

# **Communications Policy**

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## **1.0 Policy Statement**

The Diocese of Killaloe is committed to welcoming, cherishing and protecting children in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church. The Diocese recognises that policy and procedures are only effective if everyone, including children and young people understand their purpose and know how to use them. Therefore, the Diocese is committed to ensuring that all communication in relation to the safeguarding of children is open and transparent.

The Diocese of Killaloe will endeavour to ensure that the message about the importance of safeguarding standards and the availability of appropriate guidance is communicated to as many people as possible. Communication will be directed in particular ways to staff working at diocesan and parish levels, volunteers, parents, children, young people and all the lay faithful. Communication is a two-way process, so listening to suggestions and feedback is of the utmost importance, especially by those who are involved in youth activities in the Diocese.

## **2.0 Purpose of Policy**

This policy sets out the processes put in place to disseminate our child safeguarding policy and procedures to Church personnel, parishioners and external agencies. It is consistent with Standard 5 of Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland – Communicating the Church’s safeguarding message.

## **3.0 Scope**

This policy is addressed to the following groups with which the Diocese needs to communicate regarding its safeguarding children policy and procedures and includes:

- Church personnel – volunteers, staff and clergy.
- Children, and their parents or carers, involved in Church based activities.
- Parishioners.
- The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSC), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and An Garda Síochána (GS).
- Relevant external agencies, the media and the general public.

## **4.0 Communicating the Safeguarding Message**

The safeguarding message will be communicated in a number of ways:

### **4.1 Complete Policy Document**

The complete Child-Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Killaloe will be available in each parish and it can also be accessed on the diocesan website at [www.killaloe-diocese.ie](http://www.killaloe-diocese.ie)

#### **4.2 Summary of Policy Document**

A summary of the Child-Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Killaloe will be distributed as widely as possible to homes and to all church organisations active in the diocese.

#### **4.3 Child-Friendly Format of Policy Document**

The Child Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Killaloe will be prepared in a child-friendly format and made available as a leaflet to parents and their children who are participating in church based activities.

Copies of the child-friendly leaflets will be available from parish offices and can be accessed on the diocesan website at [www.killaloediocese.ie](http://www.killaloediocese.ie). This leaflet will help children become aware of their right to be safe from harm and abuse and it will inform them who they are to speak to should they have a concern.

#### **4.4 Policy Statement Displayed**

The Child Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Diocese of Killaloe will be displayed in a prominent place in every church, in every property owned by the Parish and Diocese, and in places where children and young people meet to engage in church related activities.

#### **4.5 Posters with Contact Details**

Posters will be placed in churches, parish halls, and other buildings where children and young people meet for church related activities containing details of the Diocesan contact person(s), the Tusla contacts, and the Gardaí. These posters will indicate that every child should be free from abuse and encourage children to seek help should they have a concern.

#### **4.6 Newsletter**

Regular newsletters will cover general information about safeguarding activity; developments in safeguarding policy and procedures; notices for inclusion in parish bulletins. They will include examples of good safeguarding practice, from time to time, and encourage evidence based practice informed by research. The newsletter will be published on the website and also distributed electronically to Parish Safeguarding Representatives, Clergy, Safeguarding related committees.

#### **4.7 Use of Media**

The Director of Safeguarding will be responsible for the names of the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person / Director of Child Safeguarding being published through local media and on Diocesan and parish websites. Local media – especially newspapers and radio – will be sent press releases regarding any relevant developments in child safeguarding in the Diocese of Killaloe.

#### **4.8 Obtaining Safeguarding Forms**

All the Forms relating to child safeguarding can be obtained from the Parish Priest, the local safeguarding representatives, and can be downloaded from the Diocesan website at [www.killaloe-diocese.ie](http://www.killaloe-diocese.ie) The Forms can also be obtained from the Killaloe Diocesan Offices, Westbourne, Cusack Road. Ennis. Co Clare.

#### **5.0 Communications Role of Diocesan Designated Liaison Person**

The Diocesan Designated Liaison Person will:

- Contact parishes on a regular basis with updates on child safeguarding for parish newsletters, as well as producing a safeguarding newsletter once a year.
- Attend from time-to-time Pastoral Area meetings to talk about safeguarding issues and maintaining vigilance.
- Ensure that the child safeguarding section of the Diocesan web-site is updated regularly.

#### **6.0 Role of Parents**

Parents will be informed of their responsibilities in relation to the activities in which their children and young people are taking part by child safeguarding representatives and leaders of group activities.

Parents will have access to the names of the leaders who are responsible for the children at a given event. Furthermore, the name and contact details of the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person / Director of Child Safeguarding will be available at all times.

Agreed disciplinary procedures in operation for relevant events will be provided to parents.

#### **7.0 Children / Young People**

Children and young people will be made aware by group leaders of safeguarding issues, including codes of behaviour, disciplinary procedures and the complaints procedures for use by young people. Contact details of the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person / Director of Child Safeguarding will be available to children if they need to use them at any time.

## **8.0 Responsibility for Implementing this Policy**

The Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee has the responsibility of managing all aspects of policy development at diocesan and parish level. Responsibility for the observance of this policy belongs to the Director of Safeguarding. Only those persons designated by the Bishop may speak on his behalf and on behalf of the Diocese of Killaloe. Any statements, observations, or opinions offered by another, not designated as a diocesan spokesperson, are to be understood as personal or private remarks, not necessarily reflecting an official communication of the diocese or any of its parishes, institutions or agencies.

The Parish Safeguarding Representative, members of the Safeguarding Committee, Designated Liaison Person, Authorised Signatory, and Activity Leaders all have certain responsibilities in relation to communicating the safeguarding message which are outlined in their role descriptions. Within each parish the overall responsibility for implementing this policy, as in all aspects of safeguarding children involved in Church related activities, remains with the Parish Priest.

## **9.0 Review of Communication**

An annual review and evaluation of communication effectiveness will be undertaken by the Safeguarding Committee and reported on in the context of the annual diocesan report on safeguarding activities. This will be used as an important part of child safeguarding work that will inform best practice and help ensure standards are being maintained.

Communication is a two way process so consideration will be given to developing consultation and feedback processes with the target groups, in order to ensure that their needs in this area are met and to improve practice.