

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN



POLICY  
and  
PROCEDURES  
of the  
Irish Province  
of the  
Congregation of the Holy Spirit

12th March 2014



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## Foreword

**T**he Congregation of the Holy Spirit (formerly known as the Holy Ghost Fathers and now also known as “Spiritans”) recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount and that every child has a right to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration. Respect for the innate dignity of every person is a fundamental principle emanating from the Gospel and in particular Jesus’ respect for children.

In 2011 the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit published *Spiritan Policy for Safeguarding Children: Procedures and Guidelines*. That document was based on the 2009 guidelines *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* and on the civil guidelines of the two jurisdictions of the island of Ireland. This revised document takes into account developments in the intervening period.

The establishment in October 2012 of the Spiritan Safeguarding Office provides an invaluable resource in the Province’s quest to ensure that all our works and communities are safe places for children.

Through the implementation of the policies and procedures outlined in this document, the Irish Spiritans are determined to provide the highest level of protection for all children who are involved in any way in activities with the Irish Spiritan Province.

A further and important aim in developing these policies and procedures is to create a secure and supportive atmosphere in which those who have suffered abuse in the past can be assured of a sensitive, caring and compassionate response, and be offered appropriate pastoral care for themselves and their families.

These policies and procedures also include measures to ensure that the rights, in natural justice, of a person against whom an accusation of abuse is made, are respected and that appropriate pastoral care is provided for them and their families.



The Provincial Council at its meeting on December 19th 2013 unanimously approved the policies and procedures contained in this document. Each confrère, community and work is bound to adhere to and engage with this document in a concerted effort to protect children and to cherish the gift that they are for our future.

As Provincial Leader of the Irish Province of Spiritans I sign this policy document to become operational from 12th March 2014.

**Marc Whelan C.S.Sp.**  
*Provincial*

**Spiritan Provincialate, Dublin**  
**19th December 2013**



## 1. Spiritan Safeguarding Statement

The Congregation of the Holy Spirit of the Irish Province (henceforth “The Congregation”) recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children and is committed to ensuring their safety and well-being. Members<sup>1</sup> of the Irish Province (henceforth “Spiritans”) and their co-workers<sup>2</sup> are obliged to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected.

The Congregation recognises that each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.

The Congregation undertakes to do everything possible to create safe environments where the welfare of children and young people is paramount.

In partnership with their primary carers, the Congregation encourages and values the involvement of children and young people in liturgies and activities that enhance their spiritual, social, emotional and intellectual development.

This Safeguarding Children Policy adheres to the principles and guidelines set out in “Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland” (2009) as well as the civil laws and guidelines<sup>3</sup> of the two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.

The Congregation is committed to:

- Best practice to ensure that children are listened to and treated with respect, have their rights protected and their welfare promoted;
- Minimising risks in order to safeguard the interests of children;
- Ensuring that all Spiritans and their co-workers are carefully recruited, selected, trained, supported and supervised;
- Providing appropriate pastoral support for survivors of child abuse;
- Providing appropriate training for members and co-workers;
- Working in partnership with statutory authorities for the prompt, just and professional management of complaints;
- Making this Safeguarding Children Policy widely known, accessible and understood, and implementing procedures and protocols that contribute to keeping safe children who participate in its services.

<sup>1</sup> “Member” refers to a person who has made profession of religious vows in the Congregation (SRL 129).

<sup>2</sup> This includes Associate Members involved in Spiritan initiatives, volunteers and employees.

<sup>3</sup> “Children First”, *National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011)* and “Co-operating to Safeguard Children” (2003) as well as in “Safeguarding Minors – General Policy and Guidelines for Members of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit” (2012).



## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 Child:** A person under the age of eighteen years of age.
- 2.2 Abuse:** A violation of a person’s fundamental right to respect and to bodily integrity. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. Child abuse is generally categorised into four broad groups: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subject to more than one form of abuse.
- 2.2.1 Neglect:** Refers to the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical, emotional and/or psychological needs. It is a form of omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, medical care, supervision and safety, or attachment to / affection from adults.
- 2.2.2 Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction which is reasonably within the control of a person in a position of responsibility or power. There may be a single or multiple incidents.
- 2.2.3 Emotional Abuse:** Occurs when a child’s developmental need for affection, approval, consistency of care or security are not met.
- 2.2.4 Sexual Abuse:** Occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her own sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.
- 2.3 Child Pornography:** The viewing, use, trade, transmittal or transference of abusive sexual images of children engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activity or showing of their private parts including genitals, for the purpose of sexual gratification.
- 2.4 Whistleblowing:** The term used to describe the action of someone who reveals/discloses wrongdoing within an organisation to the public or to those in positions of authority. It enables them to report concerns in a way that will not be seen as disloyal to their settings or colleagues.
- 2.5 Bullying:** Repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against another or others; such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, psychological or physical, including racist or sexist remarks, or emotional intimidation such as isolating or excluding. For more details, see Resource 1 in the Safeguarding Folder which is available in each Spiritan Community.



### 3. Recognising Child Abuse

Every Spiritan and co-worker has a responsibility and duty to take action where there is a concern for the safety of a child.

#### 3.1 Recognising physical abuse

Cuts and bruises on the bony parts of a child's body, like elbows, knees and shins are common occurrences. Unexplained bruises or injuries, injuries in unusual places like the cheek or thighs, unlikely explanations that do not fit the injury and delays in seeking medical treatment are a cause of concern.

##### 3.1.1 Physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body;
- Bruises that reflect hand marks or finger tips;
- Cigarette burns;
- Bite marks;
- Broken bones;
- Scalds.

##### 3.1.2 Changes in behaviour which can indicate physical abuse may include:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation;
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts;
- Flinching when approached or touched;
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather;
- Depression;
- Withdrawn behaviour;
- Running away from home.

#### 3.2 Recognising emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix / play with other children.



##### 3.2.1 The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from the primary care-takers;
- Sudden speech disorders;
- Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

##### 3.2.2 Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse may include:

- Being unable to play;
- Fear of making mistakes;
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair-twisting, rocking;
- Self-harm;
- Fear of parent / carer being approached regarding their behaviour.

#### 3.3 Recognising sexual abuse

Adults, who use children to meet their own sexual needs, might abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse, it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to, taken seriously, and that their concern/allegation is acted on.

##### 3.3.1 The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area;
- Bruising or bleeding near the genital area;
- Sexually transmitted disease;
- Vaginal discharge or infection;
- Stomach pains;
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down;
- Pregnancy.

