

# 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 Irish Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans) as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry related to children, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016:

### **Nature of the Service**

Spiritans in their public ministry come in to contact with children and vulnerable adults in a variety of settings which include:

- At church services – Mass,
  - Sacramental preparation
  - Participation in the sacraments
  - Participation in youth retreats
- As chaplains in schools and hospitals

### **Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm**

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 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 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 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 re-build 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 or misconduct against workers / volunteers of a child availing of our service. 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

## 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. Please refer to the Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 found on this website.

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified <i>(to be found in Spiritan Safeguarding Procedures, 2019)</i>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a child by Church personnel	Standard 1 Safeguarding procedures; 1.1 to 1.4
Risk of harm through bullying (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a child by Church personnel or peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Professional Conduct for those working with children; 1.8</li> <li>• Anti-bullying; 1.14</li> <li>• Code of Conduct for Children; 1.15</li> </ul>
The environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to protect them from harm or fails to meet effective safeguarding practice (as defined in the Children First Act 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazard Assessment; 1.20</li> <li>• Children with special needs 1.18</li> <li>• Safe care of children; 1.16</li> </ul>
External groups who use Church property are unsafe to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External Groups using Spiritan Property; 1.5</li> </ul>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child during activities or trips away from home from Church personnel or other adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trips away with children; 1.19</li> </ul>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) through the use of digital media (photography, video and social media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of the internet; 1.11</li> <li>• Social media; 1.12</li> <li>• Photography; 1.9</li> <li>• Use of CCTV and Webcams; 1.10</li> <li>• Use of technology with children; 1.21</li> </ul>
Church personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear reporting procedures outlined in Standard Two of the Spiritan Safeguarding Procedures; 2.1</li> </ul>
Church personnel fail to take action during and following any investigation into allegations of abuse against clerics and religious to ensure children are protected from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary investigation; 2.2</li> <li>• Management of the Respondent; 4.3</li> <li>• Spiritans out of Ministry; 4.4</li> </ul>
Church personnel fail to support those who are victims of abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial contact; 3.1</li> <li>• Pastoral support; 3.2</li> <li>• Information for the complainant; 3.5</li> </ul>
Church personnel fail to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction process; 5.1</li> <li>• Training; 5.2</li> <li>• Support and supervision; 5.3</li> </ul>

Children and their parents do not understand the Church's policy, procedures and structure to safeguard children and protect them from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication plan; 6.1</li> <li>• Safeguarding folder with all the relevant information in each community;</li> <li>• Safeguarding poster with contact details; 6.2</li> <li>• A safeguarding representative is available in each community</li> <li>• Training; 5.2</li> </ul>
The procedures for safeguarding children from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) fail to be implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community visits; 7.1</li> <li>• Annual safeguarding audits; 7.2</li> <li>• Hand-over; 7.4</li> </ul>
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"> <li>• Safe recruitment of staff;1.1</li> <li>• Vetting procedures;1.2</li> <li>• Visiting clerics/religious1.3</li> <li>• Clear reporting procedures; 2.1</li> </ul>
Risk of harm of a child (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) being disclosed during the Sacrament of Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to allegations of abuse; 2.2</li> <li>• Specific guidance in Standard Two;2.2</li> </ul>
Local activity with children is risk assessed in each location in which the activity takes place as part of Indicator 1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each Spiritan Community is equipped with Safeguarding Procedures folder to ensure that procedures are implemented at a local level</li> </ul>

## 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:   
Provincial Leader

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022

For any queries relating to this statement please contact the Spiritan Co-ordinator of Safeguarding, Mr Liam Lally [liam.lally@spiritanplt.ie](mailto:liam.lally@spiritanplt.ie) who is the 'Relevant Person' for the purposes of this document. Liam Lally, Provincialate, Temple Park, Richmond Ave., South Dublin 6 D06 AW02