

Safeguarding Children Procedures

Missionaries of the
Sacred Heart

2018



Missionaries
of the
Sacred Heart
MSC MISSIONS

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Provincial Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce our “Safeguarding Children Procedures 2018” which is designed to facilitate the implementation of best practice in safeguarding children across our ministry in the Irish Province. These procedures complement the ‘one-Church’ policy, “Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland” (2016).

We, as MSC, are committed to upholding the seven safeguarding standards outlined in this policy document. With the publication of our accompanying document, I require that every MSC community and work of the Province adheres faithfully to the procedures laid out within, with the intention of protecting children and caring for them.

The principles and values which we are acting out of when we implement these policies and procedures are:

- That children are integral to the life of the Church.
- Children must be cherished, kept safe from harm, and helped to achieve their potential.
- That we are often in privileged positions within families, or in contexts with children. We need to know how to act when we are concerned for the safety or wellbeing of children.

In 2017 we saw the revision of “Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017”, the statutory child protection policy. It details the legislative requirements of us according to the Children First Act 2015. The MSC Safeguarding Children Procedures helps us to understand the statutory documents and our obligations, particularly as “Mandated Persons”.

I thank the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland for their strong leadership in this area and creating policy and guidance and contributing to consistency in practice. I am very grateful to Superiors, Parish Priests, Local Safeguarding Representatives, and to every MSC, for your dedication to the work of safeguarding. I am also deeply indebted to Saoirse Fox, our Safeguarding Manager, and to the Provincial Safeguarding Committees for all their work on this document and our policy and procedure development over recent years. Without their work we would be in a far less hopeful place.

We have learnt from history and practice that we must never become complacent when we minister with children and assume that the work is complete. Sadly, our record of keeping children safe is poor. The risk of abuse and harm remains present in family, social, professional and ministerial contexts. We can be proud of the great strides we have made in the more recent past. We want to keep energy and enthusiasm in this work and indeed to recognise in it a natural and instinctive expression of our charism.

At our General Chapter in Rome in September 2017 the Chapter concluded: “We are determined to do everything possible to make sure that such abuse does not occur in the future. Individually and collectively we respect the rights of children and vulnerable persons and acknowledge that we are called to create a safe environment for them in all MSC ministries.”

May our charism and spirit of compassion, our vocation and mission to “be on earth the heart of God” continue to drive our absolute commitment in this regard. And may Our Lady of the Sacred Heart accompany us in ensuring that all children in our care may draw freely from the living waters that flow from the heart of her Son.

Fr Carl Tranter MSC
Provincial Superior



Introduction and Use of these Procedures

Introduction

In all of our work with children, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) recognise and promote the fundamental right of every child to a safe environment in which she or he will be free from any form of abuse, neglect or harm. The MSC will do all that is within its power to prevent any form of abuse and respond appropriately to any concerns of abuse. The purpose of this set of procedures is to offer clear direction and guidance to anyone working on our behalf so that they can protect children (those under age 18) from abuse.

All MSCs, staff and volunteers have an individual and a shared responsibility to prevent child abuse. Furthermore, all have a responsibility to respond compassionately to any victim of abuse. The protection of the child is paramount and where there are other considerations, the needs of the child must be prioritised.

This MSC Child Safeguarding Procedures has been revised and updated to include new information about the **Children First Act 2015**. It outlines what are now the legal obligations of the organisation and certain professionals, including priests and religious, to keep children safe.

The following procedures are in compliance with:

- Safeguarding Children Policy & Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017)
- UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland in 1992.

Legislative Requirements of the Children First Act 2015

Child Safeguarding Statement: Organisations that provide a relevant service to children and young people must produce a child safeguarding statement. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.

Under the Children First Act 2015, organisations providing a relevant service must undertake a risk assessment. A risk assessment is an exercise where the organisation examines all aspects of its service from a safeguarding perspective, to establish whether there are any practices or features of the service that have the potential to put children at risk.

The child safeguarding statement lists the risks and the measures in place to mitigate that risk and to ensure that children are protected from harm.

The MSC published its child safeguarding statement in March 2018 and it is displayed on www.mscmissions.ie.

Mandated Persons: Certain professions and organisations are now obliged to report to TUSLA Child and Family Agency, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been harmed, is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed. Priests, Religious and people employed as pastoral care workers are listed in the Act as “mandated persons”. Further detail about the implications of this are in Theme 4: Child Abuse – Recognising, responding and reporting.

Status and Layout of this Document

In 2016, the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI), replaced “Safeguarding Children Standards & Guidance” (2009) with “Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016”. After extensive consultation with Dioceses and Religious Congregations and Orders “Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016” was adopted as a OneChurch policy. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart signed a memorandum of understanding with the NBSCCCI agreeing to adopt and implement “Safeguarding Children 2016”.

The development of a One-Church policy necessitated a review of the “Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy & Procedures 2014”. Simultaneously the Children First Act 2015 came into force with sections of the Act not enacted until December 2017. Towards the end of 2017, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs published a revised Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. The legislation and church and state policy documents were reviewed by the MSC Safeguarding Committee. The current document is the outcome of this review.

Outcome:

- Our child safeguarding policy is the One-Church “Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016”. This can be accessed on our website www.mscmissions.ie and on the NBSCCCI website www.safeguarding.ie.
- Operational procedures to accompany the policy are outlined in this document “Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Safeguarding Children Procedures 2018”.

This document offers guidance and procedures under each of the seven standards outlined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016.

Layout of the Procedures

Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016	Location in MSC Safeguarding Procedures
Standard 1- Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments	Theme 1: Safe Personnel Theme 2: Safe Management of Activities
Standard 2- Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Allegations or Knowledge	Theme 4: Child Abuse – Recognising, responding and reporting
Standard 3- Care and Support for the Complainant	Theme 4: Child Abuse – Recognising, responding and reporting
Standard 4- Care and Management of the Respondent	Theme 4: Child Abuse – Recognising, responding and reporting
Standard 5- Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe	Theme 1: Safe Personnel
Standard 6- Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message	Theme 3: Communication
Standard 7- Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards	Theme 5: Quality Assurance



Child Safeguarding Policy Statement (Poster) of the Constituent Members of the Catholic Church in Ireland

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.

Details of Personnel to Contact if you are Concerned about the Welfare and Safety of Children

Designated Liaison Person (DLP):

Mary Tallon safeguarding@mscmissions.ie 01-4906622

Deputy DLP: Fr Alan Whelan arw@princethorpe.co.uk 0044 1926 634241

POLICE: An Garda Siochana - **Local Garda Station or**

Dedicated Freephone for the reporting of child sexual abuse: 1800 555 222

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE: Find your local office at

www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker

Cork Duty Social Work: (021) 4923493 or (021) 4923791.

Dublin South East (Nutgrove): 01 9213400

Galway Duty Social Work: 091 546235

This safeguarding statement is displayed in a prominent location at all MSC property

Table of MSC ministry

Ministry with children and the policy which applies to that ministry

Generic description of ministry	Specific examples	Policy to be followed:
MSC-run activity <i>Note: Very little MSC ministry falls within this category</i>	World Youth Day pilgrimage Vocation Director activities	One-Church Safeguarding Policy MSC Safeguarding Procedures
MSC-facilitated activity on behalf of another organisation	School retreats, with children supervised by teachers	This is run as a school activity; school policy applies. MSC follows MSC code of behaviour.
Diocesan/Parish ministry to children and youth	Parish setting – altar servers, mixed or children's choir, children's liturgy.	One-Church Safeguarding Policy Diocesan Safeguarding Procedures
Work for another organisation	Chaplaincy in hospital, prison or third-level education Social services NGO or Charity	Safeguarding Policy & Procedures of that organisation

MSCs involved in work for other organisations, whether voluntary or paid, are accountable to the organisation concerned. That organisation, if providing services to children, is obliged to provide its own child safeguarding policies and procedures in accordance with Children First National Guidance (2017).

In the event that no such guidelines exist, any person involved in such work should immediately discuss the matter with their local Superior or the Safeguarding Manager/DLP and seek further guidance in relation to their position.

All MSCs are expected to sign a document saying that they agree to adhere to the MSC safeguarding policy and procedures, and if they are working for another organisation that they will adhere to their safeguarding policy (Appendix 1a). Employees and volunteers sign a similar acceptance form (Appendix 1b).

Roles in the Safeguarding Structure

Provincial

To be responsible for all safeguarding practices by:

- Ensuring that the appropriate child safeguarding structures and personnel are in place and providing adequate resources for same
- Liaising with the Holy See, and other Church bodies, as appropriate
- Ensuring compliance with canon and civil law

Director/manager of safeguarding

In the MSC context, this person manages the safeguarding service and fills the role of DLP as set out below.

