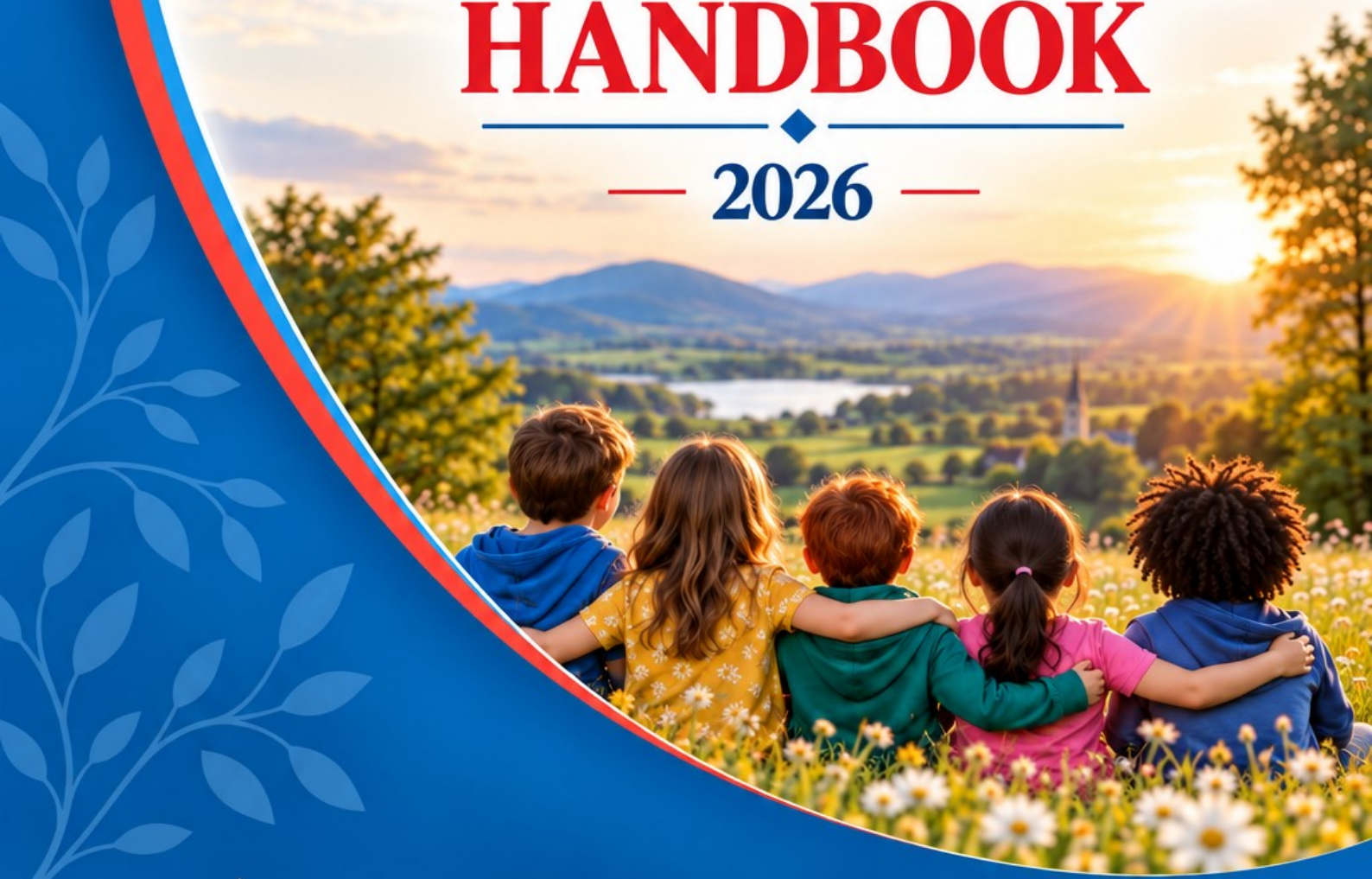
Safeguarding

DIOCESE OF KILLALOE

SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK

2026



PROTECT
Building a safe environment

RESPECT
Valuing every person with dignity

CARE
Supporting and listening to all

FAITH
Guided by the Gospel in all we do

A Safe and Welcoming Church

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Section One

Garda Vetting

When is vetting required?

