

Newsletter



Report on National Review visit to Tullamore Parish

This exercise, together with a visit by the reviewers to the Cathedral Choristers in Mullingar, was part of the independent review of child safeguarding in the Diocese of Meath on 9 - 11 October 2019.



The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) visited Tullamore parish on 11 October 2019. The main focus of the visit was to see a group of young people and their leaders involved in their weekly activity in the parish and how the safeguarding standards are adhered to and how, in practice, they are implemented. The group of young people chosen was the Junior Parish Pastoral Council who have a weekly meeting on Monday afternoons.

They are a group of 18, ranging in ages from 13 to 18 years with two adult leaders. They are involved in a number of activities including fundraising for local charities, bingo during the mid-term break after 10am Mass and reenactment of the Crucifixion on Good Friday. The group also organises a Mass in November in all post-primary schools and take part in a retreat in February.

The reviewers spent about 45 minutes with the group. They asked them about various projects they are involved in and were very interested in the retreat. They examined the group's code of behaviour, signing the attendance register and asked questions about their knowledge of safeguarding and their familiarity with the parish safeguarding representatives. They also looked at various forms including the consent forms and vetting forms.

Overall, the experience of the review was very positive. After the initial panic that our parish was included in the audit, we went about our duties as usual in adhering to the guidelines and making sure all relevant forms were completed. The visit made us check more closely on any policy changes that occurred recently. The checklist in the last newsletter (Summer 2019) was really helpful to us coming up to the audit.

(Margaret Kelly, Parish Safeguarding Representative, Tullamore)

Caring for Complainant – what support is available?

Towards Healing (www.towardshealing.ie)

Towards Healing is the counselling and support service funded by the Catholic Church to support the needs of survivors of religious, institutional and clerical abuse and their families.

The service offers counselling and other supports in a timely manner which are safe, respectful, cost effective, and of the highest quality.

Towards Healing offers a range of counselling and support services:

- Face-to-Face Counselling
- Psycho-Educational Group Work
- Practical Workshops
- Restorative Justice / Facilitated Listening Meetings
- Friendly Call
- Advocacy
- Structured Telephone Counselling
- Parent Coaching

The helpline (Freephone 1800 303416) is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 11am to 8pm and Friday from 11am to 6pm

Towards Peace (www.towardspeace.ie)

The vision of Towards Peace is to provide 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.

Towards Peace realises that abuse by Church personnel in particular may have an especially traumatic impact on spirituality; shattering a person's sense of wholeness, rupturing their inherent trust of their own goodness and sacredness, and fracturing their relationship with the presence of God within themselves and their lives.

The helpline (086 7710533) is open

Monday – Wednesday from 10am until 5pm.

For out of office hours, call the number and leave a message.



Bishop Deenihan extends his warmest best wishes and every blessing to the children, parents, volunteers and personnel who take part in parish activities throughout the year.

A message from Teresa Devlin, NBSCCCI

These excerpts are taken from an article by the CEO of the NBSCCCI in the Irish Catholic on 21 November 2019



The National Board since its inception in December 2005 has encouraged the development of a dedicated structure of personnel to manage child safeguarding. The current structure provides great clarity, not just in relation to process matters such as reporting allegations and creating safe environments, but it also identifies responsibilities. While clearly the Church authority (bishop or major superior) has overall responsibility for child safeguarding and reporting allegations of abuse, there is now in place a body of expertise in the role holders to support him or her in decision making.

A lot has been achieved by the Catholic Church in Ireland in the area of child safeguarding since the publication of the Murphy Report ten years ago, and this is heartening. However, the Church continues to face very real challenges in relation to keeping children safe.

Among these are:

- Making sure that the achievements made are consolidated, and that safeguarding fatigue and/or complacency is not allowed to take root;
- Supporting the safeguarding component of Catholic Church ministries which attract children and young people to become involved in Church activities, with an aim to ensuring that children feel comfortable and safe;
- Keeping up to date with changing technologies, and understanding how children and young people are vulnerable to abuse through social media.

In his encouraging address to the Irish Bishops in August 2018, Pope Francis told them: "In Ireland, as elsewhere, the honesty and integrity with which the Church chooses to confront this painful chapter in her history can offer an example and a warning to society as a whole. Continue on this path."

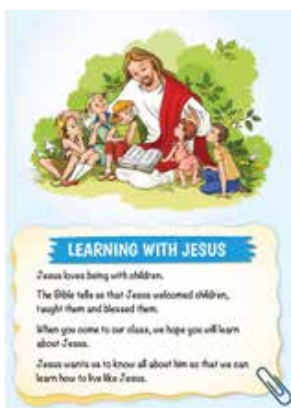
New materials published by the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee

Leaflet for pre-First Communion catechesis in parish classes

The purpose of this leaflet is to communicate, in child-friendly terms, a simple and age-appropriate safeguarding message. It is addressed to pupils who attend non-Catholic schools and are taking catechetical classes for sacramental preparation in a parish context, it is aimed at children aged 7-9 years only.

We hope to publish this leaflet in various Eastern European languages, given that a number of the parents of children preparing for First Holy Communion but attending non-Catholic schools originally come from Eastern Europe.

If your parish hosts out-of-school catechetical classes, you are asked to circulate this leaflet among the children and their parents. Copies are available from meathsafeguarding@gmail.com.



Autumn 2019 Training Report

Approximately 200 clergy and volunteers attended these sessions during the month of October. The topics covered included sacristy requirements with particular emphasis on a uniform sacristy register and the need for a celebrant notice in each sacristy; mandatory reporting and the newly upgraded version of the parish self-audit form which was warmly received. In November, the trainers delivered a full-day training session to clergy, new parish safeguarding representatives, foreign clergy, choir directors and sacristans.

What to do if you have concerns or wish to make a complaint?

The role of Designated Liaison Person in the Diocese of Meath is carried out by Mrs Marie O'Sullivan.

Her task is described in the National Guidelines as follows:

- Hearing child safeguarding concerns;
- Passing on child safeguarding concerns to the statutory authorities;
- Managing cases and all associated documents;
- Liaising with the support person, advisor and the Bishop;
- Passing on child safeguarding concerns to the NBSCCCI;
- Conducting internal inquiries;
- Contributing to upholding the seven standards in practice and behaviour;
- Completing an annual report regarding compliance with Standards 2, 3 and 4 for the Bishop;
- Monitoring respondents or, with the Bishop, appointing a suitable person to carry out this role.

"Building a Safe Environment: Group Safety Checklist"

This checklist provides an opportunity to encourage children to check how well their group respects the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved. The checklist - a simple, one-page document in easy-to-use language - can be applied to a meeting with altar servers, children's choir, Family Mass group or any church-related activity involving children. Copies are available from meathsafeguarding@gmail.com.