

Diocese of Ossory Safeguarding Newsletter



Message from Bishop Niall Coll



Dear Parishioners,

The care and protection of children are an essential part of the Church's mission in building up the Kingdom of God. Using a metaphor from the world of technology penned by Fr. Hans Zollner SJ, we can underline the fact that safeguarding minors 'is not an App that one can switch on or off according to one's current needs; it needs to be built into all activities of the Church – spiritual, pastoral, educational, charitable etc. – as a vital component'. Accordingly, each of us – people, religious and clergy – are called to play our part in building up a culture of safeguarding in our parish communities and wider society. I hope that, as you read this annual Newsletter, you will be encouraged by the commitment that the Diocese of Ossory demonstrates in embedding best practice throughout our parishes. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who are at the heart of this safeguarding culture. They include the diocesan director of safeguarding, the diocesan safeguarding committee, the designated liaison team, the vetting coordinators, the diocesan safeguarding trainers, the parish safeguarding representatives, the parish clergy, the parish secretaries, the diocesan office, and the many parents and volunteers who work attentively in our forty-two parishes.

May the Lord bless this work, most especially during this Jubilee Year of Hope.

+ Niall Coll

✠ Niall Coll

Bishop of Ossory

Update from the Safeguarding Office

New Church Safeguarding Policy

2024 saw the launch of our new National Child Safeguarding Policy "A Safe and Welcoming Church: Safeguarding Children Policy for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024."



The policy focuses on Safeguarding as core to the Mission of the Church.

An Induction event was held on 2nd May 2024 for all safeguarding personnel from the Dioceses of Ossory, Ferns and Kildare & Leighlin.

The Policy went live on 11th June 2024 and is published on our diocesan website www.ossory.ie alongside new posters and publications which reflect the new policy and support its implementation at parish level.

Training

A special word of thanks to our Diocesan Safeguarding Trainers Ger Daly and Ailish Higgins who facilitated 10 training events in 2024. A total of 238 people including clergy, religious, local safeguarding reps, youth ministers, sacristans and other Church personnel received safeguarding training last year.

Sincere thanks to all who attended and engaged meaningfully in the training and gave such positive feedback regarding the standard of training provided. It is integral to best practice that Church personnel who have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults attend these training events, so once again thank you!

The Spring/Summer Training Schedule for 2025 will be launched later this month via email to priests and safeguarding reps and on the diocesan website.

Inter-Parish Safeguarding Meetings

Three Inter-Parish Safeguarding Meetings took place during April and May 2024. These meetings were held in Castletown, St Patrick's Loughboy and Slieverue

The meetings were chaired by Ailish Higgins, Diocesan Director of Safeguarding & DLP.

Parishes were represented by a mix of Church personnel including - priests, parish secretaries, local safeguarding reps and sacristans.

The meetings provided opportunity for the invaluable sharing of information and feedback on the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures at parish level. Due to the success of these meetings, the safeguarding office plans to convene them on an annual basis.

Audits

Annual Parish Safeguarding Audits for 2023 were completed early last year and the final summary report published on the Diocesan website in July 2024 www.ossory.ie

Following the launch of the new safeguarding policy, 'A Safe and Welcoming Church' an updated Audit form for 2024 has now been created and circulated. A zoom meeting was held at the end of January outlining the updated audit form and providing advice and guidance to priests and local safeguarding reps. If you require any support with completing the audit, please contact Ailish Higgins, Director of Safeguarding on 085 802 1633 or via email safeguarding@ossory.ie

If you have a safeguarding concern, please contact: Ailish Higgins, Diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP) on 085 8021633 or Email: dlp@ossory.ie. Deputy DLPs: Ms. Rose Brophy 087 3314330/Mr. Cathal Cullen 056 7762448 (Diocesan Office). Contact details for all civil authorities are on display at the back of all churches in the diocese and available on the website www.ossory.ie.

Youth Participation



Young people at Taizé prayer evening



Young members of the 2024 Lourdes Pilgrimage with Bishop Coll



Young members of the 2024 Lourdes Pilgrimage with Bishop Coll



Bishop Coll presenting awards to some of the 2024 JPPII participants



Members of the Youth Section of the 2024 Lourdes Pilgrimage

Vetting

Persons whose area of work/ministry involves regular contact with young persons under 18 years or 'Vulnerable Adults' are required to be vetted.

Who must always be vetted?:

- Clergy resident in the Parish and involved in Church ministry on a regular basis.
- Visiting clergy who may offer pastoral support in a Parish.
- Sacristans where servers are involved.
- Altar Server Supervisors.
- Ministers of the Eucharist who are requested by the parish to take Eucharist to Family Homes (not relatives) and or Nursing Homes.
- Persons involved in Sacramental Preparation.
- Persons in any other role whose work necessarily requires them to be in contact on a regular basis with young persons under 18 years or vulnerable adults.

Information and forms for Garda Vetting are available at www.ossory.ie under the Garda Vetting Resources section. If you have a query in relation to completing a vetting application, you can email your query to vetting@ossory.ie

Local Safeguarding Representatives (LSR)

Thanks to all 91 of our LSR's in the Diocese. Your commitment to safeguarding is greatly appreciated.

What do LSR's do?

1. Raise awareness of what safeguarding is.
2. Make information on safeguarding available and visible in parish churches and parish buildings and circulate information to the public.
3. Ensure Church activities are provided in adherence with safeguarding best practice that ensures the safety and well-being of the children or vulnerable adults involved.
4. Ensure contact details of the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP), Deputy DLP, Gardai and Tusla are widely publicised in parishes.

Support for Survivors of Abuse



Towards Healing is an independent organisation providing free professional support for people who have experienced institutional, clerical or religious abuse in Ireland. They provide counselling for survivors and their families.

Their helpline is open: Tuesday to Friday 9am -5pm. Freephone 1800 303416. Hearing-impaired Text Line Number: 085-8022859. Email: info@towardshealing.ie Website: www.towardshealing.ie.



Towards Peace Provides spiritual support in a safe supportive space, where people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time. Phone: 01 505 3028/ 086 771 0533. Email: towardspeace@iecon.ie Website: www.towardspeace.ie

"It was always my intention to volunteer in our local parish & once I retired I had the time to do so. My Parish Priest asked me if I would take on the role, I had some experience of safeguarding so I agreed to undertake training. It's a rewarding role & whilst the role initially looked daunting, I discovered LSR's have an array of guidance & support from the Director of Safeguarding, PP & the Ossory Safeguarding website."

Eileen, LSR, Templeorum parish