SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND STANDARDS FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND 2016

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Foreword from the Sponsoring Bodies

We are very pleased to introduce *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.

This publication underlines a 'one-Church' approach across all constituent Church bodies. The revised set of standards is designed to ensure up-to-date 'best practice' in all aspects of child safeguarding in the creation and maintenance of safe environments. Two new standards have been introduced to address the care of complainants and also the care and management of respondents accused of child abuse.

We must remember that children are an integral part of the Church and must be cherished, cared for and safeguarded. We are reminded of this point in Matthew 25:40, 'whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers you do unto me'. We acknowledge that the harm any of our members have caused to children, and our failures to adequately address these wrongdoings, have had an enormous impact on our children and on our Church.

Since 1996, the Catholic Church in Ireland has taken many proactive steps to recognise and deal with child abuse. The first document, *Child Sexual Abuse: Framework for a Church Response*, was issued in 1996, followed by *Our Children, Our Church* in 2005. The Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Religious in Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union then established the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (the National Board) in 2006. The National Board developed the first *Safeguarding Children, Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland* (2008), which was adopted by the Church as policy in this area.

In light of developments in legislation, policy and guidance, alongside learning from reviews of safeguarding practice carried out by the National Board, and the continued development of good practice across the Church in Ireland, it was appropriate that the National Board, alongside Church personnel and external advisors, began a process of revising standards, which culminated in the publication of this document. We are grateful to all those who participated in the extensive consultation exercise. They have given immense assistance to the National Board in rewriting our child safeguarding policy and standards.

In striving to avoid complacency and to learn and improve on our practice, abiding by this policy and working to achieve these standards will protect children, Church personnel and the integrity of the Church and its mission. In this way we will each play our part in meeting the challenge set by Pope Francis when he said:

> God has no difficulty in being understood by children and children have no trouble in understanding God. It isn't by chance that in the Gospels, Jesus speaks beautiful and strong words about the 'little ones'. This term indicates all persons who depend on the help of others, particularly children. Children, therefore, are a treasure for humanity and also for the Church because they constantly remind us of the necessary condition for entering into the Kingdom of God: that we must not consider ourselves self-sufficient, but in need of help, of love, and of forgiveness. (General Audience, 18 March 2015)

Let us celebrate our ministry with children and ensure, in living out these standards, that children are safeguarded in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Fr Peter Rodgers

Conference of Religious of Ireland

Fr Hugh McMahon

Irish Missionary Union

Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly

Archbishop of Cashel and Emly

Introduction by the Chairman of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland

Families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children. No sacrifice on the part of adults is too great or costly to enable our children to grow and to safely preserve their growth.

This is the reason that the National Board has engaged in such a lengthy and comprehensive consultation over an eighteen-month period across the whole Church in Ireland, including governmental agencies, to ensure that the updating and revision of the Church safeguarding standards is consistent with both learned experience and best practice. A similar reason lies behind the establishment of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, established in 2014 by Pope Francis for the universal Church.

Raising awareness and understanding regarding the seriousness of implementing correct safeguarding environments and procedures at all levels of the Church is part of ensuring accountability. Central to the mission of making the Church a safe home for children and adolescents is the need to address the matter of accountability. In this regard, note should be taken that in June 2015 Pope Francis mandated the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) to judge bishops with regard to crimes of the abuse of their office. To undertake this, a new judicial section regarding the protection of minors has been instigated in the CDF, which is expressly dedicated to claims of abuse of episcopal office.

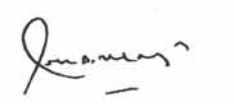
The policy element of our document sets out, by way of five commitments, the undertaking of the Catholic Church in Ireland to keep children safe through:

1. Mandatory reporting to statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused;
2. Caring for the welfare of all children involved in Church activities, and of the adults who work with them;
3. Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations, and to the people who bring these to the attention of Church personnel;
4. Caring pastorally for those who have suffered abuse, and other affected persons;
5. Caring pastorally for those implicated in the perpetration of abuse, and other affected persons.

A revised seventh standard supports a more structured process to quality assure compliance with the other six standards.

The policy and standards provide the framework for practice, through a one-Church approach to child safeguarding. The purpose is to ensure that the same principles, procedures and practices for safeguarding children and for responding to allegations or suspicions of child abuse operate at every level and in every place throughout the Catholic Church in Ireland. A further purpose of the one-Church approach is to create a secure and supportive atmosphere in which those who have suffered abuse can disclose this to a trusted person in the expectation of receiving a sensitive, caring and compassionate response, and by being supported in their continued healing. It is the responsibility of each Church authority to ensure that all Church personnel apply the standards in their own sphere of activity. These standards represent the expected level of performance all parts of the Church should reach. By dedicating ourselves to learn, to improve on our practice and to meet these new standards, we will remain vigilant in protecting the children of today and tomorrow, and protect Church personnel and the integrity of the Church and its mission.

The challenge of change has to be met, and, to the best of its ability, the National Board has incorporated all relevant legislation, regulation and statutory guidance developed in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland over the last seven years. The nature of this type of document is that it can never be completely definitive, and so the National Board will continue to provide guidance to Church bodies on future changes in the statutory context or otherwise as these arise.



John B. Morgan

Chairman

March 2016

Structure and Use of This Document

This document is structured under two sections:

1. Child safeguarding policy

This policy outlines the commitment to child safeguarding across all Church bodies in Ireland, and it applies to *all Church personnel*.

