



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR  
**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**  
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

**Second Review of Child Safeguarding Practice**  
**in the Diocese of Killaloe**  
**undertaken by**

**The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the**  
**Catholic Church in Ireland (National Board)**

**Date of Review Report: March 2020**

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## Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (National Board) was established in 2006 to provide advice, services and assistance in furtherance of the development of the safeguarding of children within the Roman Catholic Church on the Island of Ireland; to monitor compliance with legislation, policy and best practice; and to report on these activities as is comprehensively set out in the Memorandum of Association of the Company.

Church authorities who have entered into an agreement with the National Board through signing a Memorandum of Understanding have committed to following *Safeguarding Children - Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.

In order to assess compliance with the 2016 Standards, the Bishop of Killaloe invited the National Board to undertake a review of child safeguarding practice in 2020. The diocese was previously reviewed in 2014 under the *Safeguarding Children - Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2008*. The report of the first Review can be found on the Killaloe Diocese website [www.killaloe-diocese.ie](http://www.killaloe-diocese.ie) and on the National Board's website [www.safeguarding.ie/publications](http://www.safeguarding.ie/publications)

The recommendations from this first Review were that:

- The Safeguarding Committee amends the revised diocesan safeguarding document to include how those who present a risk to children are managed.
- The Director of Safeguarding in her role as designated liaison person (DLP) must ensure that all risk management plans are confirmed in writing and shared with the respondent priest.
- The Safeguarding Committee ensures that the whistle blowing statement is finalised and inserted into the diocesan policy and procedures document.
- The Safeguarding Committee ensure that guidelines on the personal/intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate and inappropriate touch, are included in the revised policy and procedure document.

All of the above recommendations were implemented by the diocese by early 2015.

The purpose of this second round of Reviews is to assess child safeguarding practice against the Catholic Church in Ireland's current standards as detailed in *Safeguarding Children - Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. The Review seeks a level and quality of evidence to provide:

- Public confidence that the Church body is safe for children.
- Affirmation to child safeguarding personnel that they are doing the right things well.
- Confirmation to the Church authority that what they want to be done is in fact being done.
- Independent verification of Self-Audit – or correction and/or improvement of Self-Audit.
- Opportunities for learning.

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## **Introduction**

The Diocese of Killaloe is in the ecclesiastical province of Cashel and Emly. The diocese covers an area of approximately 4,500 square kilometres, comprising parts of counties Clare, Tipperary, Offaly, Limerick and Laois. The diocese has approximately 120,000 Catholic residents across 58 parishes. Bishop Fintan Monahan, the current bishop, was installed as Bishop of Killaloe on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The diocese has ninety five (95) priests, including the current bishop and the Bishop Emeritus, W. Walsh. Of the total, eighty three (83) are incardinated priests of Killaloe Diocese, while twenty one (21) of the priests are retired. Four priests (4) are living and working outside the diocese, while five (5) priests in ministry are from outside the diocese. Two priests (2) are out of ministry.

The Diocese of Killaloe has seven congregations of Religious Sisters based within the diocese, with a total of approximately thirty one (31) members. (The numbers for one congregation are not included here as their data was only available on a national basis).

There are four male Religious Orders, with a total of twenty two (22) members. Of the male religious, twelve (12) are non-ordained and ten (10) are ordained priests. The ten ordained religious belong to two of the male Religious Orders. Neither of these orders has a diocesan role, they do not administer parishes and they do not provide cover for diocesan priests during holiday periods. They do not celebrate sacraments of any kind, other than saying Mass within their houses. On occasion, they may attend a Church function when they would be required to produce a valid *celebret*; but their *celebrets* are authorised by their own religious superiors. These priests are not under the direction of the bishop, but are under the direct control of their superior. The priests require faculties from the bishop to hear confession, and these are requested by the religious superior who provides a letter to the bishop stating that a named priest is of good standing.

The period covered by this Review is from May 2014 to January 2020, and so it has considered all child protection cases reported to the diocese during this time-period, as well as cases reported earlier and still being managed at the time of the Review.

Child safeguarding practice is assessed against the revised Church's national standards of 2016.

## **Process of Review**

The diocese placed a notice in all parish newsletters and on its website informing people of the forthcoming Review, while also inviting anyone with views on child safeguarding practice that they wished to share to come forward.