A person requires vetting when a necessary and regular part of their work consists of having access to, or contact with, children and/or adults at risk.

Vetting is not necessary when contact with children and/or adults at risk, is merely incidental to their work or activity, i.e. Money Collectors, Caretakers etc

Who requires vetting?

- All Clergy ministering in the Diocese.
- All retired Priests who engage in any ministry in the Diocese.
- Parish Safeguarding Representatives.
- Persons supervising altar servers.
- Sacristans.
- Leaders/supervisors of groups that involve children/adults at risk.
- Eucharistic Ministers taking the Eucharist to people in their homes or in care/nursing homes.
- Parish Home Visitation Teams visiting people at home or in care/nursing homes.

How to apply for vetting:

Download, print and complete vetting application forms, one for over 18s and one for those aged 16 & 17. Forms are available on the diocesan website. www.killaloediocese.ie

The applicant must complete section 1 and 2 of the application. Parental guardian consent is required for those aged 16 & 17. The parish will complete section 3, 4 and the validators page.

The original vetting form, and copies of ID are to be sent to the diocese by post; we will no longer accept scanned or email copies of any of the NVB forms or ID documents.

- **No copies of the ID or Forms should be kept by the Parish.**
- The vetting forms have been revised in 2025; the old versions are void and cannot be processed.
- The NBV1 form has four pages. The new forms are on the Diocesan Website.
- Page 1-Guidelines for completing vetting forms.
- Page 2- Vetting form.
- Page 3-Parish information sheet required by the Diocesan office.
- Page 4- Check list that is required to be completed by the person validating the Identity documents.
- Once authorised by the Priest of the Parish, Safeguarding Parish Reps, Parish Secretaries and Priests can complete section 3, 4 and the validators page of the application form.
- If any of the information is missing, it will be sent back to the Parish for completion. Please note this will delay the application.

European Criminal Records Checks (ECRIS)

Applicants whose roles involve contact with children will now be asked additional questions during the online part of the vetting process. If applicable, checks will be conducted across EU member states and the United Kingdom.

Expected delays: EU checks may add approximately 10 days; UK checks may take up to 20 working days. These checks apply only to applicants undertaking relevant work or activities involving children.

Additional required fields now include:

- City/Town of Birth
- Mother's Forename and Maiden Name
- Father's Forename and Surname
- Issuing Country of Passport
- Enhanced international address fields

Applicants will also be asked if they hold identification documents from a European country or the UK. These questions are now part of the online e-vetting system.

Identification Documents

You need two Identification Documents (ID), one with current photograph and one with current address which matches address on the vetting application. Proof od address documents must be dated within the last six months. If the person does not have the required ID please contact your Vetting Liaison Person for further advice.

Over 18s

Photo ID

- Passport from Country of Citizenship
- Irish /EU/UK Driving licence or learner permit (new credit card format)
- Irish Certificate of Naturalisation
- National Identity Card (EU/EEA/Swiss Citizens)

Proof of Address

- Utility providers - Gas, electricity, oil, broadband, waste & Tv licence.
- Credit Institution - bank statement from recognised bank (Not private money lenders or Revolut). Building society Statement, Credit Union statement, Credit Union Passbook.
- Government Bodies – The NVB will not accept pay slips, property tax, motor tax, hospital appointment letters.
- Local Authorities - Letter from local council confirming residency.

Under 18's

If under 18s cannot meet the above criteria. Alternatively they can submit two documents:

- Birth Certificate
- Passport from country of Citizenship
- Written statement by a school Principal confirming attendance (on school letter head)

For those who have completed e-vetting application forms

- You will receive an email from the Vetting Office, *please check your junk mail, occasionally the email will appear here.*
- Click on the link in the email and follow the instructions; you will be asked to enter the following: Place of birth, passport number, mother's maiden name, and previous addresses.
- Submit your application.

Vetting approval

- Once vetting is complete the Diocesan Vetting Liaison Person will receive a Certificate of Disclosure. The Diocesan Vetting liaison Person will store it securely and for as long as is necessary. (see separate retention schedule in the Garda Vetting Policy on website)
- An Email will be sent to the Priest in the parish confirming receipt of cleared vetting application.
- Vetting must be renewed every 3 years as long as the applicant is carrying out duties in the parish.

