

## **Child Protection**

### **Child Protection and Best Practice in Archdiocese of Dublin.**

In keeping with its commitment to best practise in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults the Archdiocese of Dublin has recently introduced a new policy and procedures for the Garda Vetting of staff and volunteers in parishes throughout the Diocese.

It is now Diocesan policy that all parish volunteers should have Garda Clearance, and a special office has been set up in the Archbishop's house to assist parishes with this procedure. The Archbishop, parish clergy, members of the parish councils and all who help out in any capacity in the activities in the parish are now requested to complete a Garda Vetting form.

There is one person responsible for Garda Vetting in the Archbishop's house who liaises directly with the Garda Vetting office. All information received will be treated with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality.

### **Child Protection and Best Practice in Mary Immaculate Parish.**

There are two Child Protection Representatives in Mary Immaculate Parish. They are: Aileen Cullen and Br. Frank Flanagan.

You can read our Child Protection Policy and Procedures [here](#).

#### *Useful numbers:*

Parish Child Protection Representatives 087 3135160

Dublin Diocese Child Protection Office 01 8360314

Diocesan Director of Child Protection 01 8842590 email: [cps@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:cps@dublindiocese.ie)

Kilmainham Garda Station 01 6669700

Health Services Executive (HSE) Local Office: 01 6486500 / 01 6206387

Faoiseamh Counselling Service for Victims of Clerical Abuse: 1800 331234

Childline 1800 666666

# Child Protection Policy & Procedures

Mary Immaculate Parish, Inchicore,  
Dublin 8

Rev. 1 – March 2010

Approved by Pastoral Council on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, PPC

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## 1. Policy Statement

Mary Immaculate Parish values and encourages the participation of children and young people in parish liturgies and in activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development.

We recognise the dignity, diversity and rights of all children and are committed to their protection and support.

The parish undertakes to do all in its power to create a safe environment for children and young people in order to ensure their protection and enable their full participation in parish activities.

Any person who has concerns regarding the suspected Emotional, Physical or Sexual abuse of a child should contact one or all of the following:

- Parish Child Protection Representative: **087 2402862 / 087 3135160**
- Dublin Diocese Child Protection Office: **01 8360314**
- Diocesan Director of Child Protection: **01 8842590** [cps@dublindiocese.ie](mailto:cps@dublindiocese.ie)
- Kilmainham Garda station: **01 6669700**
- Health Services Executive (HSE) – Local Office: **01 648 6500 / 620 6387**
- Faoiseamh – counselling service for victims of clerical abuse **1800 331234**
- Childline: **1800 666666**

At all times, an individual making a complaint or allegation has the right and is fully entitled to make a report directly to the statutory authorities i.e. the Gardaí and / or the HSE. Judgement about abuse will be left to the professionals and the parish Child protection representative will not conduct any investigation whatsoever.

The parish child protection representative will be available to discuss the issue and pass on the details to the diocesan director of child protection and to the statutory authorities.

## **2. Commitments on Working with Children/Young People**

The parish of Mary Immaculate undertakes to have the following in place:

- Signed parental consent for each young person engaged in a parish activity.
- A code of conduct for all adult leaders & young people
- A requirement that all parish groups have procedures in place to ensure the protection of all children and young people for all trips including day trips.
- Adequate record keeping processes including:
  - Participant forms
  - Incident /Accident Report forms
  - Medical information and treatment permission
  - Contact information for parents/guardians
  - Programme/attendance records
  - Volunteer Application forms
  - Declaration Forms for all adult leaders
  - Volunteer training records
- Garda Vetting for all volunteers and for members of the Parish Pastoral Council and others with responsibilities in parish activities
- Training in Best Practice for all clergy, employees and volunteers

**In all decision making and when responding to any situation of concern involving a child or young person, the welfare and interests of the child are the primary consideration**

### **3. Child Protection Representative**

As part of our policy the parish is committed to nominating a Child Protection Representative in accordance with the requirements of the ***Our Children Our Church*** national policy.