The on-site fieldwork was carried out from 8.1.20 to 10.1.20; and the following were either met or spoken to by telephone by the reviewers during this time, or in the days following:

- The Church authority, Bishop Fintan Monahan.
- The Director of Safeguarding/Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
- The Bishop's Secretary.
- The assistant DLP.
- The Safeguarding Committee.

- A priest advisor.
- The Interagency Group.
- Leaders of the Lourdes Diocesan Pilgrimage group.
- Representatives of youth ministry.
- The Diocesan Adviser for Schools, who has a safeguarding role.
- Three parish visits where children/ parents and parish volunteers were met.
- A youth club within one of the parishes.
- Diocesan trainers.
- Attendees at a youth leadership programme.
- The Director of Youth Ministry.

As part of the Review process, case management records were examined and any clarifications required were provided by the Director of Safeguarding. In addition, all relevant child safeguarding material was reviewed, in either soft or hard copy.

There was further contact with the Director of Safeguarding and the Bishop's Secretary after the fieldwork phase of the Review to check information.

The reviewers would like to express their sincere thanks to Bishop Monahan, his safeguarding staff and volunteers and the priests and lay faithful of the Killaloe Diocese for the welcome, hospitality and assistance provided during the fieldwork for this Review.

## **Standards**

Each standard contains a list of indicators, by compliance with which the standard is met. To support implementation of the Standards, the National Board has produced detailed Guidance which is accessible on its website (<https://www.safeguarding.ie/guidance>). Killaloe Diocese has adopted in full the guidance of the National Board.

This Review concentrates on practice through evaluating written records, interviews with Church personnel, communication with young people; information from complainants; information from respondents; and discussions with external statutory personnel.

An assessment of practice under each standard is set out below.

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## **Standard 1**

### **Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments**

*Church bodies provide an environment for children that are welcoming, nurturing and safe. They provide access to good role models whom the children can trust, who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.*

Clergy, women and men who are recruited to minister with children in the Diocese of Killaloe are assessed to ensure, as far as possible that they do not present a risk to children; and each parish has a checklist of safeguarding matters to be considered when recruiting volunteers. Recruitment includes Garda vetting, which is managed centrally. The database of priest, staff and volunteer recruitment that is held by the Director of Safeguarding contains

information on Garda vetting and of child safeguarding training; and parish volunteer recruitment files held securely in paper format in the relevant parishes. The reviewers saw evidence of this during visits to parishes. The parishes are in the process of transferring their volunteers' Garda vetting files to the diocesan offices to be held centrally.

In 2017, which was the first full year of the revised system of Garda vetting, the diocese processed 430 applications: 426 volunteers and 4 clergy.

In 2018, a total of 1,705 applications were processed, 1,675 volunteers and 30 clergy.  
In 2019, 1,236 applications were processed, 1,190 volunteers and 46 clergy.

The groups vetted include priests; diocesan staff; volunteers; diocesan school staff not registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland; special needs assistants; and school caretakers.

In addition, all diocesan-linked organisations involved with children /young people, such as the Meitheal Youth Leadership Programme, visits to Taizé in France, the Pope John Paul II Awards, and the Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage, are required by the diocese to have their leaders and volunteers Garda vetted.

The management of risks to children and young people is also supported by having codes of behaviour in place for staff and volunteers, and for children and young people. The reviewers examined these codes in hard copy; and they are also accessible on the diocesan website. Some of the groups, such as the faith-based youth ministry group in one of the parishes, also had a single code of behaviour for both young persons and adult leaders, which is drafted by the young people and leaders jointly at the start of each programme.

Youth ministry is well established in the Killaloe Diocese, and a noteworthy development is the production of *Light the Way*, a diocesan youth ministry resource book. This book contains for example a code of behaviour for residential events and activities; a code of behaviour for youth ministry leaders; and a parental consent form which confirms that the parent/guardian has read the code of behaviour and agrees with it. Young people who were involved in a parish faith-based youth ministry group told the reviewers of their engagement in drafting the code of behaviour at the beginning of their programme that was a key part of creating a safe environment for them.