To be responsible for coordination of all safeguarding practices by:

- Directing and implementing the child safeguarding policy
- Liaising with and supporting MSC apostolates and communities to ensure implementation of local policies and procedures
- Liaising with the safeguarding committee and the advisory panel
- Ensuring that all child safeguarding personnel are kept up to date with practice, as communicated from the NBSCCCI
- Reporting directly to the Provincial on all child safeguarding issues

Designated liaison person (DLP)

To promote safeguarding by:

- Hearing child safeguarding concerns
- Referring child safeguarding concerns to the statutory authorities and supporting mandated persons in making a joint report to the statutory authorities
- Managing cases and all associated documents
- Offering a support person and adviser to complainant and respondent and liaising with them thereafter
- Liaising with the Provincial on responding and associated actions
- Passing on child safeguarding concerns to the NBSCCCI
- Conducting internal inquiries
- Monitoring respondents or ensuring there is a suitable person carrying out this role

Advisory panel

To promote safeguarding by:

- Advising the Provincial on all stages of the investigative process into alleged child abuse
- Keeping a record of all its recommendations
- Upholding the safeguarding policy and standards in practice and behaviour

Support person

To promote safeguarding by:

- Keeping the complainant informed of the progress of the case
- Helping direct the complainant to counselling and support
- Recording any meetings or contact they have with the complainant, and reporting to the DLP as appropriate
- Upholding the safeguarding policy and standards in practice and behaviour

Advisor

To promote safeguarding by:

- Keeping the respondent informed of the process of the case
- Helping direct the respondent to counselling and support
- Recording any meetings or contact they have with the respondent, and reporting to the DLP as appropriate
- Upholding the safeguarding policy and standards in practice and behaviour

Safeguarding committee

To promote child safeguarding by:

- Developing a three-year child safeguarding plan which includes a training and communication strategy, and the establishment of the local child safeguarding policy and procedures
- Coordinating local safeguarding representatives (LSRs)
- Coordinating activities related to child safeguarding, e.g. training
- Ensuring the completion of the annual audit, including the correlation of records for training-related activities
- Ensuring the completion of training needs assessments across the various child safeguarding roles
- Ensuring, with the Provincial, that the appropriate child safeguarding personnel are in place.

Local Safeguarding Representative

- Raising awareness of child safeguarding and associated procedures
- Disseminating information on safeguarding standards and procedures
- Ensuring activities provided to children and young people are in line with safeguarding protocols and procedures
- Making sure that the contact details for the DLP, Gardaí and Tusla are readily accessible.

Theme 1: Safe Personnel

AIM: The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart do everything possible to avoid giving access to children to someone who should not be in a position of trust.

Recruitment & Selection Procedures

Safe recruitment and selection procedures help to:

1. Identify those most suitable to fill a position;
2. Screen out those unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable persons;
3. Provide a deterrent to applying in the first place.

These procedures apply to new applicants for religious life, as well as lay people seeking to be employed or volunteer.

Safe recruitment procedures involve:

Recruitment checklist	Appendix 2
Application form	Appendix 3
An interview, with the inclusion of questions of a child protection nature where candidates will be working with children.	
Declaration form: Candidate declares that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to working with children.	Appendix 4
Positive identification check in compliance with requirements of National Vetting Bureau Act	Appendix 5: Suitable I.D. and points assigned
Garda Vetting: See guidance below	Sample forms are not reproduced in this document as the form is completed online.
References: At least two verified references, one from the most recent employer	
NOTE: Please remember that Garda Vetting disclosures and other information received through a recruitment process is personal sensitive data. It should be gathered and stored in a manner that is compliant with data protection law.	See MSC Policy on Data Protection

Garda Vetting and Police Checks

In the Republic of Ireland, the National Vetting Bureau Act (2012-2016) provides a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out work with children and vulnerable adults. It is a

criminal offence to allow anyone to engage in ministry with children or vulnerable persons, without first having them vetted.

The National Vetting Bureau (An Garda Síochána) issues vetting disclosures to organisations employing people who work in a full-time, part-time, voluntary or student placement basis with children and/or vulnerable persons. The National Vetting Bureau does not decide on the suitability of any person to work with children and vulnerable persons. Rather, in response to a written request for vetting, the National Vetting Bureau releases criminal history and other specified information on the person to be vetted to the prospective recruiting organisation.

If an MSC becomes involved with any group working with children or young people or in the setting up of any such group, they should in the first instance contact the MSC Safeguarding Manager for guidance, to ensure that appropriate Garda vetting procedures are fully adhered to.

Although Garda vetting is crucial, it is only one of a range of recruitment procedures. The remainder of the recruitment tasks in the table above will allow the recruiter to systematically consider what is to be known about the applicant. The recruiter must be alert to times when an applicant was out of Ireland for a sustained period of time e.g. a year or more. Police checks may be required from other countries.

Applying to join the MSC & Formation

Safe recruitment procedures are applied equally to people who apply to join the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. The list is not exhaustive, as other measures will be used for applicants wishing to join the MSC Society. Applicants will be asked to undergo psychological testing as part of their formation. Those in a position of responsibility with applicants and students are aware of their “gatekeeper” role in assessing suitability for admission to the Society and subsequently assessing suitability for ordination.

Over the period of formation, formal child safeguarding training programmes are introduced, alongside modules around ethical practice and integrity in ministry. Candidates and novices are encouraged to think for themselves about their values and practice with children, and how they might challenge practice in others which they are uncomfortable with.

Induction

On appointment, an induction programme should be put in place for the employee or volunteer to help their successful integration. Each person will be given (or should already have in place):

- The name of the Designated Liaison Person and the Deputy DLP and advised of their role in relation to child protection procedures.
- They should be inducted into the Safeguarding Children policy and procedures and sign a form agreeing to adhere to it.

- Job description which clarifies the skills and qualifications necessary and tasks involved in the work. The level of contact with children and young people should be specified.
- Personnel including volunteers should be clear about their role and the limits to it, who they report to, and what to do if they need further support or if they have concerns.
- Clarity about the probationary period, where applicable.
- Information on professional support and supervision.
- Ensure that safeguarding training is provided and attended.

Supervision and support of workers who have contact with children

All personnel should receive training, supervision and support for their role.

Clinical/professional supervision is provided for those in safeguarding positions of responsibility.

Good supervision practice includes both formal and informal discussion, individual and team dialogue, all of which form part of a good performance management process and is summarised as:

- Reviewing operations and practice in the light of the MSC mission.
- Regularly affording personnel the opportunity to raise questions, problems, or suggestions for change.
- Based on experience, assessing the need for change in policies, practice or training.

Areas relevant to safeguarding which should be attended to in supervisory conversations are:

- Observation and assessment of the worker's attitude and competence in the role
- Observation of relationships between workers, and between workers and children
- Observation of relationships between children

Managers should be alert to any unusual incidents or activities that take place where workers may be putting themselves in vulnerable positions. This may constitute a breach of the Code of Behaviour (page 13).

Training

Nature of training	Who should attend?
1 day safeguarding workshop & Tusla e-module "Introduction to Children First"	All members in active ministry Staff and volunteers who work with children All mandated persons
Safeguarding information session Or Tusla e-module "Introduction to Children First"	Retired members Invitation to all staff and volunteers

Role specific training	Safeguarding personnel eg. DLP, support person, committee members
Specialist training eg. Safe recruitment, running activities with young people, working with perpetrators of abuse	Any member, staff or volunteer who considers the training to be relevant to their role and responsibilities

Table: MSC safeguarding training requirements

- The MSC see training and awareness raising as the cornerstone in maintaining high standards and good practice.
- The MSC recognise our responsibility to identify what training our members, staff and volunteers need and to ensure that they receive adequate and appropriate child welfare and protection information and training .
- As most of our members are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015, we also provide training specifically on the statutory responsibilities of mandated persons under the Act.
- The designated liaison person, deputy designated liaison person, and other personnel with specific safeguarding roles are provided with specialist training to enable them to undertake this role.
- All members in ministry, and employees and volunteers with ministry with children must complete the Tusla e-learning training module, Introduction to Children First. This is accessed via www.tusla.ie.
- Attendance records and a training audit is maintained.
- As part of their overall induction, all new employees/volunteers are made aware of the MSC Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- The DLP is expected to keep updated on issues relating to safeguarding children, by keeping abreast of changes in policy and guidance and attending relevant courses.
- A function of the DLP's role is to be available to all members, employees and volunteers for advice, guidance and support. The DLP builds his/her network of professional services so that advice and specific information can be accessed.

