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Child Safeguarding Statement of the Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. The policy of the Catholic Church in Ireland is based on standards of practice which contain indicators that assist in reaching these standards. These indicators can be used in assessing and managing risk.

Name and contact details of the service provider the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore:

For any queries relating to this statement please contact Fr. John Harris, on 087 966 1959.

As part of the commitment of the Diocese to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, Fr. John Harris has been appointed as Designated Liaison Person for the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore.

Anyone who has issues or concerns around the safety of children, please contact:

Fr. John Harris – 087 9661959

Or **Concerns and complaints may also be passed on directly to TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) and / or An Garda Síochána.**

Child Safeguarding Statement:

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, we recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with parents/ guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical,

emotional, intellectual and social development. All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:

The Diocese of Waterford and Lismore as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry with children, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016:

- Attendance by children in Church services usually, but not always accompanied by their parents or guardians;
- Participation of children in sacramental preparation often, but not always, done in conjunction with schools;
- Participation in the sacraments through serving at Mass; singing with choirs; acting as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Ministers of the Word;
- Participation in youth groups and programmes
- Participation in retreats and pilgrimages. This list is not exhaustive. As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the

Catholic Church in Ireland we are committed to the following principles:

1. Mandatory reporting.

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge, or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:

- physically
- emotionally
- sexually
- through neglect

Suspicions, concerns, knowledge, or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of Church personnel, but they can also relate to incidents in the child's family, or elsewhere in the community.

2. Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them.

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the

Church for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training support, communications, and quality assurance.

3. Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge, or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All Church personnel have a responsibility to report suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child abuse that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. The Designated Liaison Person can assist with this process. These reports will be made irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation being reported relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation being reported relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases. In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

The Diocese of Waterford & Lismore Child Safeguarding Committee

The Committee members are:

Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan

Very Rev. Msgr Nicholas O'Mahony – Chairperson

Rev. Fr. John Harris – Deputy Chairperson (DLP)

Nodlaig Lilis – Secretary

Peter Kelly

Anne Maher Walsh (Deputy DLP)

Avril Halley

Ann O'Farrell

Dr. Annaliese O'Sullivan


Lee Walsh (Diocesan Secretary)

Stephen Plunkett (Director of Safeguarding)

Implementation

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice supports our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

Signed:



+ Alphonsus Cullinan Bishop of Waterford & Lismore

5th of May 2023