Youth ministry within the diocese has a committed group of clerics and lay persons in leadership roles; and the safeguarding requirements of the Meitheal Youth Leadership Programme are considered by the reviewers to be a good example of what should be in place. The reviewers met a number of young people attending a youth club; a faith-based youth ministry group; and altar servers and their parents; and it was evident that the young people felt engaged with the diocese, and spoke of feeling safe in parish and diocesan-led activities.

The reviewers spoke with youth ministry leaders, with facilitators of sacramental preparation groups, and with those coordinating altar servers, and all demonstrated their strong commitment to safeguarding children, both in how they plan their activities and in how they safeguard young participants in their interactions with the adults involved.

When visiting parishes, the reviewers had sight of signing-in sheets for adults and children; and in the churches visited there was evidence of signing-in by altar servers and clergy. The reviewers observed *celebret* notices in every sacristy visited. The same safeguarding processes were seen to apply for those involved in *pray and play* for younger children, and in family Masses.

The reviewers were pleased to see physical safeguards in place in some parishes. For example, there was a separate changing area for altar servers in one parish, and separate toilet areas for children attending the *pray and play group*, which took place in a dedicated area of the church. In addition, consideration had been given to the deployment of the leaders, in terms of their gender and to the optimum adult to child supervision ratios.

The preparation of young helpers by the Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage leaders is well planned and has their safety as a priority; and there is a review after every pilgrimage to identify the effectiveness of that plan. The Director of Safeguarding provides child safeguarding briefings to youth helpers and other staff before the pilgrimage, which parents/guardians also attend.

In all youth ministry and Church-related activities, application forms have to be signed by parents/guardians and, in some cases by the young person as well, and these were examined by the reviewers. The purpose of these forms is to ensure that parents/guardians have provided their written consent for their daughter/son to participate in the Church activity, having read what is entailed. Where the young person is also required to sign, this is an acknowledgement of their maturity and ability to do so.

Regarding children with specific needs, the Killaloe Diocesan website contains the Personal and Intimate Care Policy 2015. This is one of the diocesan policies that may need to be reviewed in the context of GDPR and *Children First* compliance. While the reviewers did not have the opportunity of engaging with any children who have specific needs during fieldwork, they are aware of the involvement of children with disabilities on pilgrimages, at times in leadership roles.

The Diocese of Killaloe has a policy and procedure in relation to the use by external organisations of Church property, and the reviewers examined numbers of the diocesan Form 10 on renting/leasing parish hall or facilities. The reviewers saw copies of the public indemnity insurance policies and the application forms confirming compliance with *Children First* that had been provided by external organisations. In one parish however, it was noted that not all required forms were signed by a member of the external group. To ensure full compliance, this issue should be addressed during the annual parish self-audit.

A Whistleblowing Policy is in place since 2015, but has not been used to date. A Complaints Procedure is in place since 2014, and this was updated in October 2019. Both documents are available in hard copy and on the diocesan website.

A complaint to the National Office regarding a safeguarding concern that was not an allegation of abuse was processed with the consent and cooperation of the bishop in parallel to this Review, in line with Standard 1.7. This concern involved the management of a conflict situation that developed during a day-trip by a youth group to an event outside the diocese, and the complainants were the parents of one of the young people who participated in the event. The written report of the investigation of this complaint has been sent to the Bishop of Killaloe with findings about how matters could have been better managed by him, and with

recommendations about how future difficulties of a similar nature can be obviated. The learning which the diocese should take from this complaint is to ensure that the welfare of children is always prioritised.

The diocese provided two examples of how they conduct hazard assessment. The first was undertaken by the Director of Safeguarding in a parish, where controls were put in place to regulate the use of toilet facilities accessed by both adults and children. The second related to preparatory planning to minimise the hazards young people may encounter while on pilgrimage to Lourdes and Taizé.

The reviewers note that the Social Media Policy was updated in July 2019, which addresses both the positive potential and the possible risks of using social media. It has been developed for use by everyone within the diocese, including priests, volunteers, and young people attending diocesan activities; and it is available on the diocesan website and in hard copy.