Each Church authority is required to sign, date and adopt this one Church policy.

Each Church authority should prominently display the policy statement and make the policy available to all Church personnel who are required to adhere to it.

All Church personnel working within a Church body are required to understand, commit to and sign their agreement to adhere to the policy throughout their ministry with children.

2. Seven safeguarding standards

Church bodies are required to demonstrate that their practice complies with the seven child safeguarding standards, as appropriate to their ministries.

Each standard contains:

- A statement outlining the rationale for the standard;
- Indicators that ensure the standard is being met;
- Ways of providing evidence to support the implementation of this standard;
- Links to other standards.

Child Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Constituent Members of the Catholic Church in Ireland

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

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

Details of Personnel to Contact if you are Concerned about the Welfare and Safety of Children

DLP:	Mr Cathal Cullen 087 100 0232	dlp@ossory.ie
	Ms Rose Brophy(Deputy DLP) 087 331 4330	dlp@ossory.ie
POLICE:		
Gardaí:	Garda National Protective Services	01 666 3430 / 35
CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE:		
Tusla -Child & Family Agency		
Kilkenny Area: 052 617 7302		Laois, Offaly: 044 935 3997

Foundations

In developing and implementing the Child Safeguarding Policy, this Church body is guided by the following foundations:

1. Gospel

Children have a key place in the heart of Jesus who said: 'Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it' (Luke 18:17). This places a sacred obligation on the Church to ensure that children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church.

2. Children's rights, international and national law

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outlines the forty-two fundamental rights to be implemented in national law by signatories to the convention (this includes the Holy See, Ireland and the United Kingdom). Full realisation of these rights will ensure that children will be 'brought up in a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity',[1] whilst respecting the cultural identity of each child.

A number of the child protection rights contained in the UNCRC are already present in key pieces of national law, canon law, and child and family policy and guidance, including:

Republic of Ireland law, policy and guidance

- Children First Act, 2015
- Better Outcomes Better Futures, DCYA, 2014
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Act), 2012
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, DCYA, 2011
- Criminal Justice Act, 2006
- Our Duty to Care, DCYA, 2002
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998
- Child Care Act, 1991
- The Constitution of Ireland

Northern Ireland law, policy and guidance

- Safeguarding Board Act (NI), 2011
- Our Duty to Care (Volunteer Now), 2011
- Our Children and Young People: Our Pledge, 2006

1 Preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (United Nations).

- Cooperating to Safeguard Children, 2003
- Children (NI) Order, 1995
- Criminal Law Act (NI), 1967

In the laws of both jurisdictions, where there is a conflict between the best interests of the child and the interests of other parties, the best interests of the child are considered to have paramountcy.

3. Learning from the past

In his *Ad Limina* address to the Irish Bishops on 28 October 2006, Pope Benedict XVI stressed the need to (i) establish the truth of what happened in the past; (ii) to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it from occurring again; (iii) to ensure that the principles of justice are fully respected; and (iv) above all, to bring healing to the victims and to all those affected by these egregious crimes.[2]

The statutory[3] reports into historical child abuse that have involved the Catholic Church in Ireland, as well as the reports of the reviews conducted by the National Board of individual Church bodies, highlight past errors and recommend how child safeguarding can be significantly improved.

As a Church we commit to this journey of justice, truth, healing and abuse prevention.

Commitments

Together with the foundations outlined above, this Church body, as part of the Catholic Church, commits to:

Mandatory reporting

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:

- physically
- emotionally
- sexually
- through neglect

Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of Church personnel, but they can also relate to incidents in the child's family, or elsewhere in the community.

Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training, support, communications and quality assurance.

2 Pope Benedict XVI, Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Bishops of Ireland on their Ad Limina visit, 28 October 2006 (Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana).

3 For further details, see Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2013), *An examination of recommendations from inquiries into events in families and their interactions with State services, and their impact on policy and practice* (Dublin: Stationery Office).

Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation)[4] will be reported via the designated liaison person to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons

Those who have suffered child abuse by Church personnel will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support as they seek to rebuild their lives.

An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order and to the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

Caring pastorally for respondents and other affected persons

This Church body in its response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child sexual abuse will respect the rights under civil law and canon law of an accused cleric or religious or other Church personnel. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered to the respondent.

The Church authority will take responsibility for ensuring that any cleric or religious who is considered to constitute a danger to children is managed according to a risk management plan.

All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child.

Respondents belong to families and diocesan or religious communities. The Church authority will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

4 The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason, Code of Canon Law, c.983.1, in Catholic Church (1983), *The Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition* (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America).

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all Church bodies and is addressed to all Church personnel who are required to comply with it. Full understanding of and adherence to this policy should lead to a deepening in the understanding of, and respect for, the rights of children and young people to participate as people of faith in the life of the Church.

The care and protection of children involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church, and is a requirement that applies regardless of the nature of the Church activities in which children are involved. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in creating an environment in which children can develop and be safe.

Putting the Policy into Action

This Church body will implement this policy by ensuring that all our ministry and activities comply with applicable indicators of the seven safeguarding standards.

1. Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments.
2. Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations.
3. Care and Support for the Complainant.
4. Care and Management of the Respondent.
5. Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe.
6. Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message.
7. Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards.

Commitment by the Church Authority

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.

31st May 2019

Church Authority Signature

Date

On Behalf of

Diocese of Ossory

Child Safeguarding Standards

What is a standard?