The responsibilities of the Child Protection Representative will be as follows:

- To promote awareness of the parish's and the Church's child protection policies
- To ensure that the public has ready access to the contact details for the relevant statutory authorities and to the Director of Child Protection.
- To facilitate anyone in the parish in bringing an allegation or suspicion of child abuse to the attention of the Director of Child Protection or statutory agencies, should they wish to have such support.
- The Child Protection Representative will be given every assistance by the parish Pastoral Council in carrying out his / her task
- The Child Protection Representative does not deal with reported child abuse him / herself but refers it to the designated person within the diocese i.e. the Director of Child Protection service and / or statutory agencies (Gardai / HSE)

### **4. The Responsibility of Parents / Guardians**

The parish takes very seriously its responsibilities and obligations with respect to ensuring to the greatest extent possible, the safety of all children and young people participating in parish activities.

Notwithstanding this, succeeding in this goal requires the partnership of the parish (i.e. clergy, employees and volunteers) and the parents / guardians of the children and young people. This means that all parties must accept and discharge their responsibilities.

## 5. Code of Conduct for Volunteers & Leaders

This code of conduct is for those adults who are working with children/young people in groups or activities promoted and / or sponsored by the Parish.

### *5.1. General*

- Young people/children will be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity
- Physical punishment or verbal abuse of children is not acceptable
- Young people/children will not be permitted to consume alcohol or smoke while participating in activities
- There will be clearly designated leaders (18+) within each group
- There will be an adequate ratio of leaders to young people/children at all times whether away or at home.
- Leaders should not work alone with children/young people
- Leaders will not consume alcohol or smoke while having responsibility for or in the presence of young people.
- Physical contact between young people/children and leaders will be appropriate at all times. Leaders will not engage in rough play or undertake any task of a personal nature with/for young people/children except in cases of medical necessity or when the welfare of the child depends on it.
- Care will be taken to ensure that when working with mixed gender groups leaders and adult volunteers of appropriate gender will work in pairs
- Leaders or volunteers should not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child. If, in the event of an emergency, it is essential to make a journey alone with a child, a record of this should be made and the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) informed as soon as possible.
- Children and young people should not be allowed to work or remain in churches or in other parish buildings unless there are at least two adults present.
- Leaders will always engage with young people/children in an open manner and care will be taken not to show favouritism.
- Leaders should not engage in or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical, that could be construed as bullying or abusive.
- Bad language or inappropriate language/comments will not be permitted by children/young people or leaders
- Only age appropriate language, media products (e.g. paper, camera phones, internet, video etc) and activities should be used when working with

children and young people. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.

- Any issue / allegation in respect of abuse will be referred to the Child Protection Representative
- All concerns and/or complaints will be followed through on in a timely and efficient manner
- The parish requires all groups to have a specific code of conduct for all away trips including day trips, where children are unaccompanied by parents/guardians

### ***5.2. Personal Meetings***

- If the pastoral care of a child / young person necessitates meeting alone with him / her, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment. The times and locations for meetings should allow for transparency and accountability e.g. be held in rooms with clear glass panel / window, in buildings where others are present and with the door of the room left open)
- Both the length and number of meetings should be limited
- Parents or guardians should be informed that the meeting(s) took place, except in cases where to do so might place the child in danger
- A note of the meeting will be made and filed in the parish office. The note should identify who met, where and for how long.
- Visits to the private quarters of Church personnel are not appropriate

### ***5.3. Vulnerable Children and Adults***

- Since especially vulnerable children may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance
- Workers / volunteers should be aware that vulnerable children are more likely than other children to be bullied and may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries



#### ***5.4. Trips***

- All trips, including day trips, overnights and holidays need careful advance planning including safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place.
- A outline of the details of the trip and related activities should be supplied in writing to all parents / guardians
- Written consent by a parent / guardian specifically for each trip should be obtained well in advance.
- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents / guardians who have consented to their child's participation in the trip and activities.
- Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected on trips.
- Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same sex as the group being supervised.
- At least two adults should be present in dormitories in which children or young people are sleeping. Under no circumstances should an adult share a bedroom with a child / young person, except where there is an existing family relationship e.g. parent or sibling.
- Organisers should ensure there is sufficient and appropriate accommodation for those travelling.
- If, in an emergency, an adult considers it necessary to be in a children's dormitory or bedroom without another adult being present they should (a) immediately inform another adult in a position of authority and (b) make a diary note of the circumstances.

