

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans)

Child Safeguarding Statement

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.

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

The Spiritans, as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, exist to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry with children, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016:

- All priests, brothers in active ministry (134)
- Spiritan Associates in active ministry (11)
- Centre of Spiritan Spirituality (3)
- Spiritan Youth Services (3)
- Spiritan Safeguarding Office (5)
- School Chaplains (4)

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, we are committed to the following principles:

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
- or
- through neglect.

Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a Spiritan or co-worker, 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.

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 Congregation of the Holy Spirit 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 (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported 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 Provincial Leader. If the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Provincial Leader and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Spiritans and co-workers will co-operate 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, the Provincial Leader will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law and 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 Spiritans or co-workers 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 to privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

CARING PASTORALLY FOR RESPONDENTS AND OTHER AFFECTED PERSONS.

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit 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 co-worker. 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 Provincial Leader 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 Provincial Leader will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

Procedures

All procedures outlined in the risk assessment below are available from the Spiritan Safeguarding Office. The procedures listed include the following:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse of, or misconduct with, a child availing of our service by workers / volunteers. This is outlined in the Spiritan Procedures Standard Two, Section 2.1.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children. This is outlined in the Spiritan Procedures Standard One, Section 1.1.
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm. This is outlined in the Spiritan Procedures Standard Five, Sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla. This is outlined in the Spiritan Procedures Standard Two, Section 2.1.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons in the relevant service who are mandated persons. This is outlined in the Spiritan Procedures Standard Two, Section 2.1.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person. This is outlined in the Spiritan Procedures Standards One, Section 1.1. and Six, Section 6.1.

Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Spiritan activities and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse.

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified (to be found in <i>Spiritan Safeguarding Procedures</i> , 2017)
Those who work with children are unsafe to do so.	Safe selection and recruitment procedures for those working with children, including vetting of all involved in public ministry and/or having contact with children.
Those who work with children behave inappropriately towards them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Professional Conduct for those working with children • Complaints procedures • Appropriate communication with children (including use of social media).
Children who use our service do not understand the roles and responsibilities in place to encourage positive behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codes of Conduct for Children • Anti-bullying • Safe Care of Children
The environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to meet effective safeguarding practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard Assessment
External groups who use Church property are unsafe to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Groups using Spiritan Property
Those who wish to behave dangerously or unethically towards children are able to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conscientious Disclosure • Complaints procedures
Those who wish to exploit children through the use of digital media in our ministries are able to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the Internet • Social Media
Church personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear reporting procedures
Church personnel fail to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for all Spiritans and co-workers • Copies of Safeguarding Policy given to all personnel • Policy Agreement signed by all Spiritans and co-workers
Children and their parents do not understand the Church's policy, procedures and structure to safeguard children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plan • Each community has a safeguarding folder.
The procedures for safeguarding children fail to be implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community visits • Safeguarding Audit of each community • Safeguarding handover and induction of new leadership teams.
The Church authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of mandated persons is compiled and updated as necessary. • The Spiritans have a Safeguarding Office with lay professional staff.

Implementation

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice supports our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

Signed Mam Waelan aif. Church Authority

Date 9th March 2018

For any queries relating to this statement please contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator
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