Section 2
Parish Groups Working with Children

Codes of Conduct are essential for effective safeguarding practice.
It is important to carefully read these guidelines and implement them *at all times*.

Code of Conduct for Clergy, Staff & Volunteers Working with Children & Young People

It is important for all personnel to:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Be visible to others when working with children/young people.
- Clergy, staff and volunteer workers should never be alone in a building, car or a closed room with a child or young person. If one to one contact takes place in an emergency, inform the parent/guardian, and make a written record of the matter (to be given to Priest in the parish for secure storage).
- Written consent must be obtained from parents/guardians before organising activities for children/young people in your care.
- Particular care should be taken to ensure that the privacy of children/young people is respected in places such as toilets and changing rooms.
- Avoid spending excessive time alone with children/young people, away from others.
- All organised trips require careful planning and adherence to supervision ratios.(see page 7)
- **Parental consent for taking photographs must always be sought.**
- Use only age-appropriate language, media products, and activities when working with children and young people. Sexually explicit materials or language are never appropriate.
- Under no circumstances give alcohol, vapes, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.

- The physical integrity of children and young people must be respected at all times. Sexual relationships, physical punishments, emotional or verbal abuse are not permitted under any circumstances.
- Ensure that the buildings and/or facilities used for activities with children and young people are suitable, safe, and secure.

Code of Behaviour for Children and Young People

Church activities for young people should offer a positive experience, where they can learn new things in a safe and positive environment. To this end all young people should be made aware of the activity code of conduct . The code of conduct should be discussed with children/young people to whom it applies, so that they can understand it and take ownership of it.

It is important that children/young people know the limits and boundaries appropriate to their own behaviour and that leaders working with children/young people should be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity.

The following Code of Conduct applies to all children/young people who are involved in church related activities in the parishes and in the Diocese.

As a participant, you are expected to abide by the code of conduct.

Children/young people are expected to:

- Be loyal and give their friends a second chance.
- Be friendly and particularly welcoming to new members.
- Be supportive and committed to other members, offer comfort when required.
- Refrain from getting involved in inappropriate peer pressure and pushing others into something they do not want to do.
- Behave and listen to all instructions from the leaders.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background or religious beliefs or sexual identity.
- Refrain from the use of bad language or racial/sectarian references. This includes bullying on any social media platform or texting on any messaging apps..
- Refrain from bullying or persistent use of rough and dangerous play.
- Show respect for church property, the property of others and public property.
- Show respect to other youth members/leaders and show team spirit.
- Keep themselves safe.
- Report inappropriate behaviour or risky situations.
- Play fairly and be trustworthy.
- Challenge or report bullying to your leaders.
- Switch off mobile phones while in church or during church or parish activities. Make your activity a fun place to be.
- Treat matters confidentially, where appropriate.

Children/young people are not allowed to:

- Smoke or Vape.
- Consume alcohol or drugs of any kind.
- Use violence of any sort towards others.
- Use information technology / social media sites / messaging apps during a church related activity without prior consent of a parent and the activity leader.
- Taking photos or videos of others taking part in group activities.

Children/young people have the right to:

- Be safe and happy in their chosen activity.
- Be listened to.
- Be respected and treated fairly.
- Privacy.
- Enjoy their activity in a protective environment.
- Be referred to professional help if needed.
- Be protected from abuse by other participants or outside sources.
- Participate on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability.
- Experience competition.
- Be believed.
- Ask for help.

Any misdemeanours and general misbehaviour will be addressed by the immediate leader and reported verbally to the activity leader. Persistent misbehaviour may result in suspension/dismissal from the activity. Parents will be informed at all stages.

Note: Please inform parents about the information pack for parents/guardians on the diocesan website.

Supervision Ratios

In planning an activity or trip, it is critically important to consider how many adults are needed to supervise children in a safe manner. At a minimum, two adults are required, however this is also dependent on whether the children have specific needs or requirements, and on the duration of the activity.