A standard is the level of practice required to ensure good child safeguarding. Each standard is self-contained and is supported by indicators. It is the standard that provides the framework for action. Audits of compliance will be undertaken against the seven standards and the relevant indicators that apply to the Church body.

What are indicators?

Indicators should be understood as targets to be achieved; they demonstrate how the objectives of the standard are reached. For ease of use, the indicators have been colour coded and should be used alongside the implementation flow chart on page 15. The colour-coded indicators should be understood as cumulative in that:

- If the Church body has ministry with children, all of the indicators apply (blue, orange and green) as shown in **Table 1 .**
- If the Church body has no ministry with children but are managing allegations or cases, only the orange and green indicators contained in **Table 2** apply**.**
- If the Church body has no ministry with children and are not managing any allegations or cases, only the green indicators contained in **Table 3** apply**.**

Following the table that sets out the indicators under each standard, there are two further sections, which are explained here:

What are ways of providing evidence to support the implementation of this standard?

This section lists forms of documentary evidence of practice that can be used to demonstrate that each indicator is being fully met. Guidance has been developed for each standard and is available as a separate document. Following the guidance developed by the National Board is optional. However, a Church authority needs to ensure that appropriate written guidance is in place and is being followed in their Church body.

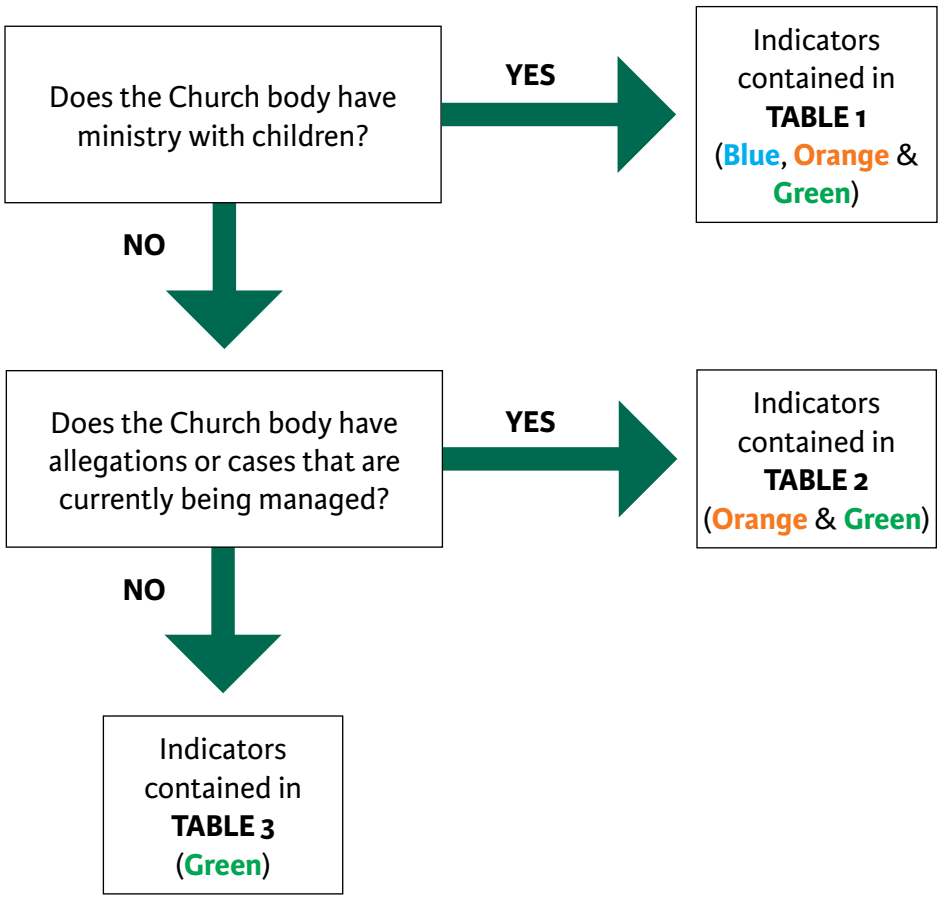
What are the links to other standards?

Safeguarding children requires that all of the standards are fully realised across the whole Church. The seven standards constitute a whole, so each individual standard should be understood alongside the other relevant standards listed in this section.

Implementation

To effectively use this document, each Church authority will be responsible for ensuring that they:

1. Read and sign the Child Safeguarding Policy.
2. Use the flow chart below to identify what indicators apply to their Church body.



3. Read and implement the relevant indicators that apply to their Church body (see tables on the following pages).

TABLE 1

1.1	The Church body follows effective practice guidelines and legislative requirements in the recruitment of all Church personnel and in assessing their suitability to work with children.
1.2	The Church body implements effective practice on the expected standards of adults' behaviour towards children.
1.3	The Church body implements effective practice in encouraging children's positive behaviour.
1.4	The Church body implements effective practice in safe care for all children, including those with specific needs.
1.5	The Church body ensures that the safe use of Church property by external groups complies with effective child safeguarding practice.
1.6	The Church body has in place clearly written whistle-blowing procedures to support and assist Church personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards children involved in Church activities.
1.7	The Church body has a clearly written complaints procedure regarding safeguarding concerns that are not allegations of abuse.
1.8	The Church body implements effective practice for Church personnel on assessment of hazards when working with children.
1.9	The Church body implements effective practice for the appropriate use of information technology, including social media by Church personnel and by children.
1.10	The Church authority has responsibility for ensuring that all clerics/religious, who are members of the Church body and are ministering with children in an external organisation/Church body, agree to follow effective safeguarding practice.
2.1	The Church body has clearly written child safeguarding procedures and access to the personnel to implement them if suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations are received about the abuse of a child. These procedures specify that all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported. In addition to reporting to the statutory authorities: • if the allegation relates to a Church authority, the National Board must also be informed; • if the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, the National Board and the Church authority must also be informed; • if the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, the Church authority must be informed.
2.2	The Church body records all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations and action taken which complies with relevant data protection legislation, statutory guidance on confidentiality and storage of information.
2.3	The Church authority shares information about child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations with those who need to know, in order to keep children safe.
3.1	The Church authority offers appropriate pastoral care and support to the complainant, which recognises their unique needs.
3.2	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the complainant.
3.3	The Church body works in cooperation with relevant organisations and seeks specialist advice from the statutory child protection services when necessary.
4.1	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. This is done in consultation with the respondent.

