



Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2026-2028

Date:

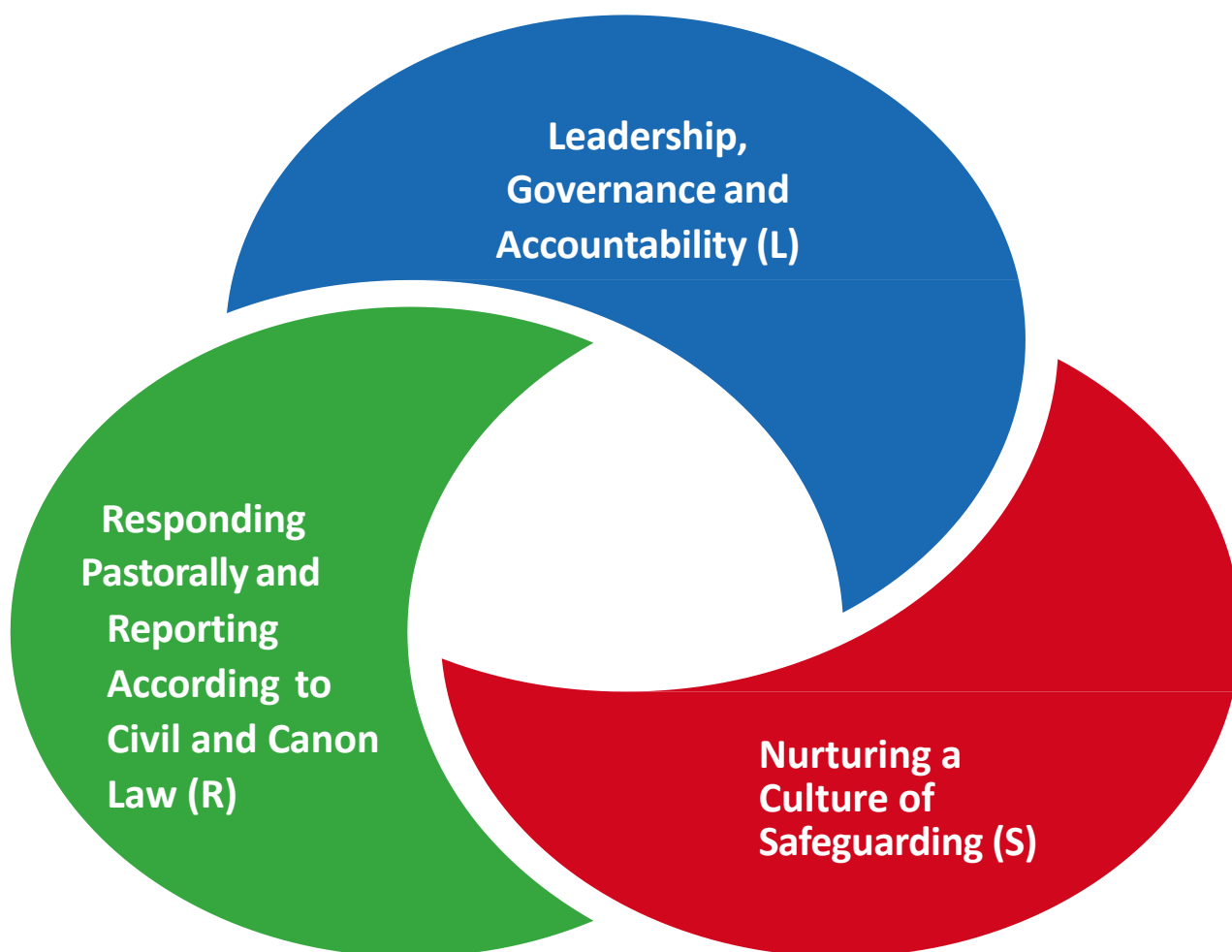
Plan Approved:

1st Review:

2nd Review:

3rd Review:

There are three core standards to the Church's Safeguarding Policies (the three standards are linked, and no standard is more important than another).



(L). Leadership, Governance and Accountability Safeguarding Criteria	Action	Responsibility	Start date	Review date
The Church Authority demonstrates his Personnel commitment to safeguarding through open and transparent communication in relation to safeguarding matters by delivering sermons, pastoral letters, addresses to meetings and newsletters, and through face-to-face meetings and personal engagement. This requires the Church Authority to be personally available and to listen with openness, humility and compassion.	Ensure Safeguarding is communicated to all Priests, Parishes and Lay Faithful. Attend Safeguarding Committee Meetings at least one a year and regular meetings with the Director of Safeguarding. Communication with respondents where and when required.	Bishop Safeguarding Committee.	January 2026	Annually
The Church Authority puts in place a system of governance that identifies clear procedures, accountability structures and quality assurance, in which roles and responsibilities are explicit. These are all mirrored in the Strategic Safeguarding Plan of the relevant Church body.	Roles and responsibilities to be clearly explained during Child Safeguarding training and induction training. Guidance on clear procedures www.killaloediocese.ie Roles and responsibilities – see appendix.	Bishop Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually
The Church Authority takes decisive action. The decision on ensuring that someone who harms a child or vulnerable adult has no role in ministry rests with a Church Authority, having sought appropriate advice. Relevant Church authorities must comply with the obligations under VELM (Vos Estis Lux Mundi) to ensure accountability for actions or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid civil or canonical investigations.	Commitment to follow the outlined procedures and obligations under VELM. Ensure the policies and procedures for Children and Adults at Risk are followed.	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually

In recognition of the challenges associated with safeguarding ministry, the Church Authority should demonstrate his commitment through providing training, care and support for those in safeguarding ministry through initial and ongoing formation for Priests and supervision for Safeguarding Committee.	Ensure all Safeguarding Committee update their knowledge and attending role specific training Ensure a training needs analysis is conducted yearly. Annual Safeguarding Training refresher/updates	Bishop Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually
In recognition of the decision-making responsibilities and potential isolation of the role, mechanisms need to be developed to support Church authorities. These will include training for leadership, induction training in safeguarding and continuous professional and personal development to include skills and knowledge for leading in safeguarding challenges. Church authorities should have access to mentoring and support and a body of experienced personnel to support best practice	Organise annual training sessions Attend regular meetings with IEC and other Religious Leaders.	Bishop Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually

(S). Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding Criteria				
Procedures for recruitment, including Garda vetting.	Recruitment procedures following in line with Diocesan HR Procedures. Garda Vetting for those who have Ministry / role with children and or Vulnerable Adults in the Dioceses / Parishes.	Bishop Diocesan Vetting Staff	January 2026	Annually
Induction and training	Ensure the opportunity to attend any training for Children through the National Board or Vulnerable Adults, through other Agencies, i.e. HSE. Ensure a training needs analysis is conducted. Annual Safeguarding Training Ensure any relevant training and updates are passed onto the relevant Personnel	National Board Bishop Safeguarding Trainer Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually
Risk-assess and ensure that measures are put in place to manage risk to children so that children in Church ministry are safe and free from harm. In the ROI there is a legal requirement to complete a child safeguarding statement: Children First (2015), ROI only.	Through the yearly audits, identify those in direct ministry with children have a risk assessment in place and undergone relevant training and garda vetting.	Bishop Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually
Codes of behaviour for children involved in Church-related activities and codes of conduct for adults that promote best practice and integrity in ministry.	Have in place codes of behaviour for both children and adults. Ensure those with ministry with children are aware of the codes of behaviour through training sessions and	Bishop Safeguarding Committee Trainer	January 2026	Annually

	regular safeguarding updates.			
Procedures to create equal opportunities for children (empowering all children to participate, including children with specific needs and children whose first language is not English).	Through the yearly audits, identify any groups or ministry that may have children with specific needs participating. Have in place clear plan and assessments to ensure the needs and safety of all are met.	Bishop Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually
Appropriate safeguards for using IT and social media when engaging with children.	To have in place a social media policy, which is regularly updated.	Bishop Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually
Support for and supervision of those in Safeguarding roles.	Access to Safeguarding Committee made available. Access to external supervision/Spiritual Direction.	Bishop Director of Safeguarding	January 2026	Annually
Procedures for dealing with complaints and whistleblowing.	Have clear procedures in place for dealing with complaints and whistleblowing	Bishop Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually
Procedures for managing external contexts, including lay associations of the faithful; visiting clerics and male and female religious; and those ministering in external organisations and external groups using Church property	Through the yearly audits, identify any lay associations, visiting clerics etc and ensure that they are in good standing and fully aware of all of the safeguarding policies within the Diocese. Any external group using church property will complete the necessary booking forms which include child safeguarding.	Bishop Safeguarding Committee	January 2026	Annually

(R)Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law				
The Church Authority ensures that all reports of child or adult safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations are processed in line with civil and canon law requirements.	The correct procedures for reporting are clearly followed and accessible to all Mandated persons. Contact details for the DLP are widely advertised and accessible to all. Availability and process in place to access Canon and Civil lawyers Regular meeting with DLP / Bishop to update on cases.	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually
The Church Authority ensures access to appropriately trained and supported staff whose role it is to respond to allegations and report to the statutory authorities, Canonical entities and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.	Trained and appropriate Personnel in place within the safeguarding structure of the Diocese. Membership to the NBSCCCI. Website updated with clear information regarding 'how to make a complaint' as well as contact number for DLP and other useful numbers and supports.	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually
Written records reflect all safeguarding action is taken in line with appropriate data protection and information-sharing protocols.	Clear file structure. Clear and transparent recording. Access to GDPR advice when needed	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually

A compassionate response will be offered to complainants (directly or indirectly) by the Church Authority, advising on available counselling, independent advocacy and support (which recognises their unique needs, and does not interfere with the legal rights of the complainant). This will include an offer from the Church Authority to meet the complainant (accompanied) in person. The support needs of the family of the complainant (however described) should also be considered.	Have in place Support Personnel / DLP who can ensure that pastoral support is offered and access to relevant supports are available on the website and communicated in the wider context. Towards Healing Towards Peace	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually
In order to assess the needs of the complainant, the Bishop should participate in and inform that assessment.	Ensure that procedures are in place to include the complainant at all stages of their reporting journey. Clear and transparent lines of communication.	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually
Following the conclusion of all inquiries, if there is a case to answer, the Church Authority will discuss with the complainant a process of reparation for the harm caused to them.	The Bishop will meet with the complainants and listen to what they feel they need to assist them in their healing journey. Discuss what supports are available for them. Any supports must be in the best interest of the complainant and realistic to the needs of all.	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually
Access to appropriately trained Personnel whose role it is to listen to, regularly communication with and represent the needs of respondents and their families throughout the Civil and Canonical process.	Work closely with agencies / support groups who represent complainants. Hold regular meetings were support is being offered.	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually

	Be open to engaging with outside agencies. Communication is a clear and effective way, that were possible does not use jargon or legal terminology.			
Regular and accessible communication that includes written procedures and information for respondents to advise them that an allegation has been made against them. This will include informing them of their rights to access civil and canon law advice, and will describe the process of assessing and managing risk and the situations in which restrictions on ministry are necessary. A preliminary investigation/collecting of proofs as provided for in Canon 1717 (1)-(3)(cleric) and Canon 695 (non-ordained religious), which is suspended while statutory Authority agencies conduct their investigations, must be carried out. This will maintain a presumption of innocence unless there is an admission of guilt or a finding of guilt. The respondent should be advised of the proceedings, kept informed throughout the process and involved where possible. If, upon conclusion of civil and canon law inquiries, a finding is made that there is no case to answer, a process for restoring the good name of the respondent is agreed and implemented. Risk management arrangements must be in place for the respondent, until and if the Church Authority no longer has responsibility for managing the respondent. This should be done in line with canon law.	Hold regular meetings with respondents and their support person. Ensure all parties have access to legal advice. Discuss and consult with the respondent when writing any management plan and restrictions. Ensure they understand the restrictions and rationale behind them. Any investigation should be undertaken by qualified Personnel, either Legal or Safeguarding professional. Procedures in place (NBSCCCI) are followed.	Bishop DLP	January 2026	Annually

Appendix

Roles and responsibilities:

Church Authority (Bishop) to be responsible for all safeguarding practices by:

- Ensuring that the appropriate child safeguarding structures and personnel are in place;
- Ensuring compliance with canon and civil law;
- Upholding the three standards in practice and behaviour.

Designated liaison person (DLP) To promote safeguarding by:

- Hearing safeguarding concerns;
- Passing on safeguarding concerns to the statutory authorities;
- Managing cases and all associated documents;
- Liaising with the support person, advisor and the Church Authority;
- Passing on safeguarding concerns to the NBSCCCI;
- Conducting internal inquiries;

Director of Safeguarding

- Contributing to upholding the three standards in practice and behaviour;
- Completing an annual report regarding compliance with Standards for the Church Authority;
- Monitoring respondents or, with the Church Authority, appointing a suitable person to carry out this role.

Support person

To promote safeguarding by:

- Keeping the complainant informed of the process 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 three 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 three standards in practice and behaviour.

Safeguarding committee

To promote safeguarding by:

- Developing a three-year safeguarding plan, including the establishment of the local safeguarding policies and procedures;
- Coordinating local safeguarding representatives (LSRs);
- Coordinating activities related to safeguarding, e.g. training;
- Ensuring 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 in the Church body;
- Ensuring, with the Church Authority, that the appropriate safeguarding personnel are in place;
- Upholding the three standards in practice and behaviour.

Safeguarding trainer

To promote safeguarding by:

- Working with the safeguarding committee to identify training needs;
- Delivering full-day and information-session safeguarding training to those identified by the safeguarding committee in the Church body;
- Keeping records of all of those who have been trained;
- Contributing to upholding the three standards in practice and behaviour.