Code of Behaviour for Adults

It is important for all personnel to:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity.
- Treat all children equally.
- Model positive, appropriate behaviour to all children we come into contact with.
- Be aware of and adhere to the MSC child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour.
- Develop a culture of openness, honesty and safety.
- Develop a culture where children have permission to tell and to talk about any concerns or worries that they may have.

- Respect each child's boundaries and support them to develop their own understanding and sense of their rights.
- Be aware of their responsibility for the safety of all children in their care.
- Work in open environments.
- Help children to know what they can do if they have a problem.

Adults must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children.
- Develop sexual relationships with children.
- Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- Act in any way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do themselves.
- Condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in any way that is intended to intimidate, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Engage in discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation or political views.
- Consume alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs while having responsibility for children/young people.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Take children away or to your own home, especially where they will be alone with you.
- Involve children in one-to-one contact; activities should usually be supervised by at least two adults. However, there may be two circumstances where this may occur:
 - I. In a reactive situation, for example when a young person requests a one-to-one meeting with you without warning, or where a young person has had to be removed from a group as part of a code of behaviour;
 - II. As part of a planned structured piece of work (for example one-to-one music tuition).

Breaches of the Code of Behaviour

If an MSC, staff or volunteer has a concern about the practice of a colleague which may constitute a breach of the “Code of Behaviour”, this should be reported to the DLP or line manager following the “Protected Disclosure Policy”. This would be the case, for example, if the concern related to poor practice rather than abusive behaviour. Abusive behaviour would be reported using the procedure for responding to allegations of abuse.

Behaviours by a worker/volunteer that may cause concern include when a worker:

- Is secretive and evasive about their activities and time spent with children and young people.
- Creates opportunities to spend significant amounts of time away from other workers/volunteers and with a single child or children/young people on a regular basis, e.g. invites child or young person to their home.
- Seeks out vulnerable children and young people.
- Sidesteps one-to-one supervision and management of work.
- Has an unusual amount of physical contact with a child or children.
- Touches a child or children in an inappropriate way.
- Talks to a child or children in an inappropriate way.
- Excludes a particular child or children from activities.
- Disciplines a child or children inappropriately or punishes a child or children harshly.
- Handles children/young people roughly.
- Teases, taunts, insults or makes derogatory remarks about or to a child/young person.
- Restrains a child/young person as a way of punishment.
- Sexually harasses or uses sexual innuendo.
- Humiliates and/or embarrasses children/young people.
- Deprives children/young people of their basic rights.
- Inappropriately uses social media.
- Bullies children/young people.

Protected Disclosure Policy

All MSCs, staff and volunteers must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of their Supervisor/ Superior/Provincial.

Although this can be difficult to do, it is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. If you have a concern, do not let the fear of getting it wrong become a barrier to speaking to the appropriate person eg. line manager, Superior. It is the responsibility of the person you report to, to inquire further and assess if there are grounds for action.

You may be the first to recognise a concern, but you may be unsure about whether and how to express your concerns. Listed below are some issues which stop people from making a disclosure. The MSC recognise that such things as feeling disloyal to colleagues, or being fearful of harassment, are real concerns and we will ensure that you feel supported to make a disclosure. It is imperative that you come forward as the protection and welfare of children is our priority. Remember, it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need an advocate to safeguard their welfare.

Reasons for making a disclosure

- Each individual has a responsibility to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent yourself from becoming implicated

What stops people from making a disclosure

- Fear of starting a chain of events that spirals out of control
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

How to raise a concern

MSCs, employees and volunteers may want to make a disclosure about a range of concerns, not just child protection.

It is important to:

- Voice any concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is expressed the sooner and easier action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning and why.
- Approach your immediate Superior/Supervisor/Manager.
- If your concern is about your immediate Superior/Supervisor/Manager, please contact the DLP, the statutory services or the NBSCCCI.
- Make sure a satisfactory response is secured – don't let matters rest.
- Ideally, concerns should be placed in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates, locations and any other relevant information.
- You are not expected to prove the truth of your complaint, but you need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for concern.

What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries resulting from your concern.
- Your Supervisor/Superior/Manager has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation.

- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations will be considered a disciplinary offence.
- Follow up if the person to whom you reported has not responded within a reasonable period of time, and if that follow up is not acted upon, report the matter to the relevant statutory authorities.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions when a member of staff or a volunteer has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their superior/manager so that professional and personal support can be offered to the person concerned. Whilst reporting will remain confidential, in most instances this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

When members work for another organisation

The majority of ministries involving children undertaken by members of the MSC are under the auspices of another organisation eg. Department of Education/school, Diocese. Where a member works with children for another organisation, it is expected that she is well acquainted with and adheres to that organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.

Theme 2: Safe Management of Activities with Children and Young People

AIM: Activities and ministry with children and young people are well planned and undertaken in a way that risks are minimised and opportunities for positive development and relationships are maximised.

Planning

When setting up an activity for children or young people, or if there is an activity underway which needs to be reviewed, the following questions are useful:

1. What are the purpose and aims of the activity?
2. What does 'child-centred' look like vis-à-vis this activity?
3. Who will be included? Eg. age of children, gender, a specific category or group.
How will children become involved in the activity?
4. How will consent be sought?

5. Where is it hoped to hold the activity?
6. How many adults are needed to run the activity safely?
7. Is the necessary insurance in place?

Hazard Assessment

When running activities with children, we have a responsibility to do what we can to make sure people do not get hurt. A hazard assessment is a systematic way of thinking through the issues that can arise associated with a particular activity, in a particular location and with a specified group of people. A plan is then put in place to manage any of the potential hazards.

It is important to identify acceptable levels of hazards, as all risk cannot be removed.

Completing a hazard assessment

You need to think through each element of your activity/equipment/venue. Think about what could go wrong, and what you are going to do to avoid this. Then write down your decisions, and the reasons you have made them. Make sure you include things that you have already planned to do (e.g. if you are already planning to use soft mats in front of the bouncy castle, you should still include this in the risk assessment).

A risk assessment for an event or activity needs to include:

The **venue** where it will be held;

The **equipment** that will be used;

The **people** who will be attending. Do they have any particular needs that might make them more likely to hurt themselves? Do you need to make sure children are supervised? Is there anyone attending that could hurt anyone else?

Assessing hazards

1. Identify the hazards: look for hazards in the nature of the activity, and in the place where you are holding the activity.
2. Identify who is at risk: decide who may be harmed and how. Everyone, or perhaps only certain people, may be at risk. Some groups may need special consideration as they may be more vulnerable to certain hazards.
3. Identify what the likelihood of harm may be.
4. Identify the consequences of injury or harm: the consequences could range from trivial to severe or even fatal. The most severe hazards need the most urgent attention.
5. Identify the controls that need to be put in place to limit the hazard.

These steps should be used to complete a hazard assessment form (Appendix 7)

Review

Risk should be periodically reviewed, especially in circumstances when a venue changes, a new activity takes place or the members of the group change.

Supervision Ratios

In planning a trip or activity, it is critically important to consider how many adults are needed to supervise children in a safe manner. It is recommended that a certain number of adults be available to supervise a certain number of children; however, this is also dependent on whether the children have specific needs or requirements, and on the duration of the activity.

The table below is a guide:

0 – 2 yrs	2 – 3 yrs	3 – 7 yrs	8 yrs & over
2 staff for 3-6 children	2 staff for up to 10 children	2 staff for up to 16 children (higher ratio if outdoor activities)	2 staff for up to 20 children, with more staff if outdoors

If it is an overnight activity, additional staff should be considered. If the group is mixed, a gender balance should be maintained.

Consent

Best practice states that we should seek written consent from parents and from the child or participate confirming that they wish to participate in the activity. Consent form template is at Appendix 6.

Attendance register

A minimum of two officially appointed leaders should be responsible for each activity involving young people. At least one of the leaders must have undergone a full day training session provided by trainers registered with the NBSCCCI. These leaders must sign an attendance sheet and put their initials under each date to confirm that the children/young people and adults marked were in attendance, as indicated by the 'time in' and 'time out' for each date.

Developing a Code of Behaviour for Children

Children should be involved in drawing up a code of behaviour for themselves. However, it is important that in working with children, an appropriate adult with relevant skills and competence participates to support them in developing the code of behaviour.