The Diocesan Secretary maintains a file on all diocesan priests who are ministering outside the diocese. If a concern arises regarding any of these priests, this is immediately shared with the bishop. These priests are police-vetted for the areas in which they work. The diocesan priests who work outside Ireland remain incardinated into the Killaloe Diocese, while their day-to-day management and supervision is the responsibility of the Church bodies abroad in which they minister. However, Bishop Monahan may need to clarify for priests ministering outside the diocese the child safeguarding policy and procedures they are expected to follow, as required by Indicator 1.10 – *The Church authority has responsibility for ensuring that all clerics/religious, who are members of the Church body and are ministering with children in an external organisation/Church body agree to follow effective safeguarding practice.*

The Diocesan Secretary confirmed the detailed procedures that are followed in relation to priests who come into Killaloe Diocese from elsewhere, whether they apply for faculties or not. This includes priests who are on holiday; priests who may want to officiate at a wedding; and priests who are retiring to the Killaloe Diocese administrative area. A priest coming into the diocese who wishes to obtain faculties to minister as a priest there, has to present a current *celebret*, or ensure that Killaloe Diocese receives a letter from the relevant Church authority indicating that he is in good standing.

The numbers of priests coming into the Killaloe Diocese who are known to the diocesan secretary include:

- Two (2) priests who habitually minister in Killaloe.
- Two (2) priests who have retired to the diocese.
- Two (2) priests from outside dioceses who now reside in the diocese and are now in fixed supply appointments.
- Ten (10) ordained religious – see details in the introduction of this report.
- Five (5) priests in full time appointments who have come from dioceses outside of Ireland.
- One priest member of an Irish religious order who is in a full time position in the diocese.
- Wedding solemnisers – In the period 2014 to 2019, on fifty seven (57) occasions, priests from outside the diocese have been given permission to officiate at weddings in Killaloe Diocese. Before solemnisers are accepted they have to produce a letter of good standing from their bishop or religious superior.



The Safeguarding Committee is a driving force within the diocese for maintaining child safeguarding as a priority. This committee has adopted and integrated National Board guidance; and it has ensured that child-friendly information leaflets and posters have been produced and made available.

The reviewers observed that some parishes hold safeguarding meetings involving, at a minimum, the parish clergy and the parish safeguarding representative/s. This is a forum in which child safeguarding at the parish level is coordinated. It would be worthwhile to consider whether such a local group could be replicated across all parishes in the diocese, to meet perhaps on a quarterly basis.

Bishop Monahan participates fully in all strategic safeguarding meetings, including two key operational child safeguarding meetings that are held within the diocese, the safeguarding management meeting and the interagency panel. It was evident that Bishop Monahan has good support from his very competent Director of Safeguarding, from his Safeguarding Committee and from his Diocesan Chancellor and Diocesan Secretary.

The reviewers recommend that all diocesan child safeguarding policies should be checked to ensure they are in conformity with GDPR and *Children First*.

The requirements of Standard 1 are met.

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## **Standard 2**

### **Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations**

*Church Bodies have clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. They also enable the Church to meet all national and international legal and practice requirements and guidance.*

Since the 2014 Review, Killaloe Diocese has received eleven (11) child abuse allegations. The alleged abuses reported to have happened prior to 2014, relate to seven (7) priests who were incardinated in the diocese at the time. There were no reports of abuse taking place between 2014 and the fieldwork in January 2020. Of the allegations reported, the majority were in respect of deceased priests, as represented in Table 1 here:

**Table 1 –Allegations reported to the Diocese of Killaloe since 2014.**

| Cleric                                      | Current status         | Number of allegations | Gardai notified                                    | Tusla notified                                     | The National Board notified                        | Appropriate and timely canonical action taken      |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                           | Deceased               | 5                     | Yes – within one month in all cases                | Yes – within one month in all cases                | Yes – within one month in all cases                | N/A                                                |
| 2                                           | Living out of ministry | 1                     | Yes - within two days                              | Yes - within two days                              | Yes - within two days                              | Precept in place. Further canonical action on hold |
| 3                                           | Deceased               | 1                     | Yes - within one month                             | Yes - within one month                             | Yes - within one month                             | N/A                                                |
| 4                                           | Deceased.              | 1                     | Yes - notified by diocese dealing with complainant | Yes - notified by diocese dealing with complainant | Yes - notified by diocese dealing with complainant | N/A                                                |
| 5                                           | Deceased               | 1                     | Yes - within one month                             | No - (RIP)                                         | Yes - within one month                             | N/A                                                |
| 6                                           | Laicised               | 1                     | Yes - within two days                              | Yes - within two days                              | Yes - within two days                              | N/A                                                |
| 7                                           | Deceased               | 1                     | No - (RIP)                                         | Yes - within one month                             | Yes - within one month                             | N/A                                                |
| <b>Total number of allegations received</b> |                        | <b>11</b>             |                                                    |                                                    |                                                    |                                                    |

All notifications required of the diocese since 2014 were made in a full and timely fashion.

