

Child Safeguarding Statement of Marist Fathers in Ireland (Society of Mary)

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. The Marist Fathers follow this Policy and use the comprehensive related procedures to guide their practice (www.safeguarding.ie/guidance)

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 Marist Fathers in Ireland (Society of Mary) as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists 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:

Ministry in St Mary's Church Dundalk (a Public Church owned and operated by the Marist Fathers).

No direct work with individual minors or groups of minors takes place here.

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
- 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.

- 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)

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 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.

Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities in Marist Fathers in Ireland (Society of Mary) and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse.

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1. Children could be exposed through their involvement in activities to people who may harm them	Safe selection and recruitment procedures for all Marist Fathers including vetting of all involved in public ministry and/or having contact with children
2. Those who work with children could engage in unsafe work practices or behave inappropriately towards them	Code of Practice for those working with children Complaints procedures Appropriate communication with children
3. Lack of clarity as to who is responsible for what when it comes to child safeguarding and protection.	Roles and responsibilities are clearly laid out Training, information and advice are provided
4. Concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected may go undetected and unreported	This statement and the accompanying procedures are circulated. Safeguarding information, training and advice is provided by the Marist Safeguarding Trainer. Safeguarding message conveyed through SM website safeguarding notices and Safeguarding Sunday
5. Personnel, whether mandated persons or others, may be unaware of their responsibility, or not supported, to report concerns that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected	Reporting thresholds and procedures are set out in procedures and covered in training. Marist Safeguarding Trainer available to provide advice, guidance and support Joint reports will be made by DLP/ deputy DLP and Mandated Persons, where appropriate taking account of data protection requirements
6. Mandated persons may not be aware of their responsibilities under the Children First Act 201	A list of Mandated persons is kept and training has been delivered. All Marist Fathers and the DLP are mandated persons. In the event of a concern arising contact details for the DLP are widely displayed.
7. Safeguarding practice may not be implemented	Internal audits of practice are carried out annually. External reviews by National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Localised Risk Assessment

Alongside the risks listed in the table above, the local community of Marist Fathers at Cerdon has been made aware of the need for safe practice at St. Mary's Church.

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Apart from Mass times the Church is open to members of the public	Vigilance is maintained regarding this use

Child Protection Procedures

Our procedures are in line with the following:

- Children First Act 2015,
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017,
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

Implementation

Marist Fathers in Ireland (Society of Mary) 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 and places of worship. As part of our annual audit we review the effectiveness of our practice and implement changes as appropriate.

Signed David Corrigan SM

Date: March 8th 2018

David Corrigan sm Provincial Delegate

for Child Safeguarding in Ireland

For any queries relating to this statement please contact Fr. David Corrigan sm on dcorrigan181@gmail.com

A copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement is available on request and online at www.maristfathers.ie.