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# **Child Safeguarding Statement**

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from "A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024". The policy of the Catholic Church in Ireland is based on standards of practice accompanied by criteria that assist in reaching these standards and which can be used in assessing and managing risk.

12/07/2024

## **Prelature of Opus Dei (North-West Europe) in Ireland**

# **CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

July 2024

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*Name and contact details of the service provider:*

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## **STATEMENT**

The Gospel teaches the importance of ensuring that the Catholic Church community is a warm, welcoming and safe place for children.

*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Mark 10:14-15)*

Children are gifts from God, to be cherished and recognised for the joyful contribution they make as valued members of the Church.

Our challenge is to follow the example of Jesus in cherishing them. Safeguarding is key to this important task and should be seen, not as a burden, but as an opportunity to embrace and encourage children's ministry, following the example of Jesus Christ.

This Church body pledges to safeguard children and young people from harm and to support them in their development as valued and integral members of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Church's ministry will be inclusive and will uphold their rights.

Consistent with Gospel values, and with civil and criminal law, those who minister will do so with dignity and integrity, honouring their calling

to ensure that children and young people are welcomed, cherished and protected, following the example set by Jesus.

This Safeguarding Children Policy will be honoured and complied with by all ordained clerics and by all lay staff and volunteers in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

*Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:*

The Prelature of Opus Dei in Ireland, as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry with children, as defined in *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and*

## *Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024:*

- Study circles, recollections, retreats and other faith formation activities
- Sacrament of reconciliation
- Personal spiritual guidance

## **SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES**

*As outlined in A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024 we are committed to the following standards:*

- **Leadership, Governance and Accountability.**

As a leader, the Church authority embodies and imparts the Catholic Church's vision, principles and values, which are reflected and apparent in the child safeguarding culture, structures and practices at all levels and in all ministries with

children and young people. This demonstrates, through words and actions, the Church authority's personal commitment to fulfil the safeguarding mission of the Church.

- **Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding.**

Ensuring the creation and maintenance of a culture of safety, including a safe Church environment that is welcoming of children.

Keeping children safe from harm is an imperative but more than that, the Church will promote the well-being of children through their participation in the ministry of the Church. The Church will create and maintain environments that uphold children's rights and that create nurturing, caring conditions where children will flourish in faith and love. Through fostering a culture of care, children feel safe and looked after and, in turn, they will be

supportive of and respectful to their peers.

- **Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law.**

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

All Church personnel have a responsibility to report suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child abuse that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) can assist with this process. These reports will be

made irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation being reported relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation being reported relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in

accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT & PROCEDURES**

For details see the *Risk Assessment* section of the [Child Safeguarding Statement 2024](#) on the NWE Safeguarding Policy website for Ireland at [www.nwepolicy.net/local-policies/ireland](http://www.nwepolicy.net/local-policies/ireland).

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Prelature of Opus Dei in Ireland is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of: *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024*. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice supports

our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant criteria of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise it as appropriate based on those findings.

In addition, we will revise this statement at least every 24 months or as appropriate due to changes in ministries or legislation/guidance.

*Signed by Church Authority:*

Very Rev. Christian van der Ploeg

Regional Vicar of Opus Dei for North-West Europe

12th July 2024

*For any queries relating to this statement please contact the relevant person who is:*

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**Prelature Safeguarding Policy -  
Ireland**

**NBSCCCI Safeguarding Guidance**

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