4.2	The Church authority has arrangements in place to inform the respondent that an allegation has been received about them, and has a procedure for deciding whether an interim management plan needs to be put in place for the respondent.
4.3	When statutory authority investigations and assessments have been completed, the Church authority resumes the preliminary investigation/collecting the proofs as provided for in Canon 1717 (1)-(3)(cleric) and Canon 695 (non-ordained religious).
4.4	The Church authority has in place suitable arrangements for the monitoring of a respondent, where there is a case to answer, until (and if) the Church authority no longer has responsibility for monitoring the respondent.
5.1	The Church authority takes responsibility to ensure that the induction of all personnel – lay, religious or clergy – includes training in the Church's child safeguarding policy and procedures.
5.2	The Church body conducts an annual training-needs analysis that identifies all Church personnel who require training and develops a training plan based on this.
5.3	The Church body ensures delivery at a local level of basic training programmes that are identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy, where this has been identified as necessary through the annual training-needs analysis.
5.4	The Church body ensures that Church personnel who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate, role-specific training that is identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy.
5.5	The Church body provides children who access Church-related activities and their parents/guardians with information, advice and support on keeping children safe, and involves them in Church child safeguarding training initiatives wherever possible and appropriate.
5.6	The Church body facilitates the provision of an appropriate level of support to all involved with the Church in relation to their responsibilities to safeguard children.
6.1	The Church body has a written plan, which details how the Church's child safeguarding message will be communicated.
6.2	The Church body makes information regarding how to safeguard children available to all.
6.3	The Church body ensures that it communicates the Church's child safeguarding message to people whose first language is not English, as well as to people who have specific needs.
6.4	The Church body establishes links with other local organisations in order to promote a safe and caring community for children and to share best child safeguarding practice.
7.1	The Church authority: • puts in place arrangements to ensure and evaluate its compliance with the safeguarding standards at a local level; • produces a report on the level of compliance established through this audit exercise; • notifies the National Board in writing of the completion of this annual audit report.
7.2	The Church body produces a three-year child safeguarding plan that: • outlines the actions that will be taken to keep children safe; • identifies who is responsible for implementing these actions; • specifies the time frame within which actions are completed; • identifies the resources to ensure that the plan's objectives are realised.
7.3	The Church authority invites the National Board to carry out an independent review of its safeguarding practice in relation to the applicable indicators of the seven safeguarding standards, in accordance with standard terms of reference at a frequency agreed with the National Board.

TABLE 2

1.5	The Church body ensures that the safe use of Church property by external groups complies with effective child safeguarding practice.
1.6	The Church body has clearly written whistle-blowing procedures in place to support and assist Church personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards children involved in Church activities.
1.10	The Church authority has responsibility for ensuring that all clerics/religious, who are members of the Church body and are ministering with children in an external organisation/Church body, agree to follow effective safeguarding practice.
2.1	The Church body has clearly written child safeguarding procedures and access to the personnel to implement them if there are suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations received about the abuse of a child. These procedures specify that all suspicions, concerns, information or allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported. In addition to reporting to the statutory authorities: • if the allegation relates to a Church authority, the National Board must also be informed; • if the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, the National Board and the Church authority must also be informed; • if the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, the Church authority must be informed.
2.2	The Church body records all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations and action taken that complies with relevant data protection legislation, statutory guidance on confidentiality and storage of information.
2.3	The Church authority shares information about child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations with those who need to know, in order to keep children safe.
3.1	The Church authority offers appropriate pastoral care and support to the complainant, which recognises their unique needs.
3.2	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the complainant.
3.3	The Church works in cooperation with relevant organisations and seeks specialist advice from the statutory child protection services when necessary.
4.1	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and to represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. This is done in consultation with the respondent.
4.2	The Church authority has arrangements in place to inform the respondent that an allegation has been received about them, and has a procedure for deciding whether an interim management plan needs to be put in place for the respondent.
4.3	When statutory authority investigations and assessments have been completed, the Church authority resumes the preliminary investigation/collecting the proofs as provided for in Canon 1717 (1)-(3)(cleric) and Canon 695 (non-ordained religious).
4.4	The Church authority has suitable arrangements in place for the monitoring of a respondent, where there is a case to answer, until (and if) the Church authority no longer has responsibility for monitoring the respondent.

