



Head to Heart- Child Safeguarding in Formation

Course Overview

1. Background

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (the National Board) has been providing child safeguarding training to seminarians in St. Patrick's College Maynooth since 2009, and more recently to other houses of religious formation in Ireland and to the Pontifical Irish College in Rome. Through the experience of delivering this training to men in formation, the National Board has identified additional areas for relevant training that will better prepare these men for their future ministry with children, as priests.

Assisting in the preparation of seminarians for their lives as priests, the National Board is eager to offer formal training, support and guidance in all matters relating to child safeguarding. The current National Board training covers a range of topics, focussing largely on the Catholic Church's policy and standards for good child safeguarding practice. The National Board now wish to complement this information-based method by promoting a more reflective approach whereby the elements of good child safeguarding move from the page to practice, and from the head to the heart.

The history of the Catholic Church in Ireland is darkly stained with the abuse of many children by clergy and religious; by a reluctance to face the truth of the extent of and damage caused by this abuse; and by denial of the very existence of child abuse within the Church. Following years of investigations and inquiries, criticism and outrage, the Church has now come to a place where it has accepted this shameful aspect of its past, and is now genuinely motivated to ensure that it provides a safe haven for children to grow and develop in God's love through promoting and supporting best practice. These positive developments have been very painfully achieved and have to be protected from any relaxation of effort.

There is a discernible desire emerging in some quarters to rewrite the history, which some view as exaggerated. In other minds the perception is that the crisis is now past. However, great caution needs to be taken to guard against the growth of complacency. It is just as important now as it has been during the last 20 years of crises to sustain the clear understanding of the need for priests and religious to honour and respect the rights of children to be safe in the Church, and in so doing, to live and model Gospel teachings.

2. Motivating influences for Safeguarding Training in Priestly Formation

Since 1992 there have been a number of motivating influences on priestly formation which are outlined below:

- **Pastores Dabo Vobis**

Pastores Dabo Vobis¹ outlines an integrated programme based on four dimensions of the person of the seminarian: human; intellectual; spiritual and pastoral.

¹ Pope John Paul II (1992) *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.



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- **Ratio Fundamentalis**

The Ratio Fundamentalis² develops and gives context to these facets, speaking of them as being grounded in community and missionary in spirit, giving shape and structure to the identity of the seminarian and the priest, and making him capable of ‘the gift of self to the Church’ (2016:3). This document describes the priest as a disciple on a journey, constantly needing an integrated formation, understood as a continuous configuration to Christ.

According to Ratio Fundamentalis this journey of formation of a priest “begins at baptism, is perfected through other sacraments and comes to be appreciated as the centre of one’s life at the beginning of seminary formation”. The Ratio identifies stages of formation as:

- I. Discipleship
- II. Configuration
- III. Pastoral or stage of vocational synthesis

The first two stages are intended to focus attention on two moments of initial formation around being a disciple and the need to understand the call to ministry in priestly life (2016, p. 5). The third stage ‘...is intended to give particular importance to the period between the end of formation in the seminary and priestly ordination, with the purpose of helping the candidate to acquire the necessary understanding and preparation for it’ (2016:4).

Four parts of the Ratio are of particular relevance:

- ‘During the process of formation for the ministerial priesthood, the seminarian is a ‘mystery to himself’, in which two aspects of his humanity, that need to be integrated, are intertwined and exist side by side. On the one hand he is characterised by talents and gifts that have been moulded by grace; on the other he is marked by his limits and frailty. The task of formation is to help the person to integrate these aspects, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in a journey of faith and of gradual and harmonious maturity...the time of formation for priestly ministry is a period of testing, maturing and discernment by both the seminarian and the house of formation (2016: Para 28).
- The Ratio identifies the importance of integrating the four dimensions of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral), to ensure the proper and practical value for the life of an integral priest (Para 89 and 92). As part of the human element, the Ratio makes it clear that seminarians must have a mature capacity for relations with men and women of various ages and social conditions (2016: Para 95).
- ‘A sufficient number of lectures should be dedicated to the teaching of the social doctrine of the Church. This is because the proclamation of and witness to the Gospel, to which the priest is called, has significant implications for human society,

² Congregation for the Clergy (2016) *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (The Gift of the Priestly Vocation)*. Vatican City: Congregation for the Clergy.



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and aim, among other things, at building up the Kingdom of God. This implies a deep knowledge of reality and a reading of human, social and political relations which determine the lives of individuals and people in the light of the Gospel. In this perspective one finds important these pertaining to the life of the People of God, treated at length by the Magisterium of the Church, such as the search for the common good, the values of solidarity and subsidiarity among peoples, the education of the young, work and the rights and duties connected with it the meaning of political authority, the values of justice and peace, social support structures and the accompaniment of those most in need' (2016: Para 172).

- 'The greatest attention must be given to the theme of the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, being vigilant that those who seek admission to a seminary or to a House of Formation, or who are already petitioning to receive Holy Orders, have not been involved in any way with any crime or problematic behaviour in this area. Formators must ensure that those who have had painful experiences in this area receive special suitable accompaniment. Specific lessons, seminars or courses on the protection of minors are to be included in the programmes of initial and on-going formation. Adequate information must be provided in an appropriate fashion, which also give attention to areas dealing with possible exploitation and violence such as, for example, the trafficking of minors, child labour and the sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults...' (2016: Para 202).

• **Children's Rights and International Treaties**

As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)³, there is a requirement for the Holy See to report periodically to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In response, The Committee offers a formal response by way of 'concluding observations'; the most recent observations (2014) included the following recommendation:

'The Committee urges the Holy See to provide systematic training on the provisions of the Convention to all member of the clergy and members of Catholic Orders and institutions working with and/or for children, and to include mandatory modules on children's rights in teachers training programmes as well as in seminaries' (CRC 2014:5)⁴.

• **Apostolic Visitation 2011**

An apostolic visitation was carried out in four seminaries in 2011 (the Pontifical Irish College in Rome, Saint Malachy's College in Belfast, and two Institutes in the Archdiocese of Dublin – the National Seminary, Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, and the Milltown Institute of the Society of Jesus). Among the recommendations from the visitators, the following are of particular importance:

³ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (United Nations)

⁴ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2014) *Concluding Observations of the Second Periodic Report of the Holy See*. Geneva: United Nations.



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‘For the further improvement of the seminaries, it has been proposed, wherever necessary:

- a) to ensure that the formation provided is rooted in authentic priestly identity, offering a more systematic preparation for a life of priestly celibacy by maintaining a proper equilibrium between human, spiritual and ecclesial dimensions;
- c) to introduce more consistent admission criteria – this would involve the seminary, in consultation with the dioceses, examining and deciding admissibility of candidates;
- e) to include in the academic programme in-depth formation on matters of child protection, with increased pastoral attention to victims of sexual abuse and their families’ (2011: 4)⁵.

- **Programme for the Formation of Priests in Irish Seminaries (Ratio Nationalis)**

The programme has not yet been updated in line with the revision of the Ratio Fundamentalis. Whilst the existing programme does not specifically address safeguarding, or children, it highlights the importance of human formation in relating to people.

‘Whilst the human formation programme must challenge the seminarian to achieve a convinced and heartfelt obedience to the truth of his own being. True freedom asks him to be master of himself and to open out to others in generous dedicated service. Since every person should take responsibility for his own actions, the seminarian in particular must be helped to foster personal responsibility in the use of money and in structuring and maintaining a daily schedule of prayer, work and leisure. Every seminarian should be encouraged to develop a spirit of collaboration with lay people, both men and women and is required to develop a capacity for choices that are clear, free and in keeping with his vocation’ (2016:para 173).⁶

- **Pastoral Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of Ireland**

In his letter to the people of Ireland⁷, Pope Benedict emphasised the importance of all the faithful working together to ensure the failures in child safeguarding are not repeated. Directly to priests he emphasised the importance of embracing safeguarding as part of ministry when he said ‘...it is essential that you cooperate closely with those in authority and help to ensure that the measures adopted to respond to the crisis will be truly evangelical,

⁵ Apostolic Visitators (2011) *Summary of the Findings of the Apostolic Visitation in Ireland*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

⁶ Irish Bishops’ Conference (2006) *Programme for the Formation of Priests in Irish Seminaries*. Dublin: Veritas.

⁷ Pope Benedict XVI (2010) *Pastoral letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Catholics of Ireland*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.



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just and effective. Above all, I urge you to become ever more clearly men and women of prayer, courageously following the path of conversion, purification and reconciliation. In this way, the Church in Ireland will draw new life and vitality from your witness to the Lord's redeeming power made visible in your lives.' (2010: Para 10)

- **Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016.**

The current Safeguarding Policy and Standards⁸ were published in 2016 and have been accepted by all constituent members of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Two indicators are of particular relevance:

- '5.3 The Church body ensures the delivery at a local level of basic training programmes that are identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy, where this has been identified as necessary through the annual training-needs analysis' (2016: 28).
- '5.4 The Church body ensures that Church personnel who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate, role-specific training that is identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board's Training Strategy' (2016: 28).

Training currently delivered to seminarians in each Church body as part of Indicator 5.3, focuses on basic awareness of child safeguarding policy and standards. In order to fulfil Indicator 5.4 it is necessary for seminarians to have more in depth training which focuses on their specific ministry and child safeguarding.

3. Course Name

The course is called 'Head to Heart-Child Safeguarding in Formation'. This name was chosen to fill the gap identified through current practice and experience of providing child safeguarding training which is truly reflective, rather than simply knowing about the policies and procedures, to understand how they can be integrated into the spiritual lives of priests. This approach has also been reflected by Pope Francis when he said '...an education that integrates and harmonizes intellect (the head), affections (the heart) and activity (the hands)...will offer students a growth that is harmonious not only at the personal level but also at the level of society. We urgently need to create spaces where fragmentation is not the guiding principle, even for thinking. To do this, it is necessary to teach how to reflect on what we are feeling and doing; to feel what we are thinking and doing; to do what we are thinking and feeling. An interplay of capacities at the service of the person and society.'⁹

⁸ National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (2016) *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. Dublin: Veritas

⁹ Pope Francis (2018) *Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Chile and Peru Visit to the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.



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4. Course Outline

| Module | Formation Stage | Aims (Purpose) | Learning Objectives |
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| Child safeguarding policy and procedures | Discipleship | To provide information on the safeguarding policy of the Catholic Church in Ireland's, and supporting guidance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how to minister in accordance with the Church's policy and standards with specific reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments (Standards 1,5 and 6) ○ Responding to child protection allegations, suspicions, concerns or knowledge (Standards 2,3,4) <p>Understand the key role of the seminarian in monitoring (Standard 7) and upholding the policy and standards in their ministry</p> |
| Historical and legislative context | Discipleship | To set the current situation in the context of public inquiries; legislation and Vatican Norms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the truth of what happened in relation to the abuse of children within the Church; • Understand the extent of the abuse perpetrated on children • Understand the civil and church law and procedures in relation to child safeguarding; including any recommendations from the pontifical commission on the protection of minors. • Understand the seminarian's responsibilities to safeguard children and take the necessary steps to prevent abuse happening. |
| Children's rights | Discipleship | To provide an overview of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; obligations on signatories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the inalienability and indivisibility of rights • Impart knowledge around the lived reality children's rights within priestly ministry. Particular attention will be paid to: |



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| | | <p>(The Holy See; Republic of Ireland and N. Ireland as part of the UK)</p> <p>To explore how to translate the articles of the Convention into practice with specific reference to priestly ministry.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 6 (right to have a full life) • Article 12 (Right to express oneself) • Article 13 (Right to have information) • Article 19 (Right to protection) • Article 42 (right to have the convention made known to them). |
| Theology of safeguarding children | Configuration | <p>To provide an opportunity for reflection on the importance of safeguarding within sacred texts (scripture) and sacred traditions of the Church.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand Gospel values and scripture and how these relate to safeguarding. • Understand sacred tradition and how it relates to safeguarding. • Understand the role of the seminarian (and as future priests) and how they relate to children. • Understand the sacred obligation of a seminarian to ensure that children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church. |
| The impacts of abuse | Configuration | <p>To provide seminarians with an understanding of the impact of abuse on the complainant, and secondary victims.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the definitions of abuse, and how to address allegations. • Understand the long term damaging effects of abuse on the well-being of a child into adulthood. • Understanding the impact of abuse on secondary victims including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complainant's family ○ Respondent's family ○ Church community ○ Church personnel |



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| <p>Good safeguarding practice and boundaries when working with children (Standards 1, 5 and 6)</p> | <p>Configuration</p> | <p>To explore the practicalities of ministering safely with children</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the practicalities of working with children in specific ministries and their particular needs (e.g. sacramental preparation, confession; working with children who have special needs) • Understand and use healthy boundaries in ministering with children. • Understand the seminarian’s role in responding to allegations from children. |
| <p>Personal challenges when dealing with child abuse</p> | <p>Synthesis</p> | <p>To provide an opportunity to reflect on personal views and experiences, in relation to child abuse</p> <p>To enable seminarians to respond appropriately to others who may disclose abuse and share their trauma of being abused.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower the seminarian to address any personal issues that arise and obtain an understanding of who to contact to access support for themselves. • Understand where to access help and support for complainants and other secondary victims. • Understand the roles and boundaries in the safeguarding structure when a member of Church personnel is accused. |
| <p>Communication and digital media</p> | <p>Synthesis</p> | <p>To explore the benefits and challenges of communicating with children safely and with particular reference to the use of using digital technology.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the many forms of communicating with children. • Understand how to communicate safely with children. • Understand that using digital media must at all times ensure the safety and well-being of children. • Understand that viewing child pornography is a crime in civil and in canon law. |



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| Spiritual healing | Synthesis | To explore how child abuse damages a person's belief in God and to develop pastoral approaches that assist spiritual healing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the impact on faith caused by abuse. • Understand the role of the seminarian in responding to an individual seeking spiritual support. |
| Leadership and safeguarding children | Synthesis | To discuss the role of the seminarian in listening with humility and acting with courage to support good leadership. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how to communicate and support the Church community in times of child safeguarding crises. • Understand how to be open and transparent (whilst complying with data protection principles) with the Church community to ensure trust and confidence is built and maintained |

A key component of each module is a reflective assignment based on assigned reading that will be completed by each seminarian, before and after each module. The purpose of this is to examine how the learning gained from the programme has impacted them and influenced their thoughts and feelings. This is a short document (no more than 500 words) and will not require academic references or the level of scrutiny associated with an academic assessment.

5. Assessment Process

Each module will be assessed in the following way. Each seminarian will:

- Complete the assigned reading for each module.
- Use the reading to complete the pre module reflective exercise (no more than 500 words).
- After the module complete the post module reflective exercise (no more than 500 words) by the date assigned by the tutor.
- Send a copy of the reflective exercises to niall.moore@safeguarding.ie and your formator by the date assigned by the tutor.

At the end of each module if each seminarian has completed the assessment process as outlined above, they will be given a certificate to demonstrate that they have completed the module. In addition all reflection exercises will be shared with the formation team of each seminary.



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Please retain all copies of your assessments and certificates in the relevant Tab of your course folder.

A final overall certificate will be presented to those students who have successfully completed all 10 modules.

6. Quality assurance

Modules will be delivered by experts in child safeguarding who will be required to develop detailed plans for delivery of the learning objectives. The training will be audited by the working group established between the National Board and the formators from St. Patrick's College, the Pontifical Irish College and Redemptoris Mater. In addition evaluation by the recipients of the training will be sought and any necessary adjustments will be made based on feedback from the working group and the seminarians.

A report will be prepared annually for the rectors on the programme delivered. In addition members of the formation team would be welcome to attend any modules which were being facilitated to assist with quality assurance.

7. Delivery method

The modules listed above will each last approximately 3 hours. Each seminarian will be responsible for completing the 10 modules within the entire period of their formation (usually 6/7 years). It is the recommendation of the working group that this is done in a phased way to ensure that there is an input on child safeguarding throughout their time in seminary. Therefore it is advised that each seminarian completes no more than 2 modules per year. For those who wish to complete the programme but who are at a later stage of their formation, the National Board will work with them and their formation team to offer credit for training they have already attended and develop a bespoke plan to ensure they complete the most relevant modules, within the formation period remaining.

STRUCTURE

To facilitate this, the National Board propose that the entire course will be delivered as outlined below:

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| Sept-Dec: | 1 hour long induction |
| | 1 three hour module |
| Jan-May | 2 three hour modules |

This structure means that there will be slots for 3 modules and an induction to be delivered every year. Each seminarian can decide when and where they want to attend the modules on offer.



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LOCATION

All the modules during September-May will be delivered via video conference with seminarians in each location joining together via Skype on the set dates. If a seminarian who wishes to partake in a particular module is not physically present in the seminary, they can join the module being delivered via Skype.

RESPONSIBILITY ON EACH SEMINARY

Each year to agree three common three-hour slots (one in September-December, two in January-May) and a one hour induction for new students (September-December) to facilitate the delivery.

RESPONSIBILITY ON THE NATIONAL BOARD

To ensure the delivery of the modules and induction on the dates agreed.

RESPONSIBILITY ON EACH SEMINARIAN

To sign up to the appropriate modules at a time and location that suits their needs and formation process. This should be done in consultation with their formation team, and if the formation team decide that seminarians will attend the modules in groups, this will be accommodated.

8. Data Protection and Consent

Taking part in this programme will require use of the following data:

| Type of Data | Purpose | Data Subject | Data Controller | Shared With: |
|--|---|--------------|-----------------|--|
| Name Email Phone Number Stage of Formation Church body | To register the participant on the course | Seminarian | NBSCCCI | Name of seminarian will be shared with their seminary to place on their academic record |
| Modules completed | To track the progress of the student across their formation | Seminarian | NBSCCCI | The modules completed by each of the seminarians will be shared with their seminary on annual basis. |
| Anonymised evaluation form | To evaluate the course | Seminarian | NBSCCCI | Working group to evaluate and redevelop the modules delivered |



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| Reflections completed before and after each module | To see the impact of the course on the seminarian across the whole formation period | Seminarian | NBSCCCI | Relevant formation team |
|--|---|------------|---------|-------------------------|

- The above information has been developed in a consent form which each seminarian must complete as part of their induction process.
- The information will be stored, maintained and destroyed in line with data protection and outlined in the National Board's data protection policy.
- The information will only be shared with those listed above and only for the purposes listed above.

In addition as part of the induction process which each seminarian has to undertake they will be advised that if they share anything of a child safeguarding nature during the modules this will have to be shared with the relevant authorities as per the Catholic Church's policy.

Formal feedback will be given to each formation team on a regular basis about any relevant issues that arise as part of the modules, which would be relevant to the seminarian's formation. The formation team will also be given access to the reflections completed before and after each module, to assist with any formation issues that may arise. This forms part of the consent form given to each seminarian at the induction