The methods used in creating a code of behaviour should be age and ability appropriate, with children being encouraged to avoid merely drawing up a list of prohibitions. Instead, the code should be comprised of positive statements about respect, and should consider what consequences ensue if the code is broken.

In developing the code, consideration should be given to the following:

- Treating everyone with respect
- Treating property with respect

- Not consuming alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs
- Acting as a good role model
- Attending activities on time
- Signing in and out
- Turning off your mobile phone
- Telling someone you trust if you feel uncomfortable with any situation or individual
- Never bullying anyone or sending threatening messages.

Discipline and sanctions when dealing with challenging behaviour

As far as possible,

- Disciplining of children should be in the form of positive reinforcement.
- Rules about discipline and sanctions should be agreed as part of the code of behaviour and accepted by all workers and children as a condition of becoming involved.
- The anti-bullying protocol should be communicated to all personnel and implemented by everyone.

Sanctions should be implemented consistently, fairly and firmly and not used as threat. Children should be helped to understand why sanctions are being imposed. When a sanction has been imposed, it is important that a child is able to feel that she or he is still valued.

Sometimes, children can be disruptive and their behaviour can be challenging, and be risky for themselves and others. Workers need to be trained and prepared for coping with disruptive behaviour. It is recommended that:

- More than one worker is present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with.
- A record is kept in an incident book, describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, any injury to a person or damage to property arising from the incident and how the situation was resolved.

Guidance on children with specific needs

Some children have specific needs that place additional responsibilities on those who care for and work with them. It is often the situational and environmental factors that disable the child, rather than the physical or intellectual difficulty the child experiences. Where possible, the environmental factors should be adapted to the child's needs. Prohibitive attitudes need to be addressed through education and information. Children who have a disability have the same rights as any other child, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Points to consider when including a child with specific needs in your group:

- Work in partnership with the child, parents/guardians and any professionals involved to establish how the child can be included.
- Make sure inclusion is possible before bringing the child into the group.
- Make reasonable adjustments.
- Be interested in the child and build a rapport with them.
- If the child has a communication impairment, acquiring some key skills in their communication method will be useful.

- Some specific training may be useful or required, e.g. the autistic spectrum, epilepsy.
- Hazard assessments may be necessary to ensure the safety of some children with specific needs.
- Higher staff ratios may be required if the child has additional needs or behavioural problems.
- Intimate care issues: when introducing a child with specific needs into an activity, it is important to establish if they have intimate care needs, and who should provide or assist with this if it is necessary. It is important to remember that not every child with a disability has intimate care needs. Intimate care is, to some extent, individually defined and varies according to personal experience, cultural expectations and gender. It may be described as help with anything of a personal or private nature that the individual is unable to do themselves.
- Children with specific needs may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and they may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.
- It is particularly important that children with specific needs are carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty expressing their concerns, and so that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.

Generally, MSC personnel are not expected to be involved in the provision of intimate care of children. This should be undertaken by suitably qualified people. It should be agreed in advance who will carry out intimate care and how it should be done. Guidelines to be borne in mind when providing intimate care include: the sensitive nature of such tasks; the need to treat every child with dignity and respect; the need to ensure an appropriate degree of privacy; the need to involve the child as much as possible in their own care; and trying to ensure consistency in who provides care.

Taking Children away on Trips or Pilgrimage

These activities require the following attention:

- Selection of suitable leaders and increased supervision to day activities
- Safe methods of transport
- Adequate insurance, to cover all aspects of the trip
- Written parental consent (for each individual trip)
- Obtaining from parents and guardians any information which may be relevant to a child staying away from home overnight (information concerning allergies, medical problems, or special needs)
- Involvement of young people in planning the trip and creating a behaviour contract
- Hazard assessment and management plan
- First aid
- Appropriate and well-supervised sleeping arrangements
- Respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms showers and toilets.

CHECKLIST FOR PILGRIMAGE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- ☐ Recruitment
 - ✓ Application form
 - ✓ Garda vetting & Police clearance
 - ✓ Declaration form
 - ✓ Interview
 - ✓ References
- ☐ Code of conduct (adults)
- ☐ Code of behaviour (must be developed by the specific group)
- ☐ Update training if necessary
- ☐ Child friendly safeguarding policy
- ☐ Consent forms
 - ✓ Parent
 - ✓ Child
- ☐ Personal details on child
- ☐ Planning
 - ✓ Supervision ratio & gender appropriate
 - ✓ Accommodation & sleeping arrangements
 - ✓ Visit the premises
 - ✓ Activities
 - ✓ Travel
- ☐ Designated person for safeguarding on the trip
- ☐ DLP advised of trip and contact details available to leaders
- ☐ Advise insurance company of the trip
- ☐ Record keeping on the trip
- ☐ Pre-trip planning meeting (brainstorm what the possible risks might be, think of scenarios which could happen so as to reduce the likelihood of unanticipated events, how will accidents be managed)
- ☐ Pre-trip planning with children/young people
- ☐ Complete risk assessment and management plan
- ☐ Post-trip review meeting
- ☐ Information on review to be fed back to Safeguarding Committee

If travelling or being hosted by another group or organisation

- ☐ Discuss and decide in advance whose child safeguarding policy and procedures will be followed
- ☐ How will incidents and accidents be managed?

Guidance on Accidents

If a child has an accident and injures himself/herself while attending an MSC-run event, these procedures should be followed:

1. Assess the injury and reassure the child. If the injury is severe or the child has lost consciousness, please contact the emergency services immediately by phoning 999 or 112. If the emergency services are to be called, contact with the child's parents/guardians

must be made urgently. If the parents/guardians are not available, it may be necessary for a leader to travel with the child to the hospital.

2. If the injury is minor, local application of treatment should be available from the first aidbox. Under no circumstances should any medication be given to a child.

3. As soon as possible after the accident, write up a report using an accident/incident report form (Appendix 8). Once completed, this form should be stored in a safe place, in line with data protection, and treated as a confidential document.

4. Always inform parents/guardians of any accident that has occurred involving their child, regardless of how minor you consider it to be. It is good practice to give a copy of the accident/incident report form to parents/guardians.

Guidance on the Use of Technology, Photographs, and Videos

MSC personnel need to assess the benefits of technology and how this can be used safely and effectively, in line with rules that respect the dignity and rights of all users, particularly children. The majority of occasions when people use mobile phones, computers or take photographs of children do not provide any cause for concern. However, there are occasions when this is not the case. At the outset it is important to identify the risks associated with the use of technology, and then to minimise the risks by putting in place measures outlined below.

Consent

The consent of parents/guardians and children should always be sought prior to engaging in any activity that involves the use of IT equipment. General consent may be sought at the outset or it may be decided to ask for permission for set occasions.

Use of Internet

It is recognised that the internet is valuable and widely used. When used in MSC contexts, clear guidelines must be developed and inserted into the code of behaviour for each activity involving children.

The following are deemed unacceptable behaviours, and must be avoided in every situation:

- Visiting internet sites that contain offensive, obscene, pornographic or illegal material
 - Using a computer to perpetrate any form of fraud or piracy
- Using the internet or email systems to send offensive and harassing material to others
- Using obscene or racist language in computer-assisted communications
- Publishing defamatory or otherwise false material generated by oneself or by others through social networking
- Introducing any form of malicious software into the used network
- Intentionally damaging any information communication technology equipment
- Using another user's password or giving that password to a third party.

It is important that the following are made clear to all who use the internet:

- All MSC personnel/volunteers/group leaders must be made aware of their responsibility and sign up to appropriate use of the internet as part of a code of behaviour. Responsibility is about safeguarding children, taking care of oneself, one's co-workers and group leader.
- Anyone using a shared computer requires their own individual password.
- Training in appropriate and responsible internet and computer use is imperative in order to follow best practice in all activities that concern children, co-workers and volunteers.

Texts & Emails

Texting and email are very quick and effective methods of communication. Usually this does not include adult members of MSC personnel contacting young people directly, as contact is

usually made via their parents/guardians. However, there are certain circumstances where contacting young people directly may be necessary (i.e. in an emergency or on a trip away). Any members of personnel using this method of communication with young people should ensure appropriate safeguards are in place as there are certain risks associated with the safe and appropriate use of texting and email, which must be managed. Adults risk misinterpretation of their communication with young people.

The risks of text and email messaging for children and young people are:

- Inappropriate access to, use of, or sharing of personal details (names, numbers, email addresses)
- Unwanted contact with children/young people from adults, text bullying by peers etc.
- Being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate materials
- Grooming for sexual abuse
- Direct contact and actual abuse.

