name, contact details and relationship to the child.

- If out-of-hours, contact the Gardaí.

### TUSLA

- The immediate safety of the child is paramount. While cases are prioritised, emergency action will be taken if the child continues to be in danger (home visit to assess). An immediate concern will get an immediate response.
- All reports and information are checked on the day they are received. Reports are screened.
- Social Worker is allocated the case.
- Social Worker will meet with the parents (invite to office, or home visit). They will meet with the child / young person / extended family members / relevant professionals.
- Signs of Safety – consider the strengths and safety that exist within the family. Gather and analyse information about the risks or danger to the child. Perhaps the child's needs may be met through extended family, neighbours, or Family Support Services.
- Two key outcomes: either child abuse is unfounded, or child abuse is confirmed. Options then move to the Child Protection Case Conferencing System; Court Orders may be needed for voluntary care, emergency care, supervision Orders, special care, foster care, or residential care.
- Provision may be made for Family Welfare Conferences or 'Meitheal' to take place.

*Peter Kerrigan, Safeguarding Children Committee*

**If you are concerned** about the Safeguarding Welfare of Children/Young People/Vulnerable Adults please contact any of the following Designation Liaison Persons (DLP):

Eileen Kelly 085 1112660

Kevin Duffy 087 6141736

An Garda Síochána 1800 666 111

**TUSLA** Child and Family Agency: Galway 091 546235 — Clare 061 5886888 — Mayo 094 9042284

### FEEDBACK

*The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora values feedback from members of the clergy, staff, volunteers, parents, young people and children on Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.*

*Please contact:*

*Mr Kevin Duffy, Director of Safeguarding, Galway Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Árus De Brun, Newtownsmith, Galway.  
Tel. 087 6141736 Email: kduffy@galwaydiocese.ie*

## VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, in association with the other Dioceses of the Western Province, is at present finalising a Vulnerable Adults Policy. This policy will come into effect before the end of this year; it will replace the interim policy currently in place. The purpose of the policy is to bring the Diocese into line with current legislation on the treatment of Vulnerable Adults. This is an area that Pope Francis has spoken about in his papal letter "Vos Estis Lux Mundi" when he included Vulnerable Adults in his decree on abuse and defined vulnerable adults as "any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offence".

This policy will cover such areas as types of abuse and reporting procedures as well as house visitations. It also covers consent and capacity. These guidelines will apply to all clergy (both Diocesan and visiting), staff, volunteers and religious. The guidelines adhere to current best practice and guidance in the Republic of Ireland, and are underpinned by the legal frameworks: *National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012*, *Domestic Violence Act 2018*, and *Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015* (awaiting full implementation).

While this policy document is a standalone document, it will cross-reference with the *Safeguarding Children Parish Handbook* already in use in the Diocese.

There will be a training session of approximately two hours given to all Diocesan personnel who work with Vulnerable Adults, before the policy is implemented.

**Kevin Duffy, Director of Safeguarding.**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Annual Safeguarding Children Conference

Date: Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019  
 Venue: Menlo Park Hotel, Galway  
 Time: 9:30am–1:00pm

### Safeguarding Training Day

Date: Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019  
 Venue: Galway Diocesan Pastoral Centre,  
 Newtownsmith, Galway  
 Time: 9.30am–3.30pm

To register please contact Ita O'Mahony: tel. 091 575051 email galwaydiocesecpo@eircom.net

## From the Safeguarding Children Conference 2018

Gillian Uí Ghallcháir &  
 Eileen O'Brien, Knocknacarra



Bernie Scalley, Westside; Joanne Flaherty, Cathedral; Imelda Holland, Maree/Oranmore



John Paul II Awards

Back (L-R): Femi Awoniran, Esther Shekete, Sinéad McDonagh, Siofra Collins.  
 Front (L-R): Ciara Morrissey, Niamh Howley, Sarah Keenan, Hannah Arosomade.  
 With Bishop Brendan, Kevin Duffy and Mia Joyce.



Darina Ryan-Pikington, Guest Speaker  
 Fr Charlie Davy SJ, St Ignatius Parish





# SAFEGUARDING Children

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF GALWAY, KILMACDUAGH & KILFENORA

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

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

If you have any suspicion or concern, or have heard any information or allegation that a child is being or has been abused, please contact our Diocesan Designated Liaison Personnel:

Mr Kevin Duffy  
Diocesan Pastoral Centre  
Árus de Brún  
Newtownsmith  
Galway  
Mob. 087 6141736

Mrs Eileen Kelly  
Diocesan Pastoral Centre  
Árus de Brún  
Newtownsmith  
Galway  
Mob. 085 1112660

If you wish to report directly to the statutory authorities, please contact either:

An Garda Síochána at 1800 666111, through the emergency 999 or 112 numbers, or your local Garda station;

Your local **TÚSLA** Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker at: Galway 091 546235 — Clare 061 5886888 — Mayo 094 9042284.

On behalf of this church body, as part of the Catholic Church in Ireland, I commit to safeguarding children by agreeing to follow this Child Safeguarding Policy.

I will abide by and uphold the seven standards and the applicable indicators in our entire ministry and contacts with children.

**Bishop Brendan Kelly**

On behalf of the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora  
March 2018



If you need more copies of these resources, please contact our Director of Safeguarding, Mr Kevin Duffy, at 087 6141736.

### Standard 7

#### Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

##### 7.0 Local Safeguarding Audit

*In order to support parishes with their implementation of safeguarding practices, the diocese, through its safeguarding committee, will undertake an annual local safeguarding audit. This is done in order to help identify any areas that require attention or additional resources. The safeguarding audit will be carried out by the priest in conjunction with the local safeguarding representative.*

The safeguarding committee is happy to report that all parishes in the diocese have complied with this standard. The audits have been checked closely by the safeguarding committee and signed by the bishop. This task completed by parish priests and local safeguarding representatives is invaluable and the committee would like to thank you most sincerely for your continuing commitment to this task, together with your other vital roles in our parishes.

**Keeping our children safe in the church requires constant vigilance and the maintenance of best practice.**

Mary Smith,  
Chairperson of Safeguarding Children Committee.