In addition to the initial two adults, the following ratios should be applied:

Within each group the ratio of adults to children is determined by the age of the children involved:

- 0-1 year: one member of staff to three children
- 1-2 years: one member of staff to five children
- 2-3 years: one member of staff to six children
- 3-6 years: one member of staff to eight children
- 7-12 years: one member of staff to eight children
- 13-18 years: one member of staff to ten children

In addition, for overnight activities additional staff should be considered. If the group is mixed, a gender balance should be maintained.

Dealing with Accidents Involving Children

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

- Assess the injury and reassure the child. If the injury is severe or the child has lost consciousness, please contact the emergency services by phoning 112.
- If the emergency services are called, *immediately inform* the child's parents/guardians. Contact information should be found on the child's consent form.
- If parents/guardians are not available, it may be necessary for a leader to travel with the child to the hospital. If medical treatment is required, Church personnel may be asked about known allergies or existing medical conditions. Again, this information should be found on the child's consent form.
- If the injury is minor, local application of treatment should be available from the first-aid box. There should be a fully stocked first-aid box to hand at all Church-related events. Remember to make a note of what has been used from the first-aid box so that it can be replaced at the earliest opportunity. Under no circumstances should any medication be given to a child, unless under parental or medical supervision.
- As soon as possible after the accident, complete the accident/incident report form, available on the diocesan website. Once complete, this form should be given to the Priest in the parish and stored securely, in line with data protection, and treated as a confidential document.
- 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.
- It is good practice to keep blank copies of the accident/incident form with the first-aid box so that one can be easily filled out in the event of an emergency.

Complaints and Whistleblowing Policies

Complaints procedure and reporting form available on the diocesan website

Whistleblowing procedure and reporting form available on the diocesan website

Reporting Abuse: Allegation, Suspicion or Concern

The Diocese of Killaloe provides guidance and training on recognising abuse, and clear procedures on what to do when a safeguarding concern arises, so that everyone knows how to respond appropriately.

If you want to report a suspicion, concern or allegation of abuse contact our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the Diocese, Ms Cleo Yates-087 3553024 Email: c.yates@killaoediocese.ie

The DLP will discuss the process of reporting with you.

If you are unsure about whether the concern meets the threshold for reporting it is important to talk it through with the DLP. The DLP will be able to inform you if the concern reaches the threshold for reporting.

Details of personnel to contact if you are concerned about the welfare and safety of children

DIOCESE OF KILLALOE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON	Cleo Yates	087 3553024 c.yates@killaloediocese.ie
TUSLA: THE CHILD AND FAMILY AGENCY	Clare	065-6863970
	Limerick	061-483091
	North Tipperary & Limerick South & East	067-46660
	Offlay	057 9570700
AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA	Garda HQ	01-666 0000
	Ennis	065-684 8100
	Nenagh	067-50450
	Henry Street, Limerick	061-212400
GARDAÍ NATIONAL PROTECTIVE SERVICES BUREAU	Dublin	01-666 3430 01-6663435

Section 3
Safeguarding Requirements

Priests ministering in the diocese

Within the Dioceses Priests work across a variety of settings therefore it is necessary to identify the requirements for Priests in various contexts.

Current Priests and Deacons of the diocese

- Valid celebret & sign sacristy register.
- **Vetting approval (renew every 3 years).**
- Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years).

Retired Priests of the Diocese

Retired Priests who <u>minister</u> in the Diocese

- Valid celebret & sign sacristy register.
- **Vetting approval (renew every 3 years).**
- Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years).

Active or Retired Priests from outside the Diocese

Active or retired Priests from outside the Diocese who wish to minister

- Priest must write to the archbishop outlining request to minister.
- Priest must complete *Declaration of Good Standing Form*.
- His Church Authority must complete the *Confirmation of Good Standing Form*.
- Bishop of Killaloe to confirm approval by letter.
- **Vetting approval (renew every 3 years).**
- Attend Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years).
- Valid celebret & sign sacristy register.
- Access to Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook.

Fully retired Priests from outside the Diocese who occasionally concelebrate at Masses

- His Church Authority to complete the *Confirmation of Good Standing Form*.
- Valid celebret.

Once off ministries (weddings, funerals, baptisms, once-off Mass)

- Valid celebret or current letter of good standing.
- Sign sacristy register.