Using bulk (or bundled) text and email messaging

A way to minimise the risks above is to use bulk text messages. This is where the same text or email message is sent to several young people involved with a particular activity or group. The advantage of this approach is that it presents fewer opportunities for misuse and abuse than personal, one-to-one texting or emailing arrangements between staff or volunteers and children/ young people. Therefore, one-to-one texting or emailing should be strongly discouraged and should only occur in exceptional circumstances.

The following guidance is provided to minimise risk to all:

1. Consent must be obtained from young people and their parents/guardians prior to sending young people text or email messages. Parents/guardians of younger children should be offered the option to be copied on texts and emails that their child will be sent.
2. The young persons' mobile phone numbers or email addresses should be stored safely and securely with access only available to the specific identified members of personnel.
3. All text and email messages must be sent via a bundle to a group of young people, i.e. the same standard text message is sent to every member of the group.
4. Young people should not be given the opportunity to text or email back to the system. It should only be used as a one-way communication channel.

Photography

The use of photos on websites and in other online/hard copy publications can pose direct and indirect risks to children and young people. If the MSC wants to use images of the children they work with, or are otherwise in contact with- consider these guidelines.

The MSC only has responsibility for safeguarding and the use of photography if it plans to use the photographs for Church purposes. Photographs taken at events organised by family and schools such as Communion, weddings or Confirmations do not fall under the responsibility of the Church/MS, unless they are being taken for Church purposes.

Risks to children

A child should not be able to be identified through a photograph. There is also a risk that the photo itself will be used inappropriately by others. Photos can easily be copied and adapted, perhaps to create images of child abuse, which can then find their way on to other websites.

How to minimise risks

- Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the activity and think carefully about any images showing children and young people on the MSC website or publication.
- Never supply the full name(s) of the child or children along with the image(s).
- Only use images of children in suitable dress and focused on the activity, rather than one particular child.
- Obtain permission: the permission of parents/guardians and children should always be sought when using an image of a young person.

Using photographers

Photographers are often employed in Church contexts for certain sacramental or Church activities.

When using a photographer, it is important to do the following:

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Ascertain if the photographer requires vetting and, if they do, put them through the process.
- Provide the photographer with a form of identification that must be worn at all times.
 - Do not allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events.
- Do not allow photo sessions to take place away from the event, for instance, at a young person's home.
- Inform parents/guardians and children that a photographer will be in attendance.

Responding to concerns

Children and parents/guardians should be informed that if they have any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography, these should be reported to the group leader to ensure that any reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other child protection or child safeguarding issue.

Guidance on External Groups Working with Children that Use MSC Property

In circumstances where groups working with children are using or hiring MSC property for this purpose, it is necessary to check that they have a child safeguarding policy and that they are insured. There is no requirement for the MSC to oversee the activities or to check that their safeguarding policy is adequate. It is the responsibility of the group using the property to check with Tusla that their policy meets statutory requirements.

The MSC should have confirmation in writing that the group has a child safeguarding policy and details of their insurance policy.

A template for receiving this information is set out at Appendix 9.

Anti-Bullying Protocol

We recognise the devastating effects and long-term damage that bullying can have on children/young people and we hope to create safe 'bullying-free' environments for our children/young people.

What is bullying?

- Bullying is intentional, repeated and aggressive physical, verbal or psychological behaviour directed by an individual or group against others.
- Bullying can occur at any age, in any environment, and can be long or short term.
- Any child/young person can be a victim of bullying.
- Bullying can be perpetrated by adults towards children/young people, as well as children/young people towards their peer group.
- Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.
- Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional/psychological:** tormenting, excluding, extorting, intimidating, etc.
- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, intimidating, damaging/stealing property, or any use of violence, etc.
- **Racist:** racial taunts, i.e. insults about colour, nationality, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background, or use of graffiti or gestures
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical harassment or contact, or sexually abusive comments. This may constitute actual sexual abuse, which should be reported.
- **Homophobic:** taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, etc.
- **Cyber:** misuse/abuse of email, mobile phones, internet chat rooms, social media, text messaging, or camera and video facilities

- **Subtle:** such as an unwelcome expression or gesture that is repeated and focused on an individual
- **Perpetrated by adults:** this can include adults who are not related to the child. When perpetrated by adults, rather than children, bullying behaviour could be regarded as physical or emotional abuse. However, other major forms of child abuse – such as neglect and sexual abuse – are not normally comprehended by the term ‘bullying’.

Prevention

To help prevent bullying, the following strategies are suggested:

- Engage children/young people in discussions about what bullying is and why it cannot be tolerated.
- Encourage children/young people to take responsibility and report any incidents of bullying to their leader/person in charge.
- Review this bullying guidance with children/young people and parents involved in parish/ agency activities.
- Seek to promote positive attitudes of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all personnel.

Procedures to deal with bullying

- All incidents of bullying should be brought to the attention of the leader/person in charge.
- All incidents will be recorded on incident report forms and kept on file.
- Leaders should report to and seek guidance/support from the parish priest/priest in charge.
- Parents should be informed of any incidents of bullying and should meet with the leader/ person in charge to discuss the problem. A record should also be kept.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying quickly stopped.
- Both the victim and bully should be supported and helped throughout the process.
- If necessary and appropriate, the Gardaí should be consulted.

Complaint Procedure:

For safeguarding concerns that are not allegations of abuse

A complaint is defined as a grievance and/or the raising of a concern about breaches of codes of behaviour. Allegations or suspicions of child abuse do not fall into this category of general complaints and should always be dealt with in accordance with the procedures for allegations of abuse. This complaints procedure is not for use by MSC personnel who would use the protected disclosure procedure to raise their complaint.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. Efforts will be made to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with the parents, children/young people, volunteers/members of staff and clergy, as appropriate.

A copy of a complaints form is available at Appendix 10.

If a parent/guardian, young person or child is not satisfied with any aspect of the running of a particular activity, or the behaviour of any individual involved in that activity, the following steps should be taken:

First step

All complaints of this nature should be resolved using an open dialogue with the MSC personnel involved. If resolution is not possible, the following step should be taken.

Second step

1. The Provincial/local Superior/Manager ("MSC representative") should be contacted by completing a complaints form. They have eight weeks to consider the complaint.
2. A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be sent within seven calendar days, enclosing a copy of the complaints procedure.
3. All complaints will be thoroughly investigated.
4. The MSC representative may organise a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. This communication may also take place by telephone if a meeting is not possible. Unless exceptional circumstances, this will be done within fourteen calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to the complainant.
5. Within seven days of the meeting or discussion, the MSC representative will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.
6. If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the MSC representative will issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out their suggestions for resolving the matter within twenty-one calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to them.

7. If the complainant is still not satisfied at this point, they should contact the Provincial or MSC representative again.

At the conclusion of this step, the Provincial may decide to take further action on the complaint. If, however, the Provincial decides not to take further action, the process is completed.

Theme 3: Communication

AIM: The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart ensure that all those who need to know about their safeguarding practices and procedures are communicated with proactively and have access to this information.

Communicating what child safeguarding policies, procedures and practice are in place is a core element of the Church's strategy to safeguard children. Policies and procedures are only effective if everyone, including children, understands their purpose and knows how to use them.

One key purpose of communicating with children about safeguarding is the desire to empower them. We explicitly state that children have a right to be consulted with and have their views taken in to account on decisions that affect them. If youth ministry is developed, this principle needs to be translated into practice.

Note: At the time of writing this document, there are not many MSC activities taking place specifically for children and young people. If this was to change, the level of activity in consultation and communication with children and families would increase proportionately.

Communication strategy:

- The Safeguarding Committee is responsible for planning in the area of communication. In the three-year safeguarding plan, a section is devoted to communications. The message to be communicated and to whom is defined in the plan. The different categories of people include:
 - All MSCs and staff and volunteers working with children and young people
 - Safeguarding personnel
 - Staff and volunteers not usually in contact with children
 - Children and young people
 - Parents/Guardians
 - External agencies
- The safeguarding committee coordinates local safeguarding representatives, who are consulted with in the development of the communication plan. The LSR can identify if there are target children and young people in their area.
- It is important that children, young people and their families are consulted with where possible. Feedback from children and parent/guardians in relation to what could be improved or changed to benefit children and parents involved in MSC activities.
- Different methods of communication are utilised in order to make the information accessible eg. hard copies of documents, website/internet, poster, newsletter.
- A complaint procedure is in place and MSC personnel are aware of the role they play in enabling people to make complaints if they need to.