5.1	The Church authority takes responsibility to ensure that the induction of all personnel – lay, religious or clergy – includes training in the Church's child safeguarding policy and procedures.
5.2	The Church body conducts an annual training-needs analysis that identifies all Church personnel who require training and develops a training plan based on this.
5.3	The Church body ensures delivery at a local level of basic training programmes that are identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy, where this has been identified as necessary through the annual training-needs analysis.
5.4	The Church body ensures that Church personnel who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate, role-specific training that is identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy.
5.6	The Church body facilitates the provision of an appropriate level of support to all involved with the Church in relation to their responsibilities to safeguard children.
6.2	The Church body makes information on how to safeguard children available to all.
7.1	The Church authority: • puts in place arrangements to ensure and evaluate its compliance with the safeguarding standards at a local level; • produces a report on the level of compliance established through this audit exercise; • notifies the National Board in writing of the completion of this annual audit report.
7.2	The Church body produces a three-year child safeguarding plan that: • outlines the actions that will be taken to keep children safe; • identifies who is responsible for implementing these actions; • specifies the time frame within which actions are completed; • identifies the resources to ensure that the plan's objectives are realised.
7.3	The Church authority invites the National Board to carry out an independent review of its safeguarding practice in relation to the applicable indicators of the seven safeguarding standards, in accordance with standard terms of reference at a frequency agreed with the National Board.

TABLE 3

1.5	The Church body ensures that the safe use of Church property by external groups complies with effective child safeguarding practice.
1.6	The Church body has in place clearly written whistle-blowing procedures to support and assist Church personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards children involved in Church activities.
1.10	The Church authority has responsibility for ensuring that all clerics/religious, who are members of the Church body and are ministering with children in an external organisation/Church body, agree to follow effective safeguarding practice.
2.1	The Church body has clearly written child safeguarding procedures and access to personnel to implement them if there are suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations received about the abuse of a child. These procedures specify that all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported. In addition to reporting to the statutory authorities: • if the allegation relates to a Church authority, the National Board must also be informed; • if the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, the National Board and the Church authority must also be informed; • if the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, the Church authority must be informed.
3.2	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the complainant. This is done in consultation with the complainant.
3.3	The Church body works in cooperation with relevant organisations and seeks specialist advice from the statutory child protection services when necessary.
4.1	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. This is done in consultation with the respondent.
5.1	The Church authority takes responsibility to ensure that the induction of all personnel – lay, religious or clergy – includes training in the Church's child safeguarding policy and procedures.
5.2	The Church body conducts an annual training-needs analysis that identifies all Church personnel who require training, and develops a training plan based on this.
5.3	The Church body ensures delivery at a local level of basic training programmes that are identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy, where this has been identified as necessary through the annual training-needs analysis.
5.4	The Church body ensures that Church personnel who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate, role-specific training that is identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy.
5.6	The Church body facilitates the provision of an appropriate level of support to all involved with the Church in relation to their responsibilities to safeguard children.
6.2	The Church body makes information on how to safeguard children available to all.
7.1	The Church authority: • puts in place arrangements to ensure and evaluate its compliance with the safeguarding standards at a local level; • produces a report on the level of compliance established through this audit exercise; • notifies the National Board in writing of the completion of this annual audit report.
7.3	The Church authority invites the National Board to carry out an independent review of its safeguarding practice in relation to the applicable indicators of the seven safeguarding standards, in accordance with standard terms of reference at a frequency agreed with the National Board.

What is the Standard?

Church bodies provide an environment for children that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. They provide access to good role models whom the children can trust, who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

Indicators that Ensure the Standard is Being Met

1.1	The Church body follows effective practice guidelines and legislative requirements in the recruitment of all Church personnel and in assessing their suitability to work with children.
1.2	The Church body implements effective practice on the expected standards of adults' behaviour towards children.
1.3	The Church body implements effective practice in encouraging children's positive behaviour.
1.4	The Church body implements effective practice in safe care for all children, including those with specific needs.
1.5	The Church body ensures that the safe use of Church property by external groups complies with effective child safeguarding practice.
1.6	The Church body has in place clearly written whistle-blowing procedures to support and assist Church personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards children involved in Church activities.
1.7	The Church body has a clearly written complaints procedure regarding safeguarding concerns that are not allegations of abuse.
1.8	The Church body implements effective practice for Church personnel on assessment of hazards when working with children.
1.9	The Church body implements effective practice for the appropriate use of information technology, including social media by Church personnel and by children.
1.10	The Church authority has responsibility for ensuring that all clerics/religious, who are members of the Church body and are ministering with children in an external organisation/Church body, agree to follow effective safeguarding practice.

Ways of Providing Evidence to Support the Implementation of this Standard

Evidence of creating and maintaining safe environments may include having and using effective procedures and practice on:

1.1	Safe recruitment, including vetting.
1.1	Visiting clergy or persons in any form of consecrated life seeking to minister in the Catholic Church in Ireland.
1.2	Appropriate behaviour by adults towards children and young people.
1.3	Appropriate behaviour by children and young people.
1.3	Dealing with breaches of codes of behaviour for adults and for children.

1.3	Preventing bullying.
1.4	Safe care for children.
1.4	Dealing with accidents.
1.4	Maintaining adequate supervision ratios.
1.4	Exceptional adult one-to-one contact with children and young people.
1.4	Operating the Pope John Paul II Award scheme.
1.4	The participation of children with specific needs.
1.4	Trips away from home with young people.
1.5	The use of Church property by external groups, including its hire for private functions.
1.6	Whistle-blowing.
1.7	Complaints regarding safeguarding concerns which are not allegations of abuse.
1.8	Hazard assessment of activities with children.
1.9	The use of technology, including the internet, texting, email and photography.
1.9	The use of CCTV and webcams.
1.10	Ensuring that all clerics/religious, who are members of the Church body and are ministering with children in an external organisation/Church body, agree to follow effective safeguarding practice.