Bishop Monahan, the Chancellor, the Diocesan Secretary, the Director of Safeguarding, and the assistant DLP are members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Management Committee. This committee meet on average every six weeks, with its primary function being to assist the bishop in making decisions in respect of allegations received. To date, the discussions at and the decisions of this meeting have not been recorded, but they will be from the beginning of 2020. Formal discussions of case management issues should be accurately recorded.

There is also an interagency panel in place which is composed of a Tusla principal social worker, a member of An Garda Síochána and Bishop Monahan, as well as the other diocesan safeguarding team members. Cases are discussed at this panel, and information is shared to help shape views on safeguarding children from both the civil and criminal perspectives. This meeting takes place as and when needed. There was evidence on the case management files of relevant discussions at the interagency panel.

The diocese has a Confidentiality Policy in place since 2014 to assist persons to comply with data protection requirements when managing personal information. The reviewers suggest that this policy be reviewed to ensure compliance with GDPR and *Children First 2017*.

In relation to how the Diocese of Killaloe is implementing Standard 2, the reviewers established that:

- All allegations were reported to the appropriate statutory bodies; and all were notified without undue delay.
- Each notification is contained in case management files which are comprehensive, structured, and included all relevant material.

The reviewers are satisfied with the diocesan approach to the reporting and initial management of allegations, which is applied in a consistent and safe manner.

The DLP is competent and alert to risks, and this is demonstrated in her records.

The reviewers are of the opinion that Killaloe Diocese meets Standard 2.

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### **Standard 3**

#### **Care and Support for the Complainant**

*Complainants who have suffered abuse as children receive a compassionate response when they disclose their abuse. They, and their families, are offered appropriate support, advice and pastoral care.*

The diocese posted a notice on their website and in newsletters advising that the National Board were undertaking a Review of child safeguarding practice. Despite the invitation contained in the notice, no complainants of abuse came forward to share their views of how their case had been managed by the diocese. Therefore, information about how complainants were engaged with by the diocese was obtained through discussions with the bishop, the Director of Safeguarding, and through reading the case management files. The files evidenced examples of where the current bishop and his immediate predecessor met complainants. In addition, timely initial meetings or contact also took place between complainants and the Director of Safeguarding, or the assistant DLP.

The diocese has a male lay support person available for complainants. One complainant who received an invitation from the diocese through *Towards Healing* made contact with the DLP at the time and shared their story and the on-going contact and support is now in place.

The reviewers have asked the bishop to consider whether it would be beneficial to also have a female support person in order to provide any future complainants with a choice.

At the time of initial contact, complainants and/or their legal representative were given the contact details for *Towards Healing* as the normal response from the diocese, and evidence of this practice was found in all the case management files reviewed.

Two complainants have been receiving long-term support from the diocese over a number of years. In both cases, there was evidence on file of the diocese providing pastoral and financial support, particularly in meeting the costs of private counselling sessions. One of these complainants was met by the bishop to discuss continued support; and advice in this case was provided to the bishop from the National Board's Case Management Committee (NCMC).

It is clear from the case management files that a number of complainants did not wish to engage directly with the diocese or to maintain any contact after making their initial complaint. The DLP did offer to follow up personally with all complainants, and offers of referral to *Towards Healing* were made to them all.

Overall, the diocesan response to complainants reflects a respect for the people coming forward and recognition that they each have individual needs requiring a range of responses.

Because of the confidential nature of counselling, it is very difficult to give an absolute figure for those who actually received counselling, especially through *Towards Healing*.

In the opinion of the reviewers, Standard 3 is met.

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## **Standard 4**

### **Care and Management of the Respondent**

*The Church Authority has in place a fair process for investigating and managing child safeguarding concerns. When the threshold for reporting has been reached, a system of support and monitoring for respondents is provided.*

There are currently two priests in Killaloe Diocese who are out of ministry and who require care and management; they are subject to canonical precepts and management plans. The Director of Safeguarding or the assistant DLP offer regular meetings to these two priests, but they cannot be compelled to make themselves available for such meetings, and as a result, the monitoring of clergy out of ministry remains a challenge for the bishop. The canonical precepts in place in relation to both men are due for review in the near future.