- Aim when communicating with children, young people, parents/guardians to:
 - Ensure relevant procedures are communicated to children and guardians.
 - Explicitly tell children about their right to be safe and listened to.
 - Check that children know that they are free to approach any worker/volunteer if they are worried about something.
 - Involve children and guardians in developing codes of behaviour and antibullying policies.
- We aim to have good channels of communication with other agencies - statutory, voluntary, and religious, to 1) learn from best practice and 2) tell other agencies about our work in safeguarding.

Theme 4: Child Abuse-

Recognising, Responding and Reporting

AIM: All MSC personnel working with children and young people will understand their role in protecting all children from harm. They will be able to recognise signs of child abuse and will know how to report concerns in an effective and appropriate way.

Categories and indicators of child abuse

Information taken from “Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children” (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017)

A Child

A child is a person under the age of 18.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child’s health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties.

A reasonable concern for the child’s welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child’s medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child’s age
- Persistent failure to attend school

- Abandonment or desertion

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling

- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography. (Section omitted in this reference from source “Children First” 2017)

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child’s body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal □ Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography
 - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the ‘grooming’ process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person

Reasonable grounds for concern

Tusla should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected (Children First 2017). Children are sometimes abused by members of their own family, by peers or by others outside the family environment such as strangers, workers or trusted adults.

Reasonable grounds for concern are listed as:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused □ Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed □ An account from a person who saw a child being abused.

Roles & Responsibilities

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children and/or families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm.

Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 specifies classes of persons as Mandated Persons for the purposes of the Act. The section most relevant to MSC personnel is:

15 (g) member of the clergy (howsoever described) or pastoral care worker (howsoever described) of a church or other religious community.

Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015.

These are:

1. To report the harm* of children above a defined threshold* to Tusla;
2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

What is meant by *harm? Harm is defined as follows: 'harm means in relation to a child– (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or, (b) sexual abuse of the child.' (Section 2 of the Children First Act 2015)

What are the *thresholds?

The threshold of harm for each category of abuse at which mandated persons have a legal obligation to report concerns is outlined below.

Neglect: The threshold of harm is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child's needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Emotional abuse/ill-treatment: The threshold of harm is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Physical abuse: The threshold of harm is reached when you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being assaulted and that as a result the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

Sexual abuse: If, as a mandated person, you know, believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused, then you must report this to Tusla under the Children First Act 2015.

If you are in doubt about whether your concern reaches the legal definition of harm for making a mandated report, Tusla can provide advice in this regard. The DLP also remains available for advice and consultation. If your concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but you feel it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, this will still be reported by the DLP following the MSC reporting procedures.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP: Best practice in child safeguarding according to “Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children” indicates that organisations working with children/young people or their families should appoint a DLP to be the resource person to any personnel who has child protection concerns and to liaise with outside agencies.

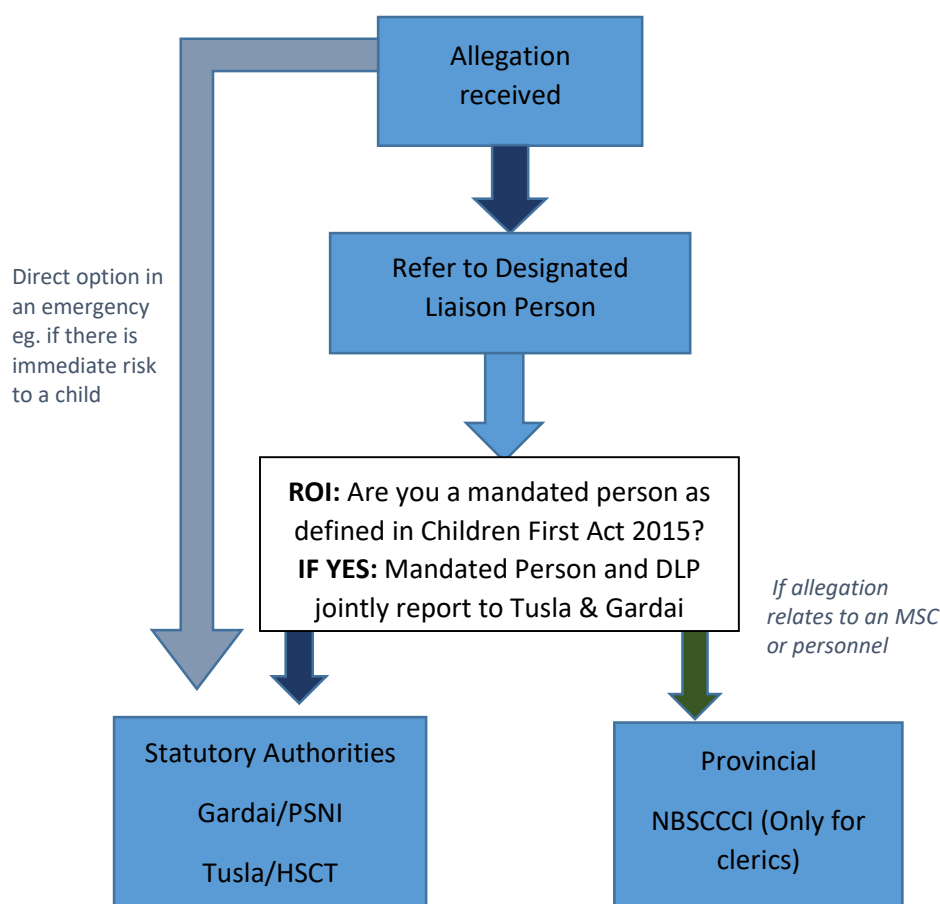
The designated liaison person is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and they act as liaison person with other agencies.
2. Receiving child protection and welfare concerns from workers/volunteers and to report concerns which meet the threshold of ‘reasonable grounds for concern’ to Tusla.
3. Making joint reports with mandated persons within the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart for concerns which have reached defined thresholds.

NOTE: Full guidance on reporting procedures for mandated persons and non-mandated persons is given below.

Procedure for reporting an allegation of child abuse & Flowchart

The reporting flow chart below refers **to any child protection concern**, including where the concern is about a situation or person involved in the Church. It is the responsibility of everyone in the Church to ensure that children who may need help and protection are not left at risk of abuse.



Following receipt of an allegation, suspicion or concern, the following steps should be taken:

1. You must refer the matter to the DLP who will report the matter to:
 - Tusla/HSCT (Social Services for ROI and NI respectively)
 - An Garda Síochána/PSNI (Police)

If you are in the Republic of Ireland and are a Mandated Person, this will be a joint report between you and the DLP.

Mandated persons are required under the Children First Act 2015 to report any concern that meets or exceeds the threshold for reporting under the legislation. It is appropriate that they make a joint report with the DLP but they cannot discharge this duty to the DLP or any other person. If reporting independent of the organisational DLP, the mandated persons must inform the DLP that a report under the Children First Act 2015 has been made.

2. If a child is at immediate risk, the person who has received the concern should report directly to the statutory authorities and inform the DLP at the earliest opportunity.
3. Some allegations need to be referred to other authorities with a legitimate interest. If the DLP is unsure about whether information can be shared, advice will be sought from Tusla.
 - Allegations against MSC personnel and members must be passed on to the Provincial, who has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding in the MSC.
 - Anonymised allegations against MSC members are notified to the NBSCCCI □ The local Bishop if a diocesan appointment was held.
4. If there is any uncertainty about whether the allegation/concern meets the threshold for reporting, a consultation should take place by the DLP with the statutory authorities, who will advise on the requirements for notification.
5. Cases not reported to Tusla: If a decision is made not to report concerns because it is understood that reasonable grounds for concern do not exist, a record should be maintained of a) the concern b) the reasons for the decision and c) any actions taken.

Responding to a person making an allegation of abuse

Where a child, young person or adult, discloses child abuse to a person working in any capacity for the MSC it is crucially important that the situation is handled sensitively and compassionately. It should be borne in mind that the person may feel that they have taken a huge risk in disclosing the abuse. Our response will help a person to disclose as much as they can remember, which will help any future investigation.

People may tell you about:

- Abuse that happened to them
- Something they've been told by someone else and that they strongly believe is true
- Seeing signs of abuse, such as physical injuries on a child
- Something they have witnessed that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Extra care needs to be taken if it is a child who is disclosing that they were abused. See guidance note on responding to children making allegations at the end of this section.

