

Report on Audit of Safeguarding Practice in Parishes of the Diocese of Ardagh & Clonmacnois 2015

Section1: Promoting Safety

1. All parishes indicated that the Safeguarding Children Policy is being adopted and advertised.
2. A Safeguarding Representative is in place in all parishes and five parishes have two representatives. Sadly, in one parish, our Safeguarding Representative has died. R.I.P. We extend our deepest sympathy to her family. We are grateful for her generosity and her commitment to safeguarding in her parish. We are also grateful to her husband who has agreed to undertake the task in the future.
3. The Safeguarding Poster is displayed in churches and parish halls.
4. Codes of Behaviour for Adults and Children are being implemented. Signed agreement to the codes has been obtained in most parishes and at the time of completion of the audit eight parishes were in the process of getting this in place.
5. Appropriate recommended ratios of supervision are being observed.
6. All parishes have a sign-in book in the sacristy.
7. Responses indicated that safe recruitment and vetting procedures are practiced in parishes. Updating of some of the necessary documentation was in progress in four parishes at the time of the Audit. One parish is in the initial stages of recruiting more supervisors.
8. Young people and their parents have been made aware of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. One parish is in the process of organising this.
9. As far as can be established parents are happy with the Safeguarding Procedures.
10. Altar servers have been trained and guidance on altar servers is being observed.
11. Health and Safety Standards are being observed.
12. Non-parish groups using parish facilities have Safeguarding Policies and adequate insurance. One parish is getting a group to finalise their Safeguarding Policy while another was carrying out an audit of all parish property to ensure compliance with this requirement.

- 13.No issues were reported relating to inappropriate behaviour, photographs, trips or use of internet.
- 14.The evidence from the audits is that records are up-to-date. Two parishes need to attend to this. One parish mentioned that there were a few occasions where parents who were supervising forgot to sign the register.
- 15.Most parishes responded in the affirmative to the question as to whether visiting priests are providing evidence that they are in good standing. Responses from three parishes indicated that it demands constant attention so that it is not overlooked at times of busy preparation for liturgical celebrations.

Section 2: Responding to Concerns

1. Staff and volunteers have had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with Safeguarding Policy including Reporting Procedures. One parish is attending to this.
2. Staff have agreed to observe procedures. Four parishes were getting this in place at the time of the audit for their new volunteers.

Section 3: Implementing Policy & Procedures

Safeguarding Representatives and clergy have received updates on Safeguarding Policy as have staff and volunteers. A Safeguarding Newsletter has been published and distributed.

Information leaflets for Staff and Volunteers and for Parents have been distributed to all parishes. Safeguarding Representatives, clergy and volunteers have also had the opportunity to brief themselves on the latest developments by attending the Diocesan Safeguarding Conference.

Information leaflets/Posters for Children have been circulated.

Names and contact details of the Designated Person have been publicised on posters, leaflets, diocesan website, safeguarding newsletters and parish newsletters. Two parishes mentioned that they need to publish them in the parish newsletter.

Safeguarding Representatives are providing support to leaders and volunteers on Safeguarding Children Procedures.

All self-audit forms were returned and have been completed with care by the Parish Priests and Local Safeguarding Representatives. Responses indicate that parishes are earnestly striving to implement Safeguarding Procedures.