## **6. Code of Behaviour for Children / Young People in Parish Groups**

- Treat all other children / group members with respect and do not bully anyone.
- Be fair and do not tell lies about other group members or leaders
- Do not spread rumours
- Respect the environment that you are in; be it a building, vehicle or in nature
- Do not shout or argue in the Church or in the House of Retreat
- Do not use violence or have inappropriate physical contact with others
- Talk to a leader if you have a problem
- Do not smoke, drink alcohol or use any other illegal substance
- Do not use mobile phones in the Church

## **7. Recruitment and Training of Volunteers**

### ***7.1. General Principles***

Safe practice starts with safe recruitment procedures. Most people who apply to work with children and young people in the Church are well motivated and potentially suitable for the tasks involved. It is most important however, that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that this is, in fact, the case. As well as enhancing the prospects of identifying the best person for the post, rigorous recruitment procedures can act as a deterrent to unsuitable applicants.

### ***7.2. Key Issues***

The safety of recruitment process can be enhanced by ensuring that due attention is paid to the key issues identified below:

1. Clear definition of role
2. Written application
3. Interviews
4. Declarations
5. References
6. Garda Vetting

## 8. Directory of Parish Groups for Children / Young People

Group Name	Leader(s)	Contact Numbers	Times	Venue(s)
<b>Mary Immaculate Children's Choir</b>	Joanne Lanigan Aideen Cullen Patty Nolan	086 2095336 087 2910532 086 8807513	Wednesday 3pm – 4pm Sunday 10am Mass	Annexe, House of Retreat Church of Mary Immaculate

## 9. Forms:

Templates for the following forms are available in soft copy for use by parish groups. Where necessary they can be amended to suit a particular situation.

- **Volunteer Application Form**

The purpose of this form is to collect relevant information and referee details from any person who is volunteering to participate in any parish sponsored activity which involves regular / ongoing interaction with children.

- **Volunteer Declaration Form**

The purpose of this form is to ensure that any person who is volunteering to participate in any parish sponsored activity which involves regular / ongoing interaction with children has received the policy on Child Protection and that s/he has declared any past criminal record.

- **Training Record**

The purpose of this form is to maintain a record of training in Child protection and related issues for all adults participating in any parish sponsored activity which involves regular / ongoing interaction with children.

- **Child and Parent / Guardian Contact Record**

The purpose of this form is to ensure that group leaders have accurate contact details for all group members and their parents / guardians. It is also used to ensure that parents and children have read the relevant codes of conduct and that parents have given consent to their child's participation.

- **Travelling Permission Consent Form**

- The purpose of this form is to ensure that parents (a) have full information about a proposed trip which their child has been invited on and (b) that they have given consent that their child can go on the trip.

### ***9.1. Completion and Storage of Forms***

The completion of forms is the responsibility of the person who has sought the information

- Volunteer Application and Declaration Forms should be supplied to an applicant volunteer by the parish office and it is the responsibility of the parish priest to ensure that they are completed fully and filed appropriately.
- Training Records should be administered and stored by the Child Protection Representative
- Child and Parent / Guardian Contact Record should be distributed and collected by the leader(s) of any group. The completed forms should be stored in the Parish Office. A copy should be maintained by the leaders for contact purposes.
- Travelling Permission Consent Form should be distributed and collected by the leader(s) of any group where a trip is being planned. The completed forms should be stored in the Parish Office.

**9.2 ADULT VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM available here**

**9.3 ADULT VOLUNTEER DECLARATION FORM available here**

**9.4 TRAINING RECORD FORM available here**

**9.5 CHILD & PARENT CONTACT DETAILS RECORD FORM available here**

**9.6 TRAVELLING PERMISSION CONSENT FORM available here**