Where information is given in person, consider the following:

- Adopt a listening style that is compassionate, calm and reassuring. If the information given to you shocks, disgusts or distresses you, do not allow these feelings to show. If you do, you may inadvertently dissuade the person from giving any further information.
- Listen carefully to that person, but do not ask intrusive or leading questions.
- Stay calm, take what the person raising the concern says seriously, and reassure them.
- Allow the person to continue at their own pace.
- Check with the person to make sure that you have understood what they actually said. Do not suggest words – use theirs.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept, particularly in relation to confidentiality, but listen carefully to what is being sought in this regard.
- Explain the referral procedures to the person.
- Do not make any comments about the respondent; do not make assumptions or speculate.
- Be aware that a person's ability to recount their concern or allegation will depend on their age, culture, nationality or any disability that may affect speech or language.
- Avoid statements about your reaction to the information given.
- Do not question beyond checking what has been said. It is the responsibility of Tusla/HSCT and An Garda Síochána/PSNI to investigate. There should be no probing for detail beyond that which has been freely given.
- Do not offer wording or language to the person making the allegation that may assist in the provision of an account of the concern or allegation.

Guidance on responding to a child disclosing abuse

- If a child tells you directly about abuse happening to them, you should allow them to speak and listen attentively. However it is not appropriate to set up a meeting with a child for the purpose of receiving a disclosure or taking a statement. That is the role of the statutory services.
- The person receiving the allegation should be conscious that a child may feel very frightened and need reassurance and support that they have done the right thing in disclosing the abuse.

- The DLP will consult with Tusla/HSCT about informing the child's parents/guardians. It is best practice to inform parents/guardians. You do not need to inform the family that a report is being made, if by doing so the child will be placed at further risk or in cases where the family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out an assessment.
- If the allegation is about MSC personnel, explain to the child and their parents that the information must be reported to Church authorities, along with the statutory authorities.
- All offers of further support to the child should be conveyed via the child's parents or an appropriate adult.

Guidance for Receiving and Recording an Allegation

1. Whenever possible and practical, take notes during the conversation. Always ask permission to do this and explain the importance of recording all information. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time, make a written record as soon as possible afterwards. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the allegation was received, e.g. by telephone, face-to-face conversation, letter, etc. This initial recorded information will be transferred to a child protection referral form and will become the first entry in a file of information about the case that will be retained by the DLP. Please always sign and date the record. The relevant forms are found at www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/ - the DLP can help you access the correct version.
2. The record would also normally include:
 - Information on the complainant including the name, address and age of the complainant when the alleged abuse occurred;
 - Where the person who has raised a concern/allegation is a child, details of parents/ guardians should also be given;
 - Name of the individual against whom the concern/allegation is being raised, and any other identifying information;
 - Dates when the concern arose, or when the incident occurred;
 - The person's own words they used to describe the event or incident. Do not make assumptions about the intended meaning of the words used;
 - Details of any action already taken about the incident/concern/allegation;
 - Do not be selective. Include details that to you may seem irrelevant. This may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation. All original records, including rough notes, should be passed immediately to the relevant DLP. Any copies of retained records should be kept secure and confidential.
3. **Remember – it is not your role to investigate.**

4. In cases of emergency (and/or outside normal business hours), where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, an urgent report must be made to Tusla/HSCT, as well as to the DLP. Where the appropriate Tusla/HSCT staff are not available, An Garda Síochána/PSNI must be contacted to ensure that under no circumstances a child is left in a dangerous situation pending Social Services intervention (see direct option in Flowchart).
5. In all cases, consideration should also be given as to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of forensic or other potential evidence (see direct option arrow in Flowchart).
6. Explain to the person raising the concern what will happen next. You should inform the person making the allegation that their identity and the identity of the respondent and complainant will be shared with the statutory authorities. Leave contact details of the DLP if the referrer needs to ask questions later. The information about the allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know.
7. A. Written confirmation should be given to the person making the referral to the DLP that the information has been passed on to the statutory authorities.
B. If the person who received the disclosure is a Mandated Person (Children First Act 2015), a joint report will be sent between that person and the DLP to the statutory authorities.

The appropriateness of the response given to a complainant is vital to ensure that they feel heard and taken seriously.

Recording and Data Protection

- Ensure records are factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
- Cooperate with Tusla in the sharing of records, where a child protection or welfare issue arises. An example of this could be information needed for a Child Protection Conference or strategy meeting or information important for the assessment of risk to a child.
- Store records on child protection concerns, allegations and disclosures securely and safely.
- Use records for the purpose for which they are intended only.
- Share records on a need-to-know basis only in the best interests of the child or young person.

Taken from: *A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns: Tusla, 2017*

Support and Care of the Complainant

All people who come forward to give their account of abuse will be treated with respect and care. They will be offered access to appropriate care, advice and support.

Pastoral care may be offered and provided by the DLP managing the case, the support person if taken up by the complainant, the Provincial at an appropriate time, or indeed another identified representative if there is something specific they can offer.

How support is offered:

- Once an allegation has been received, the DLP will try to arrange a face to face meeting with the complainant. The complainant should have a choice of venue and time. They are invited to bring a person of their choice for support.
- We listen attentively to the complainant and substance of the allegation.
- If the threshold for reporting has been reached, the DLP will help the complainant to understand the necessity to refer the matter to the statutory authorities.
- Every complainant is offered access to a support person. The role of the support person is to ensure that the complainant is appropriately supported throughout the process of disclosure and thereafter. It is the prerogative of the complainant whether or not they wish to accept the assistance of a support person.
- The complainant will be provided with details of support services and assisted in making an appointment if required.
- The MSC makes a commitment to funding such professional support, as appropriate. Details on Towards Healing will be provided. Towards Healing is an independent support and therapy service for people abused within the Catholic Church in Ireland.
- At the right time in the process, the complainant will be invited to meet with the Provincial or another MSC representative if this is their desire. This meeting is not for the purpose of determining the outcome of any investigations, but for the Provincial to hear and acknowledge the experience of the complainant.
- At the end of this meeting, the support needs can be reviewed. Some complainants may identify action that is needed to address their spiritual needs. Towards Peace, a spiritual support service for survivors of abuse, may be of assistance in this regard.
- Complainants are advised of their right to seek financial redress/compensation.
- The MSC are open to providing independent facilitation or mediation for meetings if this is required.

Procedure for allegations of abuse against MSCs, staff and volunteers:

Action taken after reporting to statutory authorities

It is recognised that it is important that there is a fair procedure in regards to the management and investigation of allegations. A proper balance should be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights of respondents. Where there is a conflict, the child's welfare must come first.

Allegations against volunteers

- If the allegation is made against a volunteer, the parish priest/superior/Provincial should consult with the DLP about whether the volunteer should remain in role during the investigation by the statutory authorities. Factors that influence this decision will include:
 - the volunteer's role in the Church (if known);
 - their level of contact with children and an assessment of any risk that arises from this;
 - the degree of credibility of the allegation.

The DLP may wish to consult with the statutory authorities for guidance.

- The manager should consider appointing a person to offer pastoral support to the volunteer during any statutory investigation.
- Following the conclusion of any statutory authority investigation and assessment, where there is no case to answer and there are no outstanding child safeguarding concerns, if the volunteer has stepped aside they may be reinstated.
- If there is a case to answer the volunteer should be asked to permanently resign from the role.
- If the DPP decides to prosecute, the volunteer should be asked to permanently vacate their Church role.
- The Provincial should consider the need to conduct a review of safeguarding arrangements in the particular area where the volunteer was working, following conclusion of the statutory authority investigations. The purpose is to review whether all appropriate safeguards were in place and to take any corrective action required.

Allegations against Paid Employees

- If the allegation is made against a paid employee, the Parish Priest/superior/Provincial should consult with the DLP about whether the employee should remain in role during statutory authority investigations and assessments. Factors that influence decision will include:
 - the employee's role in the Church;
 - whether the allegation relates to the employee's role in the Church;
 - their level of contact with children and an assessment of any risk that arises from this;
 - the degree of credibility of the allegation.

The DLP may wish to consult with the statutory authorities for guidance.

- If a decision is made to suspend the employee, HR advice should be sought.
- Any suspension during the process of statutory authority investigations, and during any internal disciplinary action that may follow, should be with full pay.
- The manager should consider offering a pastoral support person to the employee.
- Following notification of a prosecution and/or conviction, a disciplinary process should be initiated. An investigator should be appointed by the Provincial (possibly DLP) to gather any evidence and provide a report to the Provincial.
- If the Provincial determines, based on the evidence that further action is required, the employee should be invited to attend a disciplinary meeting and may be supported at the meeting by a union representative or a friend.
- Any disciplinary hearing should be conducted by a panel of 3 individuals and be chaired by the Provincial.
- Any finding should be notified to the employee in writing.
- If the panel considers that the employee has committed gross misconduct, HR advice should be sought on how to dismiss the employee from their post.
- If the statutory authorities investigation results in no further action, an assessment of whether any misconduct has been committed should be undertaken by a suitably qualified person appointed by the Provincial.