Links to Other Standards

Safeguarding children requires that all of the standards are fully realised across the whole Church. This standard should not be considered in isolation and so must be read in conjunction with the following standards:

- **Standard 5**: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe
- **Standard 6**: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

STANDARD 2

PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION SUSPICIONS, CONCERNS, KNOWLEDGE OR ALLEGATIONS

What is the Standard?

Church bodies have clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. They also enable the Church to meet all national and international legal and practice requirements and guidance.

Indicators that Ensure the Standard is Being Met

2.1	The Church body has clearly written child safeguarding procedures and access to personnel to implement them if suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations are received about the abuse of a child. These procedures specify that all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported. In addition to reporting to the statutory authorities: • if the allegation relates to a Church authority, the National Board must also be informed; • if the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, the National Board and the Church authority must also be informed; • If the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, the Church authority must be informed.
2.2	The Church body records all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations and action taken that complies with relevant data protection legislation, statutory guidance on confidentiality and storage of information.
2.3	The Church authority shares information about child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations with those who need to know, in order to keep children safe.

Ways of Providing Evidence to Support the Implementation of this Standard

Evidence of implementing procedures for responding to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may include having and using effective procedures and practice on:

2.1	Reporting allegations of abuse.
2.1	Responding to an adult making an allegation of abuse.
2.1	Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse.
2.1	Responding to an anonymous allegation of abuse.
2.1	Responding to someone who admits to abusing a child.
2.1	Responding to someone who makes an allegation that does not relate to Church personnel.
2.1	Child safeguarding and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
2.1	Responding to a complainant who is dissatisfied with how their allegation has been dealt with.
2.1	Responding to allegations against a Church authority.
2.2	Having regular liaisons with statutory authorities.

2.2	Maintaining case management records.
2.2	Minute taking.
2.3	Information sharing.

Links to Other Standards

Safeguarding children requires that all of the standards are fully realised across the whole Church. This standard should not be considered in isolation and must also be read in the context of the following standards:

- **Standard 3:** Care and Support for the Complainant
- **Standard 4:** Care and Management of Respondent
- **Standard 7:** Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

STANDARD 3

CARE AND SUPPORT FOR THE COMPLAINANT

What is the Standard?

Complainants who have suffered abuse as children receive a compassionate response when they disclose their abuse. They, and their families, are offered appropriate support, advice and pastoral care.

Indicators that Ensure the Standard is Being Met

3.1	The Church authority offers appropriate pastoral care to complainants, which recognises their unique needs. This should include an offer from the Church authority to meet the complainant in person.
3.2	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the complainant. This is done in consultation with the complainant.
3.3	The Church body works in cooperation with relevant organisations and seeks specialist advice from the statutory child protection services when necessary.

Ways of Providing Evidence to Support the Implementation of this Standard

Evidence of providing care and support for the complainant may include having and using effective procedures and practice on:

3.1	A pastoral response to complainants.
3.2	The appointment of appropriate personnel.
3.2	The role of the support person.
3.3	Effective cooperation with relevant national organisations and agencies.

Links to Other Standards

Safeguarding children requires that all of the standards are fully realised across the whole Church. This standard should not be considered in isolation and must also be read in the context of the following standards:

- **Standard 2:** Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations
- **Standard 5:** Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe
- **Standard 7:** Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

STANDARD 4

CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RESPONDENT

What is the Standard?

The Church authority has in place a fair process for investigating and managing child safeguarding concerns. When the threshold for reporting has been reached, a system of support and monitoring for respondents (cleric or religious) is provided.

Indicators that Ensure the Standard is Being Met

4.1	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. This is done in consultation with the respondent.
4.2	The Church authority has arrangements in place to inform the respondent that an allegation has been received about them, and has a procedure for deciding whether an interim management plan needs to be put in place for the respondent.
4.3	When statutory authority investigations and assessments have been completed, the Church authority resumes the preliminary investigation/collecting the proofs as provided for in Canon 1717 (1)-(3)(cleric) and Canon 695 (non-ordained religious).
4.4	The Church authority has suitable arrangements in place for the monitoring of a respondent, where there is a case to answer, until (and if) the Church authority no longer has responsibility for monitoring the respondent.

Ways of Providing Evidence to Support the Implementation of this Standard

Evidence of providing care and management of the respondent may include having and using effective procedures and practice on:

4.1	Appointing appropriate personnel.
4.2	Specifying the role of the adviser.
4.2	Informing the respondent (cleric or religious) that an allegation has been received, and considering if an interim management plan is required.
4.2	Undertaking a risk assessment – for clergy and religious – to produce an interim management plan.
4.2	Facilitating leave from sacred ministry.
4.2	Supporting parishes and others affected when a priest has taken leave from sacred ministry.
4.3	Conducting a preliminary investigation for clerics following the conclusion of any investigation by the statutory authorities.
4.3	Returning the respondent to ministry when the preliminary investigation finds that there is no case to answer or when the allegation is manifestly false or frivolous.

