



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

**Review of Child Safeguarding Practice**

**in the religious congregation of**

**The Society of the Sacred Heart**

**undertaken by**

**The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the**

**Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI)**

**Date March 2015**

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## Review of Child Safeguarding Practice – The Society of the Sacred Heart

### **Background**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) was asked by the Sponsoring Bodies, namely the Irish Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union, to undertake a comprehensive review of safeguarding practice within and across all the Church authorities on the island of Ireland.

The NBSCCCI is aware that some religious congregations have ministries that involve direct contact with children while others do not. In religious congregations that have direct involvement with children, reviews of child safeguarding have been undertaken by measuring their practice compliance against all seven Church standards. Where a religious congregation no longer has, or never had ministry involving children and has not received any allegation of sexual abuse, the NBSCCCI reviews are conducted using a shorter procedure. The size, age and activity profiles of religious congregations can vary significantly and the NBSCCCI accepts that it is rational that the form of review be tailored to the profile of each Church authority, where the ministry with children is limited or non-existent. The procedure for assessment of safeguarding practice with such congregations is set out in the contents page of this report. The NBSCCCI welcomes that in order to have full openness, transparency and accountability, religious congregations that do not have ministry with children have made requests to have their safeguarding practice examined and commented upon.

The purpose of this review remains the same and it is to confirm that current safeguarding practice complies with the standards set down within the guidance issued by the Sponsoring Bodies in February 2009 *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and that all known allegations and concerns had been appropriately dealt with. To achieve this task, safeguarding practice in each of these Church authorities is reviewed through an examination of policy and procedures, and through interviews with key personnel involved both within and external to the religious congregation.

This report contains the findings of the *Review of Safeguarding Practice in the religious congregation of the Society of the Sacred Heart* undertaken by the NBSCCCI in line with the request made to it by the Sponsoring Bodies.

The findings of the review have been shared with a reference group before being submitted to the Society of the Sacred Heart along with any recommendations arising from the findings. The review is based on a review of case material. There were no allegations made against members of the congregation that were within the Terms of Reference, however there were concerns in respect of other forms of abuse, documentation relating to which was made available to the reviewer. The review therefore is based on policies and procedures plus the above mentioned documentation and interviews with key personnel involved in the safeguarding process within the congregation, particularly in the services run by the congregation.

**1. Introduction**

The Society of the Sacred Heart was founded in France by Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat in 1800. It is an international community serving in 41 countries around the world. Its primary focus of work since inception was in the field of education. The Society came to Ireland in 1842.

**2. Role Profile (past role with children):**

**Roscrea**

The first Sacred Heart convent was founded in Ireland in Roscrea in 1842. Another order, the Brigidine Sisters, had founded a convent in Roscrea in 1823 with a boarding school (for 30 girls) and a free school for 60 children. In 1841 the Brigidine Order required assistance in the running of the school and contacted the Society of the Sacred Heart. In 1843 the Orders amalgamated under the leadership of Mother Elisa Croft of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

The Society developed the school over the years; in 1963 a new primary school was built; in 1965 a new secondary block was opened, and in 1970 a day school was opened under the free education scheme. The boarding school closed in the late 1970's and in 1999 the three second level schools in Roscrea amalgamated to form a new coeducational college. This amalgamation included the Society of the Sacred Heart secondary school.

The Trusteeship of the primary school was handed over to the diocese of Killaloe in 2010, thus ending the Society's role in Roscrea.

**Armagh**

In 1851 the Society of the Sacred Heart Sisters came to Armagh at the request of the Archbishop and a boarding school and a free school were established – St. Catherine's College and Mount St. Catherine's Primary School. In 1989 these schools were taken over by the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools, which still oversees them at the present time.

**Mount Anville**

In 1853 the Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Heart established a convent, boarding school and free school in Glasnevin House. The success of the schools necessitated the transfer to larger premises and in 1865 they were transferred to Mount Anville. Educational provision on this site developed over the years and included the provision of a boarding school and a day school which amalgamated in 1966, with the boarding school closing in 1977.

Transfers from other educational establishments took place from Leeson Street School in 1967 and Monkstown in 1970. The trusteeship of Mount Anville School was transferred to the Mount Anville Sacred Heart Education Trust in 2007; the school is now operated by lay management and staff. The campus currently comprises Mount Anville Montessori/Junior School, Primary school and secondary school.

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The primary school remains under the trusteeship of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

### **Leeson Street**

Established in 1875, facilities developed to include a free school, a national school, montessori school, junior school and secondary school and a night school. With the closure of the schools in 1967, the community and some pupils transferred to Mount Anville.

### **Monkstown**

Opened in 1945 at the request of Archbishop McQuaid, the school developed to teach a capacity of 300 pupils in 1955.

In the 1960's it was decided that the Society of the Sacred Heart in Monkstown would enter the free education scheme – however the decline in income led to the continuation of the school becoming unsustainable and the secondary school was wound down over a three year period. Two Sacred Heart Sisters employed there went to teach in Holy Child Secondary School in Killiney and two others taught in the Holy Child Secondary School in Sallynoggin in 1977.

The montessori and junior schools in Monkstown closed in 1977 with some pupils transferring to Mount Anville.

### **3. Profile of Members – Current Role Profile**

There are 72 Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Heart in the Irish/ Scottish Province. 44 of these live in Ireland, 13 of them being resident in the Society's nursing home in Cedar House. The age range of the Sisters is from 65-103 years, with the average age of 82 years. All of the Sisters are retired; however most who are still active participate in voluntary work, e.g. pastoral work, retreats, visiting the sick and prison visiting.

There are 6 Sisters who have direct involvement with the children in Ireland. In Armagh, one Sister is involved in a secondary school, bringing groups of school children to Uganda/Kenya in the summer months as part of their character development. One other Sister helps with folk masses.

In Dublin, one Sister works three days a week in a primary school. One other Sister does meditation in two primary schools twice a week. A third Sister works part-time in a primary school, and a fourth Sister is a part time volunteer librarian in a secondary school.

While working in each of these settings the Sisters follow the child safeguarding policy and procedures of the establishment in which they work.

### **4. Policy and Procedures Document:**

The policy and procedures document of the Society of the Sacred Heart is formatted in line with the seven standards as laid out in the NSBCCCI guidance. Reference is made in the document to both international and civil law and guidance in relation to

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contact with statutory authorities, management of allegations; advice and support for both victims and respondents, and telephone numbers for both advice and support in relation to child protection and safeguarding are also included. There is also evidence of a clear commitment to the promulgation of this policy and the familiarization on training of members in it.

Reference is also made to the process of self-audit by the provincial team, in line with Standard 7, *Implementation and Monitoring of the standards*.

The reviewer is satisfied that the policy document of the Society is both adequate and fit for purpose, proportionate to the ministry the Sisters have with children.

### **5. Structures:**

Safeguarding is directed and overseen by the provincial team. They have put in place a safeguarding committee to oversee their policy, procedures, training and monitoring of the standards. They also have in place a designated liaison person (DLP) and a deputy DLP whose responsibility it is to manage allegations of abuse and report these to the civil authorities.

### **6. Management of Allegations and liaison with the statutory authorities:**

The reviewer read all documentation in relation to three allegations of abuse made known to the Society. Two allegations of physical abuse were made, one against a member of the congregation and a second allegation against a lay teacher, both of whom were employed within the schools managed by the Society. A third concern brought to the attention of the Society about information of “emotional harm and slapping” was placed on a social media website.

Having reviewed all of the information contained on the case files the reviewer is satisfied that all appropriate safeguarding action has been taken by the Society. Two cases were non-specific, received by way of a letter where the complainant is quoted as “being given a hard time in school”. The information was shared with An Garda Síochána and TUSLA (formerly HSE) and a pastoral response made to the complainants, but there was no further response from them.

The third concern was not expressed directly to the Society or to the civil authorities but was posted on a social media outlet. The concern was reported to An Garda Síochána and TUSLA, who have stated that this does not reach the threshold for reporting. The Society is willing when and if appropriate, to offer a pastoral response.

The reviewer was also informed of a complaint made by a parent in relation to what the parent saw as inappropriate material being discussed in a CSPE class in one of the Society’s schools. This was dealt with under the schools own internal policies and the reviewer is satisfied that it was brought to a definitive conclusion.

Having viewed the documentation with relation to the above the reviewer is of the opinion that none of the above meets the criteria of allegations of abuse – rather they represent “concerns” raised by the alleged victims. The reviewer is of the view that these were managed and responded to in an appropriate fashion.

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The policy documents also indicate that there is a robust and thorough procedure in place to deal with any further developments in relation to these, and to any future concerns/ allegations which may arise.

### **7. Conclusion:**

There are no concerns regarding the Society of the Sacred Heart on the part of the civil authority agencies.

The reviewer is satisfied that there is a very good awareness of child safeguarding within the Society and that they have responded appropriately to concerns and passed these onto the state investigation agencies – Tusla and An Garda Síochána.

The reviewer has seen evidence of a very good commitment to prevent abuse and to respond appropriately to allegations and concerns. From this review process it is clear that the Society is fully aware of its responsibilities regarding child protection and safeguarding, and has demonstrated a commitment to both.

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### **Review of Child Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland Terms of Reference Small Religious Congregations (which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes)**

#### **Introduction**

In order for the NBSCCCI to be able to state that all Church Authorities on the island of Ireland have been evaluated in respect of their child safeguarding policies and practices, both historical and current, then some form of appropriate assessment has to be conducted of every one of these. It is rational however that the form of assessment is tailored to the profile of each Church Authority, and that needless expenditure of resources and unnecessary interference in the life of religious orders and communities that have no children-specific ministry would be avoided.

This review seeks to examine the current arrangements for safeguarding children across small religious congregations /orders, and missionary societies in Ireland who have limited or no direct contact with children as part of the congregation's ministry.

It would also scrutinize practice within all known cases to ensure that they have been responded to appropriately.

The review's methodology is an adaptation of the methodology developed for all dioceses and large religious congregations and missionary societies, where the ministry involves regular contact with children.

The proposed review would consider the following:-

- (a) Former role with children
- (b) Allegations of child abuse against members and how these have been responded to
- (c) Existing relationships with statutory authorities such as the HSE, Gardai in the Republic and the HSCT or PSNI in Northern Ireland.
- (d) Policies in place and being applied for safeguarding children
- (e) Roles and responsibilities and where they exist the operation of Advisory Panels, and Safeguarding Committees

The objective of the review would be to confirm if there have been any allegations and how known allegations have been responded to; in addition the review seeks to confirm what the current arrangements for safeguarding children are. In particular, emphasis will be placed on establishing how policies and practice match up to the standards set down in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* published by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland and launched in February 2009. Priority, at all times, will be given to how policy and practice can be improved and strengthened. If policies and/or practices are identified that are concerning, inadequate, or dangerous, they will be addressed through the provision of guidance and support, and through the reporting of these situations to the appropriate statutory authorities, if this has not already happened. Similarly, those that are good examples will be highlighted with a view to them being adopted comprehensively across all parts of the Church. All cases that relate to alleged or known offenders that are alive will be read and included in the review. In cases where the alleged or known offender is deceased, these will be sampled in an attempt to gather learning from them that will be used to inform the framing of recommendations.

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### **Guidance Documents**

The review will be guided by the following:-

- (a) *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*
- (b) *Children First* Guidance in ROI; and Regional Child Protection Guidelines in Northern Ireland;
- (c) Legislation that exists in each jurisdiction which contributes to safeguarding children and young people.

The review will be undertaken by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) through their National Office and led by the Chief Executive Officer.

The review process will be overseen by a Reference Group to whom the CEO will report on a regular basis. The membership of this Reference Group has been drawn from each of the statutory child protection agencies in both jurisdictions, along with eminent individuals in the field from academia. The current Reference Group consists of: Dr Helen Buckley (TCD); Mr Paul Harrison (Tusla), and John Toner (SBNI).

It is important to confirm that the value of the review is dependent upon full and complete access to all relevant documentation and information relating to the abuse of children known to the individual Church authorities. The review will proceed on the basis that willingness exists on the part of each of the subjects of the review to provide full access to the fieldwork team, subject, where relevant, to the terms of the Data Processing Deed agreed between the Sponsoring Bodies and entered into between the parties hereto.

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### **Step Guide to the Review Process**

#### **Step 1.**

A letter of invitation to review is sent by the Provincial/Regional Superior or other person responsible for the congregation/ order or missionary society (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Ordinary’).

#### **Step 2.**

The CEO will forward a survey to the provincial which will identify:

- Current number of members
- Past role with children
- Current role with children
- Total number of allegations received up to 2014
- Number of living members against whom there are allegations

#### **Step 3.**

For any Order where there have been allegations a full review will proceed, as per step 4 - 23. For those Orders where there have been no known allegations a desk top examination of policies and procedures will take place followed by a site visit to interview all relevant personnel within the safeguarding structure. For these orders step 5 and 13-23 will apply.

#### **Step 4.**

The CEO and Ordinary will confirm the dates for the fieldwork for the review, and names of the fieldwork team.

#### **Step 5.**

The Church Authority will be asked to make available all of the case files and related documentation in respect of any safeguarding concerns that have been identified within the diocese. The Church Authority will make available a room with wireless internet access for the reviewers to conduct their review of files, so that any records made by the reviewers can be directly typed and stored onto a secure server which is only accessed by the reviewers. In the absence of internet access the reviewers will type their notes onto a secure encrypted USB stick for later uploading onto the secure server.

#### **Step 6.**

The Church Authority will be requested to sign the revised Data Processing Deed prior to the arrival of the team.

#### **Step 7.**

The Church Authority will arrange a schedule of interviews with all who hold safeguarding roles within its functional area. The designated person and the Church Authority will be available to the reviewers throughout the period of fieldwork.

#### **Step 8.**

The fieldwork team when they arrive on site will firstly confirm that they have a suitable place to work in and that all the required documentation has been provided to them for their review. In the event that the fieldwork team forms the opinion that the Church Authority has not provided access to all such documents, the NBSCCCI shall give notice in writing to the Church Authority of the opinion of the fieldwork team and such notice shall specify the reasons for same. Thereupon, the Church Authority shall respond in detail to the notice.

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Each party shall use its best endeavours to resolve any differences of opinion which shall arise and, in the event that resolution is not arrived at, the parties will attempt to resolve the dispute by recourse to the services of a mediator agreed between them or nominated for the purpose at the request of any of them without prejudice to the NBSCCCI's entitlement to terminate the review. In the event that resolution has not been arrived at following mediation, either party shall be at liberty to terminate forthwith the review.

### **Step 9.**

On arrival, the fieldwork team should be supplied with a single case file index that lists all the cases that have been created within the diocese. These may be divided into two groups. The first group will contain all allegations that relate to living alleged or known perpetrators. The second will contain any that are deceased.

### **Step 10.**

Depending on the volume involved a decision should be made as to whether all or a random sample of the "deceased group" should be reviewed. Care should be taken to include all prominent cases in the sample.

### **Step 11.**

Each case file will be reviewed by each fieldworker independently in the first instance. They will create a written summary with chronological information of the case. In certain cases a second reader may be required, this will be discussed and agreed between the fieldworkers.

### **Step 12.**

Following the reading of the case and the creation of a summary, the fieldworkers will analyse and assess the actions taken in the case. They will assess compliance with agreed Church policy that was extant at that time. They will also indicate whether any current risk exists in respect of the information contained within the file and advise the church Authority of necessary safeguarding action to reduce the risk.

### **Step 13.**

When all the case files have been read, the fieldwork team will then examine and review any procedures or protocols that exist within the diocese to confirm that they are in compliance with the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance* document issued by the NBSCCCI in February of 2009.

### **Step 14.**

To complete the review, the fieldwork team will then seek to speak to those directly involved in the safeguarding structure in the diocese. This should include the Advisory Panel, a sample of parish safeguarding representatives, the designated person, the safeguarding committee, victim support and advisors and the Bishop/Provincial. The purpose of these interviews is to form a view of the competence and effectiveness of the safeguarding structure that exists within the Church Authority.

### **Step 15.**

The fieldwork team will also seek to speak to representatives of the key statutory agencies to provide them with an opportunity to express their views on the quality of the working relationships that exist between them and the Church Authority.

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### **Step 16.**

A verbal feedback session on initial key findings will be given to the Church Authority.

### **Step 17.**

Upon completion of the field work, the team may request to take materials – other than casework records to review off-site; this alongside all materials gathered by the reviewers, including written notes on cases and meetings, will be analysed and will form the basis of the draft assessment review report.

### **Step 18.**

The draft will be forwarded to the Church Authority for factual accuracy checking.

### **Step 19.**

Alongside all other reports under review, the report will be presented in draft to the Reference Group for their critique and comment. If further work is required at the direction of the Reference group the CEO will ensure this work is completed and advise the Church Authority accordingly.

### **Step 20.**

The report will be legally proofed by NBSCCCI lawyer.

### **Step 21.**

The report will be forwarded to the NBSCCCI for approval

### **Step 22**

A final draft report will then be submitted to the Church Authority. The expectation would be that the report will be published by the Church Authority at an agreed time in the future.

### **Step 23.**

All case material written, including summaries, as part of the review, which are for the reviewers use only, will be stored on a secure server.

### **Guide for Reviewers**

In terms of small (female religious orders) reference should be made to the following:

1. Has the Order provided alternative care to children in an orphanage, industrial school or children's residential home, but no longer is engaged in running such services;
2. Has the order provided education to children, in both or either boarding schools and day schools, but no longer does so ;
3. Has the order provided medical and/or nursing services to children, but no longer does so;
4. Has the order provided any other services to children, in community services centres, youth clubs etc., and no longer does so;
5. Does the order currently provide any sort of service to children and families that brings them into regular contact with children;
6. Has the order never provided any service to children (e.g. contemplative orders).

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*In relation to category 1 above;*

1. The reviewers will establish whether any service they provided is included in the list of children's residential services produced by the Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB);
2. If this is the case, reference should be made to this.
3. If complaints have been referred to the Redress Board or Ryan Commission, this review cannot access these records and that will be stated in the report.
4. If the order has received complaints which have not been processed through Redress or Ryan these cases will be thoroughly examined as detailed above.

### **Review of Policy and Procedures**

1. It is recognised that not all Orders will have any ministry with children and therefore their policies and procedures should reflect the work that they do with children.
2. If the Order only works through other organisations, example in Diocesan work or in schools, they are required to follow the policies of those organisations.
3. If there are gaps in the policy document an assessment should be made as to whether the ministry engaged in requires full compliance with all criteria attached to the seven standards
4. Where it is clear that the criteria do not apply a reference should be made at the beginning of the review report that the Order's ministry is not directly with children and therefore adherence to particular criteria do not apply.
5. If the Order is a contemplative Order, there is no expectation that they will have detailed policies and procedures, but reference should be made to their ministry and that they have no contact with children.
6. In all cases, contact will be made with the civil authorities to identify if they have any child safeguarding concerns in relation to the order.