##### 3.3.2 Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn;
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people;
- Having nightmares;
- Running away from home;
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level;



- Sexual drawings or language beyond their age or developmental level;
- Bedwetting;
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia;
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts;
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about;
- Substance or drug abuse;
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money;
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence);
- Acting in a sexually explicit way.

### 3.4 Recognising neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise. It occurs over a period of time; it is not a once off incident.

#### 3.4.1 The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children;
- Constantly dirty or 'smelly';
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight;
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

#### 3.4.2 Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time;
- Not requesting medical assistance and / or failing to attend appointments;
- Having few friends;
- Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.



## 4. Responding to an Allegation / Concern of Child Abuse by a Spiritan or Co-worker

At all times action must take place in instances where child abuse is:

- **Observed.** Immediate intervention is required in order to provide a safe place for the child. Report the intervention to the Designated Liaison Person (henceforth DLP).
- **Disclosed.** When there is a disclosure of current or historical child abuse either by the individual directly affected or by a third party this must be reported to the DLP.
- **Suspected.** Any concern that a child is at risk must be brought to the attention of the DLP who will seek advice from the Child and Family Agency in the Republic of Ireland (henceforth CFA<sup>1</sup> also known as Tusla) or the Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team in Northern Ireland (henceforth HSC). It is not the responsibility of the individual who has a concern or the DLP to investigate the matter or to decide whether abuse has taken place.

### 4.1 If you receive a concern or allegation

- a. Act immediately – refer the matter to the DLP who will consult / refer to the CFA / HSC and / or An Garda Síochána / PSNI as appropriate.
- b. If required, the Spiritan Community Safeguarding Representative (henceforth SSR) will assist you in contacting the DLP.
- c. Make a written record without delay using as many of the person's words as possible on the Spiritan Recording Form (Form 3), available in the Safeguarding Folder. This initial recording will form the first entry in the file and will be retained by the DLP. All original notes and records will be passed on to the DLP. Any copies of records must be stored in a secure and confidential place.
- d. Not all persons will wish to make a formal report. Nonetheless all information about the existence of a concern must be communicated to the DLP.
- e. Do not be selective. Include details which may seem irrelevant. It may prove invaluable at a later stage in an investigation.
- f. In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at *immediate and serious risk*, contact the CFA / HSC directly. Where the appropriate CFA / HSC staff are not available, An Garda Síochána / PSNI should be contacted to ensure that *under no circumstances* is a child left in a dangerous situation. Inform the DLP as soon as possible.

<sup>1</sup> The Child and Family Agency, established with effect from 1/1/2014, brings together child protection and welfare agencies operated by the Health Services Executive (HSE).



- g. Explain to the person raising the concern what will happen next. Indicate who will be made aware of the information given by them. Give him / her the contact details of the DLP and Support Person.
- h. The allegation is revealed to others only on a “need to know” basis.

#### 4.2 Feedback to the person who made the referral.

Persons who refer child welfare concerns to the DLP should have their reports acknowledged within 24 hours and be informed of what will most likely happen next.

#### 4.3 Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the report

If you do not agree with the outcome of your report to the DLP, outline your on-going concern to the DLP, contact the CFA / HSC directly, and inform the DLP of the outcome.

#### 4.4. Disclosure by a child

Children have a right to be listened to and be heard. Any allegation or suspicion of the sexual abuse of a child should be reported to the civil authorities, and if the allegation / suspicion refers to a Spiritan or co-worker it should be reported to the Provincial and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) also. Children who suffer abuse often hide the experience; it may be that the child has been abused by an adult who exercises power and control over them or the adult may have used threats to harm the child or his/her family if the child discloses the abuse. The child may be manipulated into believing that the abuse is his / her fault or that they are equally to blame and should be ashamed of what has happened.

Children who are very young or have a disability or communication difficulties may need skilled help to communicate their message. Children whose first language is not English may also need extra help.

##### 4.4.1 Do

- Stay calm, listen carefully and patiently;
- Reassure the child s/he is right to tell you;
- Explain, in an age-appropriate manner, that you will have to inform the appropriate authorities;
- Record what the child said as soon as possible after the meeting, using the child's own words as far as possible;
- Tell the child what will happen next;
- Complete the Spiritan Safeguarding Recording Form, sign and date it, and forward it to DLP;



- Seek advice from DLP or social services about who should inform the parents;
- Remember: It is not your role to investigate or decide if abuse has taken place.

##### 4.4.2 Do not

- Make judgements about the alleged abuser;
- Promise to keep this a secret;
- Tell the child stories about other people;
- Tell the child that everything will be fixed straight away;
- Press for details, except to clarify;
- Fill in words or finish sentences for the child;
- Show anger, shock or embarrassment, or give your opinion;
- Leave a child in a dangerous situation.

##### 4.4.3 In an emergency

If a child is at *immediate and serious risk*, the CFA or the HSC should be contacted without delay. If a child is at immediate risk after office hours, contact the Garda in the ROI. In Northern Ireland the HSC Trust Gateway Team operates an out-of-hours service.

##### 4.4.4 Seal of Confession

An ordained Spiritan must be clear about the status of any conversation. He should make sure that there is no misunderstanding about whether or not the seal of confession applies.

##### 4.5. Disclosure by an adult

It is often very difficult for people to talk about abuse, therefore:

- Be patient;
- Listen carefully and actively;
- Create a safe environment in which the person feels able to tell as much as they can remember.

##### 4.6 People may tell about:

- Child abuse that is happening now – current;
- Child abuse that happened some time ago – historical;
- Something that they have been told and that they strongly believe to be true;
- Seeing signs of abuse that they have noticed e.g. unexplained physical injuries on a child;
- Something that they have witnessed, such as inappropriate behaviour by an adult towards a child.



#### 4.7 Where information is given in person, consider the following:

- Listen carefully to that person, but do not ask intrusive or leading questions;
- Stay calm, taking the concern being raised seriously, and reassure the person raising the concern that telling is the right thing to do;
- Allow the person to continue at his/her own pace;
- Check with the person to make sure that you have understood what they actually said. Do not suggest words; use their language;
- Make no promises that cannot be kept, particularly in relation to secrecy. This information will be reported to the relevant authorities;
- Explain the referral procedures;
- Offer to accompany the person to the DLP / Support Person, to the CFA / HSC or to the Gardaí / PSNI as appropriate;
- Do not make any comments about the respondent (the person against whom an allegation has been made) or make assumptions. Be aware that a person's ability to recount his or her concern or allegation will depend on age, culture, nationality and upon any disability which may affect use of language or range of vocabulary;
- Adopt a listening style which is compassionate, calm and reassuring. If the information given to you shocks, disgusts or distresses you, do not allow these feelings to show. If you do, you may inadvertently dissuade the person from giving any further information;
- Avoid statements about your belief / disbelief of the information given;
- Do not question beyond checking what has been said. It is the job of the CFA / HSC and / or An Garda Síochána / PSNI to investigate. There must be no probing for detail beyond that which has been freely given;
- An ordained Spiritan must be clear about the status of such a conversation. Make sure there is no misunderstanding about whether or not the Seal of Confession applies.