4.3	Supporting and managing a respondent when a preliminary investigation finds there is a case to answer and the allegation against a cleric is not manifestly false or frivolous.
4.3	Supporting and managing religious (non-ordained) following the conclusion of any investigation by the statutory authorities.
4.4	Monitoring those who have been accused of child abuse once there is a case to answer, or the allegation is not manifestly false or frivolous.
4.4	Conducting clinical risk assessments.

Links to Other Standards

Safeguarding children requires that all of the standards are fully realised across the whole Church. This standard should not be considered in isolation and must also be read in the context of the following standards:

- **Standard 1:** Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments
- **Standard 2:** Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations
- **Standard 5:** Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe
- **Standard 7:** Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

STANDARD 5

TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

What is the Standard?

Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard and protect children.

Indicators that Ensure the Standard is Being Met

5.1	The Church authority ensures that the induction of Church personnel includes training in the Church's child safeguarding policy and procedures.
5.2	The Church body conducts an annual training-needs analysis that identifies all Church personnel who require training, and develops a training plan based on this.
5.3	The Church body ensures delivery at a local level of basic training programmes that are identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy, where this has been identified as necessary through the annual training-needs analysis.
5.4	The Church body ensures that Church personnel who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate, role-specific training that is identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy.
5.5	The Church body provides children who access Church-related activities and their parents/guardians with information, advice and support on keeping children safe, and involves them in Church child safeguarding training initiatives wherever possible and appropriate.
5.6	The Church body facilitates the provision of an appropriate level of support to all involved with the Church in relation to their responsibilities to safeguard children.

Ways of Providing Evidence to Support the Implementation of this Standard

Evidence of providing training and support for keeping children safe may include having and using effective procedures and practice on:

5.1	Inducting all involved in providing Church-related activities.
5.2	Participating in the National Board Training Strategy.
5.2	Carrying out a training needs analysis.
5.3	Ensuring the delivery of basic safeguarding awareness.
5.3	Accessing registered trainers with the National Board.
5.4	Providing role-specific training for Church personnel.
5.5	Raising awareness of child safeguarding with children and their parents/guardians in the Church.
5.6	Ensuring access to appropriate support and supervision.

Links to Other Standards

Safeguarding children requires that all of the standards are fully realised across the whole Church. This standard should not be considered in isolation and must also be read in the context of the following standards:

- **Standard 1:** Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments
- **Standard 2:** Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations
- **Standard 3:** Care and Support for the Complainant
- **Standard 4:** Care and Management of the Respondent
- **Standard 6:** Communicating the Church's Child Safeguarding Message
- **Standard 7:** Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

STANDARD 6

COMMUNICATING THE CHURCH'S SAFEGUARDING MESSAGE

What is the Standard?

Church bodies appropriately communicate the Church's child safeguarding message.

Indicators that Ensure the Standard is Being Met

6.1	The Church body has a written plan that details how the Church's child safeguarding message will be communicated.
6.2	The Church body makes information regarding how to safeguard children available to all.
6.3	The Church body ensures that it communicates the Church's child safeguarding message to people whose first language is not English, as well as to people who have specific needs.
6.4	The Church body establishes links with other local organisations in order to promote a safe and caring community for children and to share best child safeguarding practice.

Ways of Providing Evidence to Support the Implementation of this Standard

Evidence of communicating the Church's child safeguarding message may include having and using effective procedures and practice on:

6.1	Developing a communications plan.
6.2	Ensuring that information regarding the Church's child safeguarding message is accessible.
6.2	Creating user-friendly versions of the child safeguarding policy.
6.2	Creating a child safeguarding newsletter.
6.3	Communicating appropriately to those whose first language is not English, as well as to those who have specific needs.
6.4	Developing links with other organisations in the locality in order to promote a safe and caring community and to share good practices.

Links to Other Standards

Safeguarding children requires that all of the standards are fully realised across the whole Church. This standard should not be considered in isolation but must be read in the context of all of the seven standards, and in particular the following standards:

- **Standard 1:** Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments
- **Standard 5:** Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe
- **Standard 7:** Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards

STANDARD 7

QUALITY ASSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE STANDARDS

What is the Standard?

The Church body develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This action plan is reviewed annually.

The Church body only has responsibility to monitor, evaluate and report on compliance with the indicators under each standard that apply to it, depending on its ministry.

Indicators that Ensure the Standard is Being Met

7.1	The Church authority: • puts in place arrangements to ensure and evaluate its compliance with the safeguarding standards at a local level; • produces a report on the level of compliance established through this audit exercise; • notifies the National Board in writing of the completion of this annual audit report.
7.2	The Church body produces a three-year child safeguarding plan that: • outlines the actions that will be taken to keep children safe; • identifies who is responsible for implementing these actions; • specifies the time frame within which actions are completed; • identifies the resources to ensure that the plan's objectives are realised.
7.3	The Church authority invites the National Board to carry out an independent review of its safeguarding practice in relation to the applicable indicators of the seven safeguarding standards, in accordance with standard terms of reference at a frequency agreed with the National Board.

Ways of Providing Evidence to Support the Implementation of this Standard

Evidence of quality assuring compliance with the standards may include having and using effective procedures and practice on:

7.1	Compliance with the seven standards at local level.
7.1	Monitoring visits by the Church authority.
7.1	Auditing local child safeguarding.
7.1	Annual reports by the DLP to the Church authority.
7.1	Ensuring a safeguarding handover and induction of a new Church authority or DLP.
7.2	Developing a three-year child safeguarding plan.
7.3	A National Board review.

Links to Other Standards

Safeguarding children requires that all of the standards are fully realised across the whole Church. This final standard should not be considered in isolation but must be read in conjunction with all of the preceding six standards.

Canon law: In the Catholic Church, canon law is the system of laws and legal principles made and enforced by the Church's hierarchical authorities to regulate its internal organisation and government, and to order and direct the activities of Catholics toward the mission of the Church.

Child: Means everyone below the age of eighteen years.

Children with specific needs: This term is used to cover the specific or unique, out-of-the-ordinary concerns created by the child's medical, physical, mental or developmental condition or disability. Additional services are usually needed to help a person in one or more of the following areas (among others): thinking, communication, movement, getting along with others, and taking care of oneself.

Church authority: This term does not appear in canon law. It can refer to the leader of the Church body, usually the bishop or provincial, or the senior administrative authority of a lay organisation or ecclesial movement. This term includes prior, prioress, abbot, abbess, congregational leaders, province leader, unit leader, regional, superior, archbishop, cardinal and diocesan administrator (while in office).

Church body: Canon law contains many distinctions between the types of Church organisations and bodies that have developed over the life of the Catholic Church. It would be impractical to include all of these when referring to an element of the Church that has a child safeguarding responsibility. In this document the term 'Church bodies' is used as shorthand to include all of those constituent members of the Catholic Church in Ireland who hold a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland. A full list is provided on the website of the National Board.

Church personnel: The term 'Church personnel' is used to define those that work (voluntarily or paid) for the Church body. This includes clergy, religious, staff and volunteers.

Cleric: One who is ordained in sacred ministry in the Church. Clerics are divided into deacons, priests and bishops.

Complainant: This is a term used to describe a person who has made an allegation of abuse.

Constituent member: The twenty-six dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church on the island of Ireland, members of the Conference of Religious in Ireland and members of the Irish Missionary Union; and such other congregations, organisations, associations, ecclesial movements or prelatures on the island of Ireland with the prior agreement of the members of the National Board; to the extent any such foregoing body has agreed to adhere to the Memorandum of Understanding.

Delict: A crime in canon law; an external violation of a law or precept gravely imputable by reason of malice or negligence.

Designated liaison person: The person appointed by the Church authority to liaise with the statutory authorities regarding child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.

Effective practice: Effective practices are: accessible; identify and respect the rights of service users; client-centred; delivered by trained and committed staff; well managed; and shown through regular evaluation to have positive outcomes for the people being served.

In Ireland: For the purposes of this document, the term 'in Ireland' includes Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. If the term 'Northern Ireland' or 'Republic of Ireland' is used, it is in relation to something that is only applicable to that specific jurisdiction.

Interim management plan: A plan put in place with the respondent during the process of investigation of an allegation of abuse by the Church and by the statutory authorities.

Ministry with Children:

This includes:

- any work or service undertaken by Church personnel with children, which is under the authority of their Church body;
- any work with children undertaken by Church personnel (lay, vowed and ordained) within Church property, which is under the authority of their Church body;
- all priests in active ministry under the authority of their Church body are to be considered as having ministry with children.

Monitoring: A mechanism put in place to systematically oversee and review how a respondent has complied with a permanent management plan.

One-Church approach: Although the Catholic Church in Ireland comprises a large number of Church bodies, in relation to safeguarding, this term means an approach that is consistent and transparent across the whole Church in Ireland.

Preliminary investigation: This is a canonical term, which refers to the initial investigation by which a Church authority determines whether an alleged delict, which has reached the threshold of a semblance of truth, is not manifestly false or frivolous and remains a case to answer.

PSNI: Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Respondent: This is the term used for the person about whom child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations have been made.

Statutory Authorities: These include TUSLA and the Gardaí in the Republic of Ireland, and Social Services and the Police Service of Northern Ireland in Northern Ireland.

Threshold:
ROI – Children First Act 2015 Part 3 (14), (1) defines the threshold for reporting as '... where a mandated person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a mandated person, that a child (a) has been harmed, (b) is being harmed, or (c) is at risk of being harmed, he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, as the case may be, to the Agency' (Child and Family Agency).

NI – Cooperating to Safeguard Children 2003, 2.3 and Children NI Order 2(2) and 50 (3), defines the threshold for reporting as 'reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm'.

Tusla: The Child and Family Agency who are the statutory authority in the Republic of Ireland, responsible for improving well-being and outcomes for children.

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- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
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- Irish Bishops' Conference
- Irish Missionary Union
- Local Safeguarding Representatives (Diocese of Dromore)
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Respondents of abuse
- Complainants of abuse
- Towards Healing
- One in Four
- Tusla (Child and Family Agency)
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- Archdiocese of Armagh
- Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly
- Archdiocese of Dublin
- Benedictines Glenstal Abbey
- Capuchins
- Christian Brothers
- Conference of Religious of Ireland
- Diocese of Achonry
- Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois
- Diocese of Clogher
- Diocese of Clonfert
- Diocese of Cloyne
- Diocese of Cork and Ross
- Diocese of Derry
- Diocese of Down and Connor
- Diocese of Dromore
- Diocese of Elphin
- Diocese of Ferns
- Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora
- Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin
- Diocese of Killaloe
- Diocese of Kilmore
- Diocese of Limerick
- Diocese of Meath
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- Diocese of Waterford and Lismore
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- Holy Spirit Congregation
- Loreto Sisters
- Medical Missionaries of Mary
- Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
- Oblates of Mary Immaculate
- Congregation of the Passion
- Presentation Brothers
- Presentation Sisters
- Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer
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