The case management files provide evidence that respondent priests were notified by the diocese of allegations made against them, following consultation with the statutory authorities (where and when appropriate). The reviewers evidenced that the records of all meetings, internal or external, related to respondent priests are copied to the relevant case management file (excepting the discussions at the safeguarding management meeting, as described earlier).

Two questionnaires were received from respondent priests who are out of ministry since before the previous Review; one commented that he had “no voice” during the investigation process; the other sees himself as ‘an outsider’. Neither man felt he had been justly treated. Both have the support of priest advisors. There are a number of trained priest advisors available within the diocese. One of the priest advisors was interviewed has received role-specific training, but he had not been linked with an accused priest to date.

An examination of the case management files indicated that a number of other diocesan personnel provided pastoral support to respondent priests, including the bishop, the Director of Safeguarding, and the assistant DLP. In all the cases reviewed, their contact with respondents was written up on file.

Records indicate that initial risk assessments were conducted by the Director of Safeguarding; while clinical risk assessments were commissioned and undertaken by an external expert in the field. These assessments have enabled the Director of Safeguarding to develop management plans, which were available on the file and demonstrated the oversight by the diocese.

No priests were returned to ministry during this Review period; and the majority of allegations received were in respect of deceased priests.

The reviewers note that the bishop is considering the viability of having the monitoring of clerics out of ministry established as a separate function/role, rather than being undertaken by the Director of Safeguarding or assistant DLP.

The Bishop of Killaloe and the key diocesan safeguarding personnel provide a clear and consistent system of managing respondents. The strong emphasis on safeguarding children remains in place, and the defined management plans and monitoring visits reflect this.

The reviewers are of the view that Standard 4 is met.

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## **Standard 5**

### **Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe**

*Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard and protect children.*

At the time of the Review, the Diocese of Killaloe has two trainers; a third trainer retired prior to this Review starting. They are the Director of Safeguarding and the diocesan schools' advisor, and they report to the Safeguarding Committee. This committee also has responsibility for developing a three-year safeguarding plan, with the associated training plan and communication plan.

The trainers attend the Safeguarding Committee meetings. In addition to training, the Diocesan Schools Advisor and the Director of Safeguarding undertake parish support visits during which they monitor child safeguarding practice.

The reviewers were given access to the diocesan training files for the years 2016 to 2019; and to the Safeguarding Committee annual reports for the years 2017 to 2019. In each of these years a diocesan Training Plan was in place. The primary focus in these annual plans was to ensure that parish volunteers attended the two-hour child safeguarding information sessions, and that the parish safeguarding representatives were clear as to their safeguarding responsibilities.

Priests are required to do the full day child safeguarding training; and subsequently, the two-hour refresher training. A record of this training is logged within the diocesan safeguarding office. The reviewers had access to the database held by the Director of Safeguarding and to the training folders which together provided evidence of these training targets being met.

There is a child safeguarding briefing update given by the Director of Safeguarding at the twice yearly priests' gathering with the bishop.

To complement the Church child safeguarding training, the diocese intends in 2020 to trial the use of the Tusla's *Children First* e-learning module with a number of priests, with a possible full roll-out in the future. It should be noted that this e-learning cannot replace the Church-specific training, which must be completed to meet the requirement of Standard 5.

The following personnel in child safeguarding roles received role-specific training in 2019:

- The diocesan clergy.
- Local parish safeguarding representatives.
- Safeguarding Committee members.
- Designated liaison persons (DLP).
- Youth ministry leaders.
- Lourdes and Taizé Pilgrimage leaders and helpers.

This training was delivered by either National Board or diocesan trainers. The reviewers were also given access to attendance sheets and evaluation forms for a sample of the training delivered. The evaluations given by participants were generally positive.

On one of the parish visits there was concern that not all of the volunteers involved in a youth activity had attended such a two-hour child safeguarding briefing; so the diocese needs to ensure that all relevant parish volunteers have attended this briefing.