Missions, Novenas, Retreats (Clergy and Laity)

- Valid celebret (Clergy) and sign sacristy register.
- Leader must complete *Declaration of Good Standing Form*.
- Their Church Authority must complete the *Confirmation of Good Standing Form*.

Procedures For Diocesan Clergy who have ministry with children in an external organisation/church body

- Diocesan Clergy who are ministering long-term in an external organisation/Church Body must adhere to the safeguarding procedures of that organisation/Church Body.

Parish Safeguarding Representatives

The Priest in the parish has overall responsibility for ensuring that effective safeguarding procedures are in place.

The role of the Parish Safeguarding Representative is to support the Priest in the parish with this work.

All Parish Reps must:

- Ensure that correct safeguarding information is displayed in the churches / parish buildings.
- Be informed about safeguarding practice in the parish, for example, in sacristy with altar servers, junior choir groups, children liturgy groups, youth ministry groups.
- Have access to where the parish safeguarding records are stored.
- Conduct an annual check of these records.
- Attend 3 meetings a year with the Priest of the Parish.

Parish Safeguarding Representatives, Sacristans, Group Leaders and all persons who supervise under 18s

- Complete recruitment and agreement form for adults supervising children
- **Vetting approval (renew every 3 years)**
- Attend Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)
- Have access to Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook

Eucharistic Ministers and Parish Visitation Teams who visit nursing homes / homes of non-family members

- **Vetting approval (renew every 3 years)**

- Attend adults at-risk training programme (renew every 3 years)
- Have access to Adult Safeguarding Policy

Parish groups with under 18s in attendance must ensure the following:

Supervision

- Abide by supervision ratios detailed in this handbook
- Always have a minimum of 2 adults supervising children

Parental consent

- Parents/guardians to complete joint consent form
- Leaders to review any special requirements for children
- Leaders to abide by media permissions selected by parents in the consent form

Safeguarding procedures for leaders of the activity

- Complete recruitment and agreement form for adults supervising children

- **Vetting approval (renew every 3 years)**

- Attend Safeguarding Training (renew every 3 years)
- Have access to Diocesan Safeguarding Handbook
- Abide by Code of Conduct for Adults Working with Children and Young People
- Provide annual information session for parents/guardians & children
- Maintain attendance registers
- Review a risk assessment for the group annually with the Safeguarding Parish Rep and Priest in the parish.

Additional information for Altar Servers

If the Mass is live streamed ensure that you have webcam consent box ticked from parents in the joint consent form.

Additional information for Choirs (full guidance on website).

Section 4

Use of Church property that involve children

Church property is primarily for use for Church sponsored activities and as such has insurance to cover the property and the activities organised by the Diocese. Forms can be found on website

www.killaloediocese.ie/safeguarding/safeguarding-forms-policies

Such activities include:

- Parish related events that are under the direction and control of the Priest of the Parish. In these situations, the responsibility for safeguarding rests with the parish.
- School activities (i.e. sacramental preparations). In these situations, it is advisable that the school and the parish agree who is responsible for safeguarding.

Parish Groups with under 18s using Church Property

It is the responsibility of the group to get approval for the activity from the Priest of the Parish. The group must also inform the Parish Safeguarding Representatives about the activity. The group is obliged to follow diocesan safeguarding procedures and complete a risk assessment annually.

External Groups with under 18s using Church Property

It is a requirement for all independent groups working with children to complete *The Use of Church Property Form*. Form is on the diocesan website.

The group is responsible for ensuring that they comply with all applicable child safeguarding protection legislation and guidelines. The group should have their own child safeguarding policy and procedures. The group is also responsible for liaising with Tusla to ensure that the policy and procedures meet the statutory requirements. The Diocese/Parish should at no stage assist any outside group in developing a child safeguarding policy.

The group must have appropriate insurance for the activity they are running.

The Parish should have confirmation in writing from the group that they have a child safeguarding policy in place. It is not the role of the Parish to check or validate the adequacy of the policy; that is the responsibility of Tusla.

Private Function

Use of property for private functions (birthday parties for example) is not advised as such functions cannot be covered by parish liability insurance or parish safeguarding protocols.

This Handbook was produced by the Safeguarding Offices of the Archdiocese of Cashel & Emly and the Dioceses of Cloyne, Kerry and Killaloe.
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