- A disciplinary panel should be established to consider the investigating person's report and consider the future employment of the employee.
- The employee can be represented by a union representative or a friend at any disciplinary hearing.
- If a decision is made to reinstate the employee, appropriate support should be offered for a return to work.
- If a decision is made to dismiss the employee, and if the employee is resident or has worked in Northern Ireland, a referral must be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. The DBS website provides further information on checks, referrals and barred lists.
- Any appeal by the employee who has been disciplined/dismissed should be made in writing to an independent person appointed by the Church authority.

Allegations against MSC members

- On receipt of an allegation, the priority is to ensure that information that has reached the threshold for reporting is referred to the statutory authorities. The DLP will check with the Police, if there is any reason as to why the information cannot be shared at that time with the respondent. In rare circumstances, the Police will ask the DLP to delay this so as not to hamper an investigation.
- If the threshold for reporting has been reached, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated by the Provincial (CIC, c. 1717). This canonical inquiry will be paused to allow any statutory investigation to take place.
- At the earliest opportunity, the Provincial will call a meeting with the respondent and invite him to bring a person for support.
- At the meeting the DLP will share the details of the allegation with the respondent. The respondent will be invited to seek canonical advice and if required, civil legal advice. He will be advised that he can respond to the allegation if he wishes and this will be recorded and referred to the statutory authorities. However, in line with civil law, he does not need to make a response at this stage.
- The respondent will be offered the support of an advisor. The role of the advisor is to attend meetings with the respondent and to help them to access advice and support.
- The Provincial will judge the level of risk in consultation with the statutory authorities and the DLP. A decision will be made at this stage as to whether an interim management plan is required, which may include restrictions to sacred ministry.
- A written reminder is given to the respondent by the Provincial to advise him to continue following the child safeguarding policy and procedures.
- If required, the DLP and advisor will meet the respondent and present him with the interim management plan, which the respondent will be asked to agree to and sign. During this meeting, the respondent must be advised that the preliminary investigation will be resumed following the conclusion of any statutory authority enquiries.

Canonical Inquiry including Preliminary Investigation

- The preliminary investigation is the initial stage of the canonical inquiry. It is an inquiry into the facts and circumstances around the allegation. The investigator produces a written report for the Provincial. Conclusion of this report should enable the Provincial in deciding whether there is a case to answer, and that the case it is not manifestly false or frivolous.
- The preliminary investigation is completed once formal confirmation is received from the statutory authorities that their investigations have ended. The DLP may complete the investigation with the support of a canon lawyer or the Provincial may instruct another appropriate person/s to complete it.
- If the preliminary investigation finds there is no case to answer, the respondent should be advised that the case is closed and he is supported in a return to ministry, if he had stepped aside.
- If the preliminary investigation finds there is a case to answer, the Provincial must forward a report to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).
- The CDF will authorise the appropriate canonical process to be followed (e.g. a judicial penal process, an administrative penal process, confirm precept, etc.).

If there is no case to answer

- If at the end of a preliminary investigation, it is found there is no case to answer, it is important that all outstanding matters be dealt with to allow the person to move forward with their life and ministry. Therefore, in preparation, the respondent should be provided with counselling and support to assist them to deal with any residual anger/distress. This may include spiritual direction, reflection and discussions with the Provincial or a member of leadership.

Risk management

- Once an allegation is received against a living member, a risk assessment and management process is engaged in. Protective measures may be taken at an early stage. This is covered in the earlier section "Procedure".
- Tools and templates for risk assessment and management plans are accessed from the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland "Safeguarding Children- Guidance; www.safeguarding.ie".
- If there is an adjudication criminally or canonically that abuse was committed, a permanent management plan is put in place. A clinical risk assessment may be commissioned to inform this plan. The plan will detail, amongst other things, how the respondent is to be monitored.

Support

- While statutory and/or Church investigations are underway, pastoral support is offered to the respondent. It is recognized that this is an especially difficult time for

any person and they will be vulnerable. They are provided with an advisor/support person and offered therapeutic support as well as canonical and legal advice.

- If the allegations are substantiated at the end of the canonical process, the person requires pastoral and therapeutic support and also to help address any offending behaviour.

Theme 5: Quality Assurance

AIM: To ensure that our safeguarding policy and procedures are understood and effectively implemented at all levels, informal and formal methods of quality assurance are used. This process mitigates the risk of complacency.

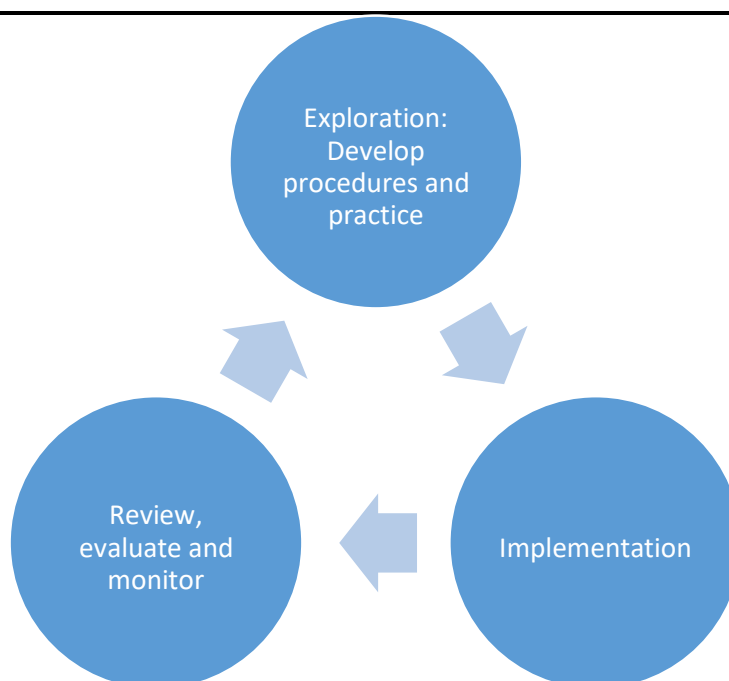


Figure: Quality assurance cycle

Outlined in the previous sections are our child safeguarding procedures and methods of communicating the procedures. To ensure the safeguarding standards and procedures are being implemented at all levels with the MSC, there is a need to monitor, further review and evaluate the effectiveness of the child safeguarding arrangements. This step provides the opportunity to reflect upon the overall process.

Role of Safeguarding Committee

The role of the safeguarding committee is to oversee the implementation of

1. The safeguarding procedures, particularly procedures relating to working with children and young people

2. The training plan
3. The communication plan
4. Self-auditing

These functions are fulfilled by the safeguarding committee through:

- Producing and reviewing the three-year child safeguarding plan of how to maintain the safeguarding standards across the MSC organisation.
- Liaising with the local safeguarding representatives (LSRs) (The local Superior often fills this role) to ensure the compilation of a local safeguarding audit, and to identify areas where guidance and support on policy or practice is needed.
- Ensuring that an annual safeguarding report is made to the Provincial.

Safeguarding strategic plan

The safeguarding strategic plan is to assess the effectiveness of the steps being taken to keep children safe. The purpose of this internal child safeguarding plan is to set out what, how, who and in what time frame key elements of child safeguarding practices and procedures are going to be met by the MSC.

The MSC safeguarding plan includes the following:

- Specific objectives linked to each of the safeguarding standards and themes. These objectives can be broken down into set actions. A training plan and communications plan is included.
- Resources: It is important to set specific and realistic objectives linked to identified allocated resources.
- Implementation: The Provincial, through the safeguarding committee, should identify clear time frames for implementation, which should take account of the completion of the local safeguarding audits.
- Review and evaluation: It is important that the three-year plan sets clear dates for review of each specific objective outlined in the plan. These review dates should be achieved on an annual basis, and reviews should take account of the outcomes of the annual local audit.

Audit and Quality Assurance

This is done by applying three methods:

1. Assessing compliance during systematic visits to MSC centres or community houses.
2. Annual self-audit scheme carried out locally, but coordinated by the safeguarding committee (Self audit template Appendix 11).
3. External audits by the NBSCCCI and statutory agencies eg. Tusla.

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4. Commit to ongoing review of policy and procedures with a full review at a minimum of every three years.