The current diocesan Training Plan is for 2020, and it sets out targets for delivery of training, either by the diocesan trainers or the National Board trainers. It identifies the target groups and locations for the training. If external training is required, based on information from the annual training needs analysis of volunteers and clerics, this is sourced by the diocese; and there was evidence of external presenters being engaged by the diocese in 2019. When the reviewers met with the two trainers, it was clear that they remain committed to continuing in this work. The bishop may wish to prioritise the replacement of the third trainer to ensure the commitment to training can be maintained.

The 2020 Training Plan provides for a mix of generic and role-specific child safeguarding training, and will focus on:

- Full day training for newly appointed parish safeguarding representatives.
- Three hours refresher training for those who received full day training up to 3 years ago, but no training in the last three years.
- Information sessions in parish clusters.
- Clergy annual refresher briefing.
- Input to Lourdes pilgrimage preparation.
- Input to Taizé pilgrimage preparation.
- Youth ministry training.
- Pope John Paul II awards.

National Board training will also be available as follows:

- Annual update to trainers/full day.
- Lay apostolates /full day.
- Support people /full day.
- Theology and safeguarding /full day.

Safeguarding personnel with specific roles, such as the Director of Safeguarding and assistant DLP, access their role-specific training from the National Board. The reviewers inspected the training files to establish that all safeguarding personnel receive updated general training, irrespective of role; and this was also clarified in meetings with all individuals and groups during the fieldwork. The Director of Safeguarding has received role specific-training from the National Board in respect of both the *Train the Trainer* programme and preliminary (canonical) investigation methods. The reviewers are satisfied that there is a fundamental knowledge of child safeguarding requirements amongst the clergy, volunteers and those responsible for youth ministry and pilgrimages across the Diocese of Killaloe.

The Director of Safeguarding also administers the annual safeguarding parish self-audit across the diocese. This self-audit gathers and collates the records of various training-related activities. The collated information informs the training needs analysis which is then signed off by the Safeguarding Committee and integrated into the diocesan training plan for safeguarding children. The reviewers had sight of the written training needs analysis and of the 2020 Training Plan, and are satisfied that the emphasis is on ensuring that all personnel, clergy, volunteers and those in youth ministry have the child safeguarding information that they need to responsibly carry out their designated tasks. There is also evidence that developments in legislation and in National Board Guidance are factored into the training needs analysis and training plan.

Youth ministry has compulsory training sessions for new youth leaders, including an Introduction to Youth Ministry; Child Safeguarding; an Introduction to the Enneagram; and Planning Liturgy, Blessing and Commissioning.

Standard 5 is met in full

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## Standard 6

### Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

*Church Bodies appropriately communicate the Church's child safeguarding message*

Killaloe Diocese has a Safeguarding Strategy and plan for the period 2020 to 2022. The diocese also has linked Communication and Training Plans in place. The reviewers are satisfied that the Communications Plan for 2020 to 2022 sets out specific communication objectives for: the lay faithful; the local safeguarding representatives; diocesan priests; and youth ministry.

An example of communication in practice, which the reviewers noted were parish newsletters which have information on child safeguarding as a standing item; with the name/s and contact details of the local parish safeguarding representative/s. The reviewers were advised that priests are kept informed by the Safeguarding Committee of events, as well as on any changes in policy, so that they can then communicate this new information through their parish newsletters. The hard copies of the diocesan safeguarding newsletters examined by the reviewers were deemed to be of a good quality, attractive and child-friendly; while the information inserted into parish newsletters was relevant and up to date.

The Killaloe diocesan website has a dedicated, comprehensive and accessible safeguarding section at [www.killaloediocese.ie/safeguarding/](http://www.killaloediocese.ie/safeguarding/). This section also includes the child safeguarding statement of the diocese required for Children First Act compliance.

As noted previously in this report, the diocese uses posters and leaflets to ensure that the safeguarding message is accessible to all. The posters and leaflets are in child-friendly and age-appropriate formats, and these were evidenced during the parish visits. After discussion with the reviewers, the bishop committed to also using Irish and Polish language versions of the safeguarding information.

The diocese and the bishop also use social media and the local radio station as other means of communicating the child safeguarding message to as wide a community as possible. The reviewers would advise Bishop Monahan to ensure that appropriate consent is in place for use of children's photographs on all diocesan media platforms.

The month of May each year is dedicated to child safeguarding in the Diocese of Killaloe, which the reviewers commend. The focus on child safeguarding is maintained by the priests talking about it at every Sunday Mass during the month, and by child safeguarding being highlighted in parish newsletters. In 2019, a child safeguarding conference was held in the diocese, which was open to parishioners, school staff and others, at which speakers addressed child trafficking in Ireland, and the online solicitation of minors, among other topics.

A regional child safeguarding meeting has been established in the Metropolitan Area of Cashel and Emly, which is attended by DLPs or their nominees, a commendable development. The Director of Safeguarding represents the Killaloe Diocese at these meetings. Communicating the child safeguarding message regionally is one focus of the work of this grouping.



Communication is also guided within the diocese by some key policy and procedure documents which include:

- Communications Policy 2014
- Social Media Policy, 2019 (including guidance for contacting and communicating with young people)
- Mobile Phone, Photography and I.T. Policy and Procedures, 2014.

As noted already in this report the diocese should ensure that the above policies and procedures are GDPR and *Children First* compliant.

A system is in place which encourages communication throughout the diocese, supported by the framework of the communication plan; and the reviewers are satisfied that the Diocese of Killaloe meets all the requirements of Standard 6.

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## **Standard 7**

### **Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards**

*The Church Body develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This action plan is reviewed annually. The Church body only has responsibility to monitor, evaluate and report on compliance with the indicators under each standard that apply to it, depending on its ministry.*

Bishop Monahan has notified the National Board of the completion of the parish self-audit exercise and of the DLP audit exercise each year. The Director of Safeguarding's annual reports to the bishop for 2016 to 2018 were read by the reviewers. The reviewers also sampled parish self-audit returns, which were of a high quality. A 'traffic-light' system is used to track the returns of the audit questionnaires; and the visiting undertaken by the diocesan advisor for schools generates a momentum for the timely completion and submission of these.

The 2019 parish self-audit was fully completed in early January 2020, at the time the fieldwork was underway for this Review. This process has been strengthened since 2019 by a parish-visiting programme undertaken by the diocesan advisor to schools, which is used as an indicative audit prior to the full parish self-audit. It is a supportive process and assists the parishes to prepare for the self-audit and to address any gaps they may have in implementing the child safeguarding policy and procedures, as well as other key issues, such as the vetting and training of volunteers. The Director of Safeguarding also carries out parish visits as and when needed.

There is a feedback letter sent back to the priests in the parishes following the analysis of the self-audit returns. As an example, the feedback letter from the Director of Safeguarding, following the 2017 self-audit gave clarification on the following issues which had been raised during the audit:

- Safe recruitment and codes of behaviour for adults.
- Renting or leasing of parish halls.
- Safeguarding to be on the agenda for every parish council meeting.
- Training dates.
- Responding to concerns.
- Signing-in of visiting clergy.
- On line training.
- School activities in parish.
- Vetting.
- Vulnerable adult policy/definitions.

The information, comments and questions fed back through the parish self-audits and safeguarding training are used to update the structure of the audit form and the audit process followed.

In 2019, youth ministry with the assistance of the Director of Safeguarding developed a self-audit form specifically for use within their ministry, and this initiative is commended.

Safeguarding children activities and initiatives are sufficiently funded within the Diocese of Killaloe, and lack of adequate funding has never been a reason for something being left undone or a requirement not being met.

It is the opinion of the reviewers that Standard 7 is met.

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## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the reviewers are of the view that there is supportive evidence that all seven standards are met. During the review Bishop Monahan demonstrated his commitment to child safeguarding and his willingness to listen, reflect and learn. We commend his openness and energy for youth ministry and for ensuring that safeguards are in place, reviewed and amended when mistakes are made. It is evident that Bishop Monahan has ensured that the Diocese of Killaloe has systems and procedures in place which promote the safety of children and young people; and the personnel and volunteers involved who were met or spoken to over the telephone, are committed to the task.

Of significance is the fact that the young people and their parents who were consulted during this review were aware of the importance that the diocese has placed on safeguarding children and their active participation in diocesan-led activities was direct evidence of this.

Finally, the reviewers would wish to note that without clear leadership and the appropriate structures in place full compliance with the standards could not be maintained.

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