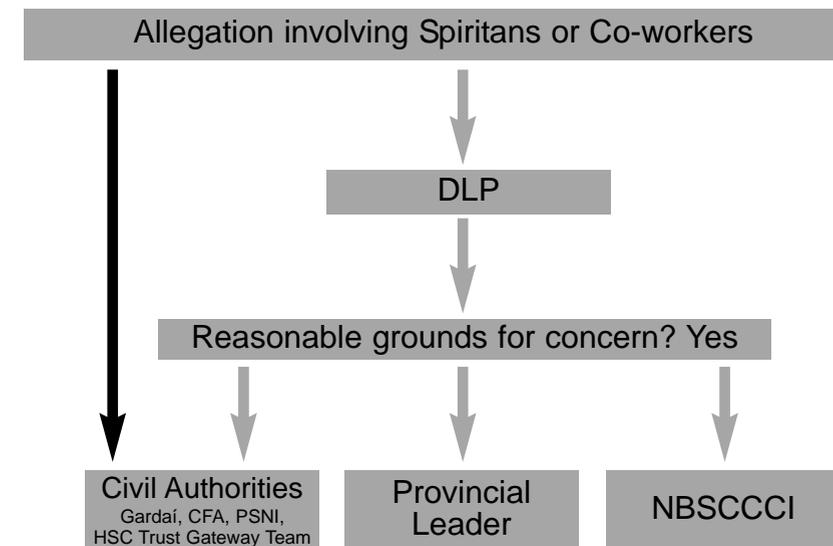
#### 4.8 Listening to a person who admits abusing a child

It is necessary to tell a person who admits an offence against a child or young person (outside of Confession) that such information cannot be kept confidential. If such an admission is made, even where the admission relates to something which happened a long time ago, the matter must be referred to the DLP as soon as possible, and s/he will follow the procedures for referral to the CFA / HSC and An Garda Síochána / PSNI.



## 5. Reporting Procedure

This procedure must be followed by all Spiritans and co-workers when a concern about the abuse of a child, either current or historical, is raised regarding a Spiritan or co-worker in the Irish Province.



1. All safeguarding concerns and allegations concerning Spiritans or co-workers should be passed on to the Spiritan DLP;
2. The DLP will report the concern/allegation to the CFA / HSC or An Garda Síochána / PSNI without delay;
3. If the DLP or person reporting is unsure if there are reasonable grounds for concern, the DLP will seek the advice of the CFA / HSC;
4. A complete written record is kept in relation to the concern including the subsequent action and all communication with the civil authorities;
5. The DLP will inform the Provincial Leader of all reports and contacts with the civil authorities. If a child is in *immediate danger*, contact the CFA / HSC directly or, if out of hours, the Gardaí. Then inform the DLP;
6. If the concern relates to a Spiritan, the DLP will inform the NBSCCCI;



7. Care must be taken to protect a person's right to confidentiality. Information will be given to others on a 'need to know' basis;
8. Any person may report directly to the civil authorities. If such a report concerning a Spiritan or co-worker is made, the DLP should be informed as soon as possible;
9. It is not the role of the DLP or the person reporting to investigate the concern / allegation.



## 6. Complaints Procedure

This complaints procedure deals with complaints made in relation to:

- A. The handling of an allegation / concern / issue;
- B. Unacceptable behaviour towards a child.

It does not deal with the reporting of a child safeguarding concern.

- A. Where the complaint relates to how a complaint of abuse was handled, the person making the complaint can contact the:
  - a. Spiritan Safeguarding Office;
  - b. Provincial Leadership Team;
  - c. National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI);
  - d. CFA / HSC.

A written request for a review should be forwarded to one of the previously mentioned bodies within three calendar months of the conclusion of the investigation of the initial concern, using Complaint Form 4 in the Safeguarding Folder.

- B. If the complaint concerns unacceptable behaviour of a Spiritan or co-worker towards a child:
  - a. Speak directly to the person responsible;
  - b. If the issue is not resolved it may be brought to the attention of the Community Leader or Safeguarding Office to be dealt with promptly and fairly;
  - c. If the issue is still not resolved at that level it may be referred to the Provincial Leadership Team;
  - d. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be arrived at within a further month, the complainant is invited to put the complaint in writing for consideration by a mutually agreed mediator, who will be invited to dialogue with all concerned;
  - e. The determination of the mediator will be final.



## 7. Spiritan Safeguarding Structures

### 7.1. Spiritan Safeguarding Representative

In every Spiritan Community there is a named Spiritan Safeguarding Representative (henceforth SSR). It is the responsibility of the Local Community Leader to ensure that a person is nominated and assigned to this role. The SSR promotes and monitors safeguarding in the community.

### 7.2 Designated Liaison Person

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the Spiritan Congregation in Ireland is appointed by the Provincial Leader to receive allegations of child abuse by Spiritans or their co-workers, record and report them to the relevant church and state authorities. A deputy DLP is also appointed who can act in the event that the DLP is not available to deal with the concern.

### 7.3 Support Person for Survivors and their Families

The Support Person for Survivors and their Families is appointed by the Provincial Leader to assist those who make an allegation or disclose abuse. The Support Person will assist, where appropriate, communication with the DLP to facilitate access to information and to represent the needs and concerns of those who make the allegation.

### 7.4 Adviser

The Provincial, in consultation with the respondent, appoints an Adviser to be available to any Spiritan against whom an allegation of abuse has been made. The Adviser shall offer pastoral support and shall represent the needs of the respondent to the Provincial Leadership Team (henceforth PLT) and assist, where appropriate, with communication between the respondent, the Designated Liaison Person and the PLT. The respondent's adviser cannot act as the respondent's therapist or spiritual adviser. Under no circumstances should the same person act as Adviser for respondent and Support Person for the survivor.

### 7.5 Spiritan Safeguarding Committee

The Spiritan Safeguarding Committee has a supportive and developmental role. It supports the work of the Spiritan Safeguarding Office and advises it, and the Provincial Leadership Team, on a range of matters including:

- Creating, maintaining and monitoring a safe environment for children in all aspects of Spiritan life and activity;
- The safe recruitment of volunteers and staff;
- The provision of training for all Spiritans in ministry and their co-workers;



- Human resources required for implementing best safeguarding practice across services;
- The development, implementation and review of policies;
- Assisting in identifying emerging needs and priorities;
- The development of audits to ensure adherence to policies and procedures;
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the Spiritan Safeguarding Office.

### 7.6 Advisory Panel

The Advisory Panel is a consultative panel, set up to advise and assist the Provincial at all stages of the investigative process into alleged child abuse by members of the Congregation. The Panel provides him with a consistent and accessible source of guidance. The Advisory Panel may provide advice whether specialist risk assessment should be sought in relation to a Child safeguarding concern. The Advisory Panel will collectively provide the expertise, experience and impartiality necessary in the field of safeguarding. No member of the panel shall act in a professional capacity to either the person making the allegation or the respondent.

### 7.7 Monitoring Panel

Due to an allegation / conviction of child abuse having been made against him, a Spiritan may come to a voluntary agreement with the Provincial about restrictions of his ministry and residence, or be placed under precept and supervision in a Spiritan Community. A Health Care and Safety Plan is drawn up for each respondent by the Provincial Leader in consultation with the Spiritan Health Care Manager, Monitoring Panel, CFA / HSC, and An Garda Síochána / PSNI. The number and severity of the restrictions placed on a respondent will be commensurate with the nature of the accusation. The purpose of the Monitoring Panel is to monitor the adherence of the respondent to agreements made between the Provincial and the respondents or the precepts placed on them.

### 7.8 External Supervisor

The External Supervisor oversees the adherence of respondents to the agreements / precepts and precepts placed on them, and reports to the Monitoring Panel.

The External Supervisor:

- Visits the respondents on a regular basis, planned and unannounced;
- Notes their concerns;
- Reports to the Monitoring Panel on the adherence of the respondents to their agreements / precepts;
- Advises the Monitoring Panel on any action that is deemed necessary to ensure that the risk to children is minimised.



### 7.9 Spiritan Safeguarding Office

The members of the Spiritan Safeguarding Office, with the Provincial Leadership Team and the Safeguarding Committee, devise and revise safeguarding policies, determine and present appropriate training to different groups within the Congregation, and co-operate and comply with Church and civil authorities' laws and policies.

The Safeguarding Office staff informs the Provincial (or his delegate) of developments and communicates the concerns, needs, and requests of persons who have sought their assistance.



## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

### 8.1. Role of the Spiritan Safeguarding Representative

Every community shall have a trained Spiritan Safeguarding Representative. The role of the Spiritan Safeguarding Representative is to:

- Raise awareness of what safeguarding involves;
- Ensure that key safeguarding information is disseminated;
- Co-operate with the Spiritan Safeguarding Office in relation to the monitoring of safeguarding practices, including the annual safeguarding audit;
- Assist Spiritans and co-workers, if required, to contact the DLP or the Support Person.

8.1.1 The Spiritan Safeguarding Representative is responsible for:

- Ensuring that any activity taking place in his/her Community operates in a manner which facilitates the safety and wellbeing of the children involved;
- Briefing the Community on best practice principles;
- Publicising the contact details of the child safeguarding services and the relevant civil authorities;
- The overall responsibility for safeguarding children in each Spiritan Community remains with the person in charge, i.e. the Local Community Leader.

### 8.2. Role of the Designated Liaison Person

The DLP's role is to receive information about a concern, allegation or disclosure of abuse relating to a Spiritan or co-worker and to report all child-safeguarding concerns, allegations and disclosures to the civil and ecclesial authorities without delay.

8.2.1 The DLP is required to:

- i. Receive allegations / concerns of child abuse;
- ii. Report the concern to the statutory authorities without delay regardless of whether the respondent is alive or not;
- iii. Create a Child Safeguarding Case File for every referral that includes a log of actions, events and information. Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event. They must be timed and dated by the author;



- iv. Take possession of any written records made by any person in connection with the case and place them on the Child Protection Case File;
- v. Explain the procedures for addressing the concern, allegation or disclosure to the person who has raised the concern;
- vi. Contact emergency or appropriate service where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk of harm;
- vii. Seek appropriate advice from the CFA / HSC and / or An Garda Síochána / PSNI / NBSCCCI. The DLP must keep a written record of the outcome in the Spiritan Safeguarding Case File. Decisions not to report a matter must be made by the CFA;
- viii. Inform the Provincial and the NBSCCCI that a complaint has been made and make a recommendation about any immediate action that needs to be taken in order to ensure the safety of children;
- ix. Make enquiries to identify the present and previous appointments of the respondent in order to establish whether there are any previous concerns about his/her practice, or any current grounds for concern in relation to the safety and well-being of children;
- x. Consult the Provincial regarding the appointment of an Adviser;
- xi. With the agreement of the Gardaí / PSNI, arrange to meet the respondent to:
  - Inform him / her that an allegation has been made; the consequences are outlined and the support structures are discussed. The respondent is informed that:
    - S/he is not obliged, in law, to respond or to furnish evidence and that anything s/he says will be taken into account in any subsequent investigation of the allegation;
    - S/he is entitled to seek legal advice – civil and, where appropriate, canonical.
  - Provide the respondent with further information concerning the allegation with the agreement of the CFA / HSC, An Garda Síochána / PSNI;
  - Make a written record of all meetings.
- xii. Implement the Reporting Policy as outlined in Sections 5 of this document;
- xiii. Ensure the availability of the Advisory Panel, if required, and convene the Advisory Panel at an appropriate time;



- xiv. Allow the CFA / HSC / An Garda Síochána / PSNI to conduct their enquiries unimpeded;
- xv. Maintain a dialogue with the Investigating Officer or Social Worker to monitor the progress of the case and act on any advice given. Details of contacts made should be recorded chronologically on the Child Safeguarding Case File;
- xvi. Request an update in writing from the CFA / HSC / An Garda Síochána / PSNI about the outcome of their investigations; this request should be made in writing;
- xvii. Conduct, for co-workers, an internal investigation at the conclusion of any police investigation or where no such civil investigation takes place. Any internal investigation will be initiated in cases where child protection concerns remain or where disciplinary action needs to be considered. Such an investigation will gather and assess available information from all sources and witnesses. Every effort should be made, in consultation with the CFA / HSC / An Garda Síochána / PSNI, to avoid the necessity to interview child witnesses for the purposes of disciplinary inquiries;

This investigation (which takes place after the statutory enquiries have been completed) should be conducted expeditiously. In cases where there is a delay, and where a Spiritan has temporarily stood down from active ministry or where a lay person has temporarily stood down from duties, it is important to keep everyone informed of the progress of the investigation and to maintain records of such communications;

Where an investigation concerns a Spiritan, the requirements of Canon Law will be observed. A canonical investigation of a Spiritan will be carried out by the Congregation after the statutory investigation is completed. Where an allegation or suspicion is made against the DLP, the information must be passed to the Deputy DLP and the process as outlined should be carried out by him/her.

### 8.3 Role of Support Person

- i. The Support Person is to be available to those who make an allegation / disclose abuse under these procedures. The role of the Support Person is to:
  - a. Assist, where appropriate, with communication between the child or adult making an allegation / disclosure and the DLP and the Congregation;
  - b. Facilitate the child or adult in gaining access to information and help;
  - c. Represent the concerns of the survivor during the inquiry process;



- ii. The Support Person will also extend appropriate pastoral support to family members of survivors;
- iii. The Support Person will be clear about his / her role and should receive appropriate training;
- iv. The Support Person is not a counsellor for the complainant, and must not be or act as their therapist;
- v. The Support Person must be particularly attentive to the expressed needs and objectives of the complainant, and the fact that some may be reluctant to seek help;
- vi. The Support Person should consider how any therapeutic or spiritual needs of a child or adult who has made an allegation / disclosed abuse may be met, and will be mindful of his / her ongoing vulnerability during this process.
- vii. In addition, the Support Person should:
  - Consider any wishes of the complainant in regard to a pastoral response by the Spiritans to his or her family;
  - Be available to the complainant throughout the course of the inquiry process, and thereafter as required;
  - Ensure the complainant is kept informed of developments in their case;
  - Arrange, if considered helpful, a meeting between the complainant and the Provincial Leader or member of the Provincial Leadership Team.

**NB**

Under no circumstances should the same Support Person be provided for both the complainant and the respondent.



## 9. Access to Advice and Pastoral Support

**9.1** Through its Safeguarding Office, the Spiritan Congregation wants to reach out to survivors of abuse, and their families, who are seeking pathways of recovery.

### **9.2 For those who have been abused**

Anyone who has been abused should be assisted and supported in seeking help and reporting the crime:

- The Spiritan Safeguarding Office will provide information about what to do and where to go for help;
- The Support Person for Survivors and their Families will be available to provide pastoral support to those who make an allegation or raise a concern. See Section 8.3 of this document for Role and Responsibilities of the Support Person.

### **9.3 For those who have abused**

Spiritans or co-workers who have abused children should be helped to face up to the reality of the harm they have caused, as well as being assisted in a manner which does not compromise the safety of children.

An Adviser will be appointed to be available to the Spiritan against whom a child safeguarding concern/allegation has been made. See Role of Adviser at 7.4 above.

### **9.4 For Spiritan personnel**

Child abuse, both current and historical, is distressing and can be difficult to deal with. The Congregation recognises that it has a duty to ensure that advice and support is available to assist Spiritans and co-workers to play their part in protecting children and assisting adults who have been abused.

Section 4 of this document gives guidance on how to respond to a child or adult who raises a concern or makes an allegation.

All Spiritans and co-workers can access support about safeguarding issues from the Spiritan Safeguarding Office, civil authorities and the NBSCCCI – see Appendices A and B for their contact details.



## 10. Confidentiality / Data Protection

### 10.1 Confidentiality

**10.1.1** The Congregation recognises the importance of ensuring people's right to confidentiality and is committed to keeping confidential all personal information about complainants and respondents in so far as this is possible and lawful. When there is a safeguarding of children issue, or welfare concerns arise in relation to a child, the information will be shared on a "need to know" basis in the best interest of the child as provided for by this Policy and by law. The confidentiality of such information should not and cannot be guaranteed by members of the Congregation, and reporting same, on receipt, to a Designated Liaison Person or relevant church / statutory authority for the protection of a child is not, therefore, a breach of confidentiality.

**10.1.2** The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 creates an offence of failing to disclose to the Gardaí, without reasonable excuse, information relating to certain specified serious offences against a child or a vulnerable person, where it is known or believed that that information will be of material assistance in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of another person known or believed by the first person to have committed an offence.

The specified offences include most sexual offences as well as, among others, offences such as assault causing harm, abduction, manslaughter and murder.

A person is not obliged to report vague rumours or suspicions: only information which that person believes will be of material assistance to the Gardaí.

The Act does not apply to information received before the passing of the Act on 18 July, 2012. It does, however, apply to information obtained after 18 July, 2012 even where that information relates to offences committed prior to that date. The offence can only be prosecuted against a person who first received such information after 18 July, 2012.

**10.1.3** The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse to the relevant authorities "reasonably and in good faith". Even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted 'reasonably and in good faith' in making the report. The main provisions of the 1998 Act are:

- The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse "reasonably and in good faith" to designated officers of the CFA / HSC or any member of An Garda Síochána.
- The provision of significant protections for employees who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal.
- The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities "knowing that



statement to be false". This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

### 10.2 Data Protection

**10.2.1** Data protection law attempts to ensure that an individual's right to privacy and dignity are respected, particularly regarding the use and sharing of personal data, whether the personal data is held electronically or held in manual form in a structured file, for example, hard copy safeguarding files.

#### 10.2.2 The Congregation is required under the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003 to:

- (a) Obtain and process personal data fairly;
- (b) Keep it only for specified, explicit and lawful purposes;
- (c) Process personal data only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was obtained;
- (d) Ensure that personal data is kept safe and secure;
- (e) Ensure that personal data is accurate, complete and up to date;
- (f) Ensure that personal data is adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- (g) Retain personal data for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it was obtained; and
- (h) Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual on request.

#### 10.2.3 Retention and Security of Records

- Records which contain personal information should be stored in a secure, locked and fireproof container away from unauthorised access.
- Only persons who are approved by the Provincial Leader have access to personal information.
- All computers/laptops used for the purpose of record keeping must be password protected and encrypted.
- Persons who store information on shared computers/laptops must use individual passwords.
- All case management and safeguarding files must be retained for a period of 100 years.
- Where there is no legal requirement to retain records beyond closure, the records will be destroyed by shredding and disposed of securely.

#### 10.2.4 Access to Information

- Persons are entitled, on request, to access their own personal data kept by the Congregation, subject to limited exceptions.
- Persons wishing to access their own personal data will be provided with the data to which they are entitled in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003.
- Such access requests must be made in writing to the Provincial Leader.



## 11. Safe Recruitment

When a situation becomes vacant or a new position is created those responsible for filling them should be aware of best practice in the recruitment of employees and volunteers. All positions of employment require a safe practice at every stage of the recruitment process in order to promote the welfare of children. Safe recruitment requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing, and evaluating information from and about applicants. The following must be observed:

- Clear job descriptions, skills descriptions and person specifications for all paid and voluntary posts;
- All vacancies for volunteers or paid staff should be openly advertised;
- Application Forms should be used for recruitment to all posts, including those to be filled by volunteers. Applications must include Photo ID;
- Application Forms should include a Declaration Form (Form 5 in the Safeguarding Folder) which applicants are required to sign, stating that they do not have criminal charges, cautions or convictions against them, or any other reason why it may be inappropriate for them to work with children;
- Garda vetting;
- A specific reference to suitability to work with children if the position entails such contact;
- Written references should be obtained in respect of all candidates being considered for paid or voluntary appointment. All written references must be followed up by verbal contact with referees;
- An interview panel of at least two people with appropriate competence and authority;
- Transparent interview procedures that are recorded and stored securely until the process is fully complete;
- Verification that the successful applicant has the academic or vocational qualifications claimed;
- Verification of previous employment history and experience.

For more details of Recruitment Process see Resource 2 in the Spiritan Safeguarding Folder.



## 12. Vetting

### 12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 All Spiritans in ministry and their co-workers are required to complete the vetting process before they start work or act as a volunteer. If it is necessary that a person takes up work before the Garda / Police Vetting process is concluded, they must sign a Declaration Form and their contact with children should be closely supervised until the Garda / Police Vetting process is complete. The Declaration Form is to be found in the Safeguarding Folder.

### 12.2 Vetting Procedure

**12.2.1 Application:** The applicant is asked to complete a Vetting Application Form (Form 6 in Spiritan Safeguarding Folder) and return it to the Community Leader who in the case of ordained Spiritans forwards it to the Provincial. All lay co-workers' completed forms are returned to the Spiritan Vetting Officer (henceforth SVO).

- a. The completed Vetting Application Form is forwarded by the Provincial or the SVO to the Vetting Administrator in the IMU who forwards it to the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU);
- b. The GCVU returns applications and outcome of the vetting process to the IMU Garda Vetting Administrator who in turn forwards them to the Provincial or the SVO. The Provincial or the SVO informs the applicant of the outcome of the vetting process through the Community Leader;
- c. If the returned application contains information relevant to the employment / retention of the applicant, the Provincial must consider whether or not a Process Review Meeting is appropriate.
- d. In Northern Ireland vetting is done by ACCESSNI.

### 12.2.2 Responsibilities of applicant

The applicant is responsible for completing the Vetting Application Form truthfully and in its entirety and for returning it to the relevant person in the Congregation. The applicant is required to make a full and complete declaration; failure to do so may jeopardise the offer of employment or retention in his/her present post.

### 12.2.3 Process Review Meeting

The GCVU provides the Provincial or SVO with details of all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, and / or convictions. No Process Review Meeting is required where none of the above is identified. Consideration for a



Process Review Meeting will occur when an application is returned from the GCVU with relevant information attached. The Provincial or SVO will clarify any information received from the GCVU with the applicant. If the information received gives rise to concern, a Process Review Meeting is strongly recommended. In the event of a Process Review Meeting being held, the following steps are taken:

1. Provincial or Community Leader arranges the meeting.
2. The applicant is invited to attend and may be accompanied by a support person if he/she wishes.
3. The meeting has two purposes; firstly to verify the applicant's identity and secondly, to give the applicant an opportunity to discuss his / her application in the light of the information received from the GCVU.
4. An applicant who asserts that his / her Garda / Police Vetting Disclosure may be inaccurate must provide satisfactory evidence to support his / her assertion.
5. If the applicant provides satisfactory evidence to support his / her assertion that his / her Garda Vetting Disclosure may be inaccurate, the Provincial or SVO will contact the Garda Central Vetting Unit with that information, and any other information as deemed necessary. The Garda Central Vetting Unit will conduct further checks required in respect of the applicant and write back to the Provincial or SVO who will communicate the response to the applicant.
6. The Provincial or SVO keeps a written record of the meeting.

#### 12.2.4 Risk Assessment Guidelines

A conviction, prosecution or case pending will not necessarily prevent an applicant from being considered for employment / retention. The decision-making process is fundamentally to assess the suitability of an applicant. Any information which arises from the Vetting process may influence that decision.

The following criteria will be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- The nature of any convictions;
- The number of any convictions;
- The frequency of any convictions;
- The post for which the applicant is seeking employment/engagement;
- The self-disclosure of the conviction/case pending by the applicant;
- Time lapse since last conviction;
- The steps the applicant has taken to prevent re-offending.



#### 12.2.5 Data Confidentiality

- (a) Vetting information will be shared with other appropriate and relevant staff only to the extent required by the recruitment / retention process.
- (b) All vetting applications received by the Provincial Leader and SVO are entered onto the Spiritan Vetting Database. The database contains information such as full name, position applied for / currently held, date of application, date of outcome, renewal date. Access to the database is restricted to named Spiritan personnel and password-protected, and the data is stored safely and securely.
- (c) It is Spiritan policy that only those who are entitled to see the vetting application (or any data disclosed as part of the vetting process) as part of their duties will be allowed to do so. Under this Policy and the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003, applicants can request access to any personal data held about them, such requests to be made in writing to the Provincial Leader.



## 13. Training and Education

**13.1** It is essential that all Spiritans and co-workers are provided with appropriate child-safeguarding training along with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge. Maintaining a high standard of training and education protects:

- Children, by ensuring that they are in a safe environment and minimises risk of abuse;
- Spiritans and co-workers, by outlining best practices and procedures;
- The integrity of the Spiritan Congregation and its mission, by making clear its commitment to keeping children safe and modelling best practice.

### 13.2 The Province requires

- All Spiritans in any form of ministry to undertake a recognised programme of child safeguarding training approved by the NBSCCCI;
- All Spiritans and co-workers to receive induction into the Spiritan Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Children.

### 13.3 The Spiritan Safeguarding Committee will

- a. Identify the training needs of Spiritans and co-workers;
- b. Ensure that all training is evaluated and presented by suitably qualified trainers;
- c. Monitor the training of all Spiritans and co-workers.



## 14. Code of Behaviour

### 14.1 Interaction with Children

Adults should:

- a. Avoid spending time alone with a child or young person. Should circumstances arise where this is unavoidable, inform another responsible adult and keep a note of what took place and why you were alone with a child;
- b. Treat children and young people in a manner that fully respects their dignity and rights;
- c. Provide an example of good conduct at all times;
- d. Respect each child's boundaries, avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- e. Help children develop an awareness and understanding of their own right to protection and a respect for the rights of others;
- f. Provide children with information on how, and from whom, they can seek help if they have a concern;
- g. Be visible to others if working alone with a child;
- h. Challenge and report behaviour that is abusive or potentially abusive;
- i. Develop a culture where children are encouraged to talk openly about their contacts with staff and others;
- j. Unless there are at least two adults present, avoid permitting children and young people to work or remain in the chapel, community house or property.

### 14.2 Spiritans or their co-workers must never:

- a. Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse a child;
- b. Develop sexual relationships with a child;
- c. Engage in inappropriate conversations with children;
- d. Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative / abusive;
- e. Act in ways that may place a child at risk of abuse;
- f. Take children to their bedrooms;
- g. Use alcohol, tobacco or non-prescriptive drugs when in the company of children;
- h. Offer alcohol, tobacco or non-prescriptive drugs to children.



### 14.3 Actions and Behaviours to be avoided

Spiritans and their co-workers must avoid actions and behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. They should never:

- a. Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
- b. Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative;
- c. Have a child or children stay overnight at their home, unsupervised;
- d. Sleep in the same room or bed with a child;
- e. Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves;
- f. Condone or participate in behaviour by children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- g. Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children;
- h. Exclude or discriminate against particular children or show favour towards particular children.

### 14.4 Implementation

Any member of the Congregation or co-worker who becomes aware of a breach of this Code of Conduct should bring the matter to the attention of the Community Leader, Designated Liaison Person or Provincial. If there is a risk to a child the matter is dealt with as outlined in Section 5 of this document – Reporting Procedure.



## 15. Working Safely with Children

### Activities Involving Children

(if not covered by either school or parish safeguarding policies)

#### 15.1 Planning:

- Spiritans and co-workers should be fully aware of their roles and responsibilities;
- Leaders should be aware of children's relevant medical conditions including allergies;
- Leaders working with a mixed group must be drawn from both genders;
- There should be a clearly designated Group Leader for all activities;
- Parents / guardians and children must complete a Consent Form including relevant medical details, any special needs and emergency contact numbers – see Form 7 in the Safeguarding Folder;
- Accident / Incident Report Forms should always be completed whenever an incident occurs – for Accident Report Form see Form 8 in the Safeguarding Folder;
- All children are checked in to an activity on a Registration Form – see Form 9 in the Safeguarding Folder;
- All activities must be planned and managed in a way that minimises risk;
- An initial safety check for hazards should be done on each occasion before premises are used;
- Games and icebreakers should be structured to take into consideration the age of participants, risk of physical injury and personal space issues;
- Adequate insurance cover must be in place;
- Ensure proper safety standards and bear in mind that extra insurance may be necessary for some activities;
- Prescribed medication may only be administered to a child with the written consent of parent / carer.



### 15.2 Supervision of Children

Having clearly defined supervision arrangements minimises the risk of accidents occurring and also protects children from intentional harm. When planning activities for children and young people, there should always be a minimum of two adults to accompany the group.

- The recommended ratios for children of 8 years and over are two adult supervisors for every 20 children (15 children for outdoor activity), and one additional adult supervisor for every extra 10 children;
- For residential retreats and pilgrimages this ratio should be lower to allow for adequate free time for leaders;
- This ratio may change from time to time; always check with the relevant authority.

### 15.3 Guidance on Photographing Children and Young People

#### 15.3.1 Care must be taken to avoid:

- The identification of individual children;
- The identification of children in vulnerable circumstances which may cause embarrassment / distress.

#### 15.3.2 Reason and purpose:

Photographs should only be taken by an authorised person who has a suitable reason relating to the child or organisation i.e. is a parent / carer, a relative, a leader of an activity or a member of staff. Unless photographs are taken as part of activities such as sporting events, plays and concerts, they should not be used for a public purpose e.g. not posted on the internet and not passed on to others unconnected to the child.

#### 15.3.3 Appropriateness of images

- No images of children are to be taken, which capture them in what are commonly understood as non-public activities like toileting or changing clothes, or which show body parts not usually visible in public settings;
- Children should be fully clothed;
- Images involving groups should be about that activity and not the individual child;
- Photographs of children should not show them in breach of rules, or behaving in a reckless or dangerous fashion.



### 15.3.4 Identification of subjects

A photograph should not allow an unauthorised person to identify a child or their whereabouts. If the full name of a child or young person is used, there should be no photograph; if a photograph is being used, the full name should not be given.

### 15.3.5 Photography for public display

Parents and children must consent to the use of an image and this consent must be recorded and filed.

### 15.4 Use of mobile phones

Permission to use mobile phones will vary according to the nature of the activity that is being organised / conducted. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to make it clear to the participants what level of use is deemed appropriate in the context of the activity being organised. Because mobile phones can be used for taking photographs the guidelines outlined above also apply.

### 15.4.1 Communication and Data Technology

Leaders will not share their phone numbers with children. When necessary for organisational purposes, permission is sought from the parent asking if the leaders can send messages by text to participants about future meetings; it is best practice to copy all texts to parents. Spiritans and co-workers who receive a 'Friend Request' from a child in their activity should always click 'Ignore'.



## 16. Spiritans out of Ministry

Spiritans who are prohibited from ministry because of allegation(s) made against them are to abide by the policies and procedures of this document and must also abide by any agreement entered into with the Provincial regarding restriction of ministry / residence or precepts placed on them.



## 17. Spiritans Working in Schools, Parishes and other Ministries

Spiritans contracted by schools, dioceses or other institutes are governed and regulated by the safeguarding policies, procedures and codes of practice of the institutes and organisations that contracted them. Spiritans so contracted must familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures of those institutes.



## 18. Spiritans from other Provinces

### 18.1 Spiritans Seeking Appointment to the Irish Province

If a Spiritan from another circumscription wishes to be appointed to the Irish Province he must complete an Application Form, signed by his Major Superior and also have a Testimonial Letter from his Major Superior supporting the application and stating that the applicant is suitable for working with children and that he does not have any continuing alcohol or substance abuse problem.

If he is an ordained Spiritan, he must have a valid celebret.

### 18.2 Spiritans Temporarily Residing in the Irish Province

- a. A Spiritan who is not ordained and wishes to engage in ministry in the Irish Province must have a Testimonial Letter from his Major Superior indicating suitability to work or interact with children.
- b. An ordained Spiritan must have a valid celebret if he wishes to engage in any ministry.
- c. A Spiritan who wishes to reside in the Province for more than three months must have a Testimonial Letter from his Major Superior stating that there is nothing in his background indicating that he would be unsuitable for working or interacting with children and that he does not have any continuing alcohol or substance abuse problem.

**Note:** The Application Form and Testimonial Letter template are available from the Irish Provincialate.



## 19. Whistleblowing

### 19.1 Introduction

- The Spiritans are committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability;
- Spiritans and their co-workers are expected and encouraged to voice any concerns about activities involving children to local superior / manager;
- All have a right to raise a concern about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour;
- All concerns will be treated, as far as possible, in the strictest confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the complainant, if requested. If, however, concerns require further action, the complainant may at a future date have to act as a witness and / or provide evidence;
- Whistleblowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support are available in the first instance from the SSR, the Spiritan DLP or the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland;
- No action will be taken against a complainant if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith. This is in line with the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998;
- Malicious allegations will also be treated in line with the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

### 19.2 How to raise a concern

- Voice your concerns, suspicions or unease as soon as you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken;
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why;
- Approach your immediate superior / supervisor / manager;
- If your concern is about your immediate superior / supervisor / manager then contact a member of the Provincial Leadership Team, the National Office for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, the CFA / HSC or the Gardaí / PSNI;
- Note your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places;
- Note the response you receive, if not satisfied, you may wish to take it to another level;



- You are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

### 19.3 What happens next?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries;
- Your supervisor/superior/manager has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation;
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith. This is in line with the Protection for Person Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998;
- Malicious allegations may be considered a disciplinary offence.



## 20. Communicating the Spiritan Safeguarding Message

**20.1** Contact details of the Spiritan Safeguarding Personnel, civil authorities and support services will be circulated by every means possible.

The latest edition of the Spiritan Safeguarding Children Policy will be available on the Spiritan website: [www.spiritan.ie](http://www.spiritan.ie)

### 20.2 Spiritan Safeguarding Children Policy

All members of the Province and their co-workers will be given a copy of this Policy and will be asked to sign an Agreement Form confirming that they have read the policy and agree to abide by it – see Form 1 in the Spiritan Safeguarding Folder.

### 20.3 Safeguarding Notices

**20.3.1** Every Spiritan Community in Ireland will clearly display a copy of the latest “Spiritan Safeguarding Children Notice” in all its properties to which the public have access. This Safeguarding Notice will detail:

- The Spiritan Safeguarding Policy Statement, clearly stating the Province’s commitment to safeguarding children, specifically indicating that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance;
- The names and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person and Support Person for the Province;
- Contact Numbers of the CFA / HSC in the surrounding region;
- Contact number of An Garda Síochána / PSNI in the surrounding region;

**20.3.2** Each Spiritan Community will be notified when there are changes to the detail on this Notice and each Community will be immediately issued with an updated Safeguarding Children Notice by the Spiritan Safeguarding Office to replace those already in existence.

### 20.4 Contact Details

All who work with children and/or young people in or on behalf of the Province will be made aware of contact numbers for the CFA / HSC, An Garda Síochána / PSNI, the DLP, the Support Person and all other pertinent information in terms of advice, help and support.



### 20.5 Updates and information

The Spiritan Safeguarding Office will give updates of developments in safeguarding children by means such as the Province's Newsletters which will be distributed to all members of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and their co-workers and the Spiritan website. These will contain the contact details of the Designated Liaison Person and the Support Person for Survivors and their Families.



## 21. Implementation of Policy

**21.1** The Congregation is committed to the implementation of all policies, procedures and protocols that contribute to keeping safe children who avail of its services. To this end checks will be put in place at Provincial and Community level to ensure full policy implementation.

### 21.2 Implementation by the Spiritan Communities

- The Spiritan Safeguarding Office will maintain regular contact with each Spiritan Community in terms of monitoring and implementation of best practice in safeguarding children. This will be done collaboratively with the Community Leader and the Spiritan Safeguarding Representative;
- Each Community is recommended to have an annual meeting to discuss safeguarding issues;
- An annual Safeguarding Audit will be undertaken by each Spiritan Community. (Form 2 in Spiritan Safeguarding Folder)

**21.3** The views of agencies involved inside and outside of Church organisations will be sought to help improve the effectiveness of measures taken.

**21.4** An annual meeting of Spiritan Safeguarding Representatives will be convened by the Spiritan Safeguarding Office.

**21.5** The Congregation will co-operate fully with any review/audit by civil authorities and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

### 21.6 Implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

- It is the responsibility of the Provincial Leadership Team (PLT), through the Spiritan Safeguarding Office, to ensure that this Spiritan Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are implemented.
- The SSC will assist implementation by offering support and guidance as required. They will also ensure that the principles of best practice in recruitment and vetting form part of its various communications and training initiatives.
- This policy will be reviewed after two years and updated in line with new legislation.



## Appendix A – Contact Details of Spiritan Personnel and Statutory Authorities

### SPIRITAN SAFEGUARDING OFFICE

4 Temple Park, Richmond Avenue South, Dublin 6.

### SPIRITAN SAFEGUARDING CO-ORDINATORS

#### Designated Liaison Person

Mr Liam Lally

**Email:** [liam.lally@spiritan.ie](mailto:liam.lally@spiritan.ie) **Tel:** 087 670 94 61

#### Support Person for Survivors

Ms Jane Ferguson

**Email:** [jane.ferguson@spiritan.ie](mailto:jane.ferguson@spiritan.ie) **Tel:** 087 740 59 36

#### Provincial Leadership Liaison Person

Brendan Carr C.S.Sp.

**Email:** [pltl@spiritan.ie](mailto:pltl@spiritan.ie) **Tel:** 01 497 72 30

#### Canonical Advisor

Edward Grimes C.S.Sp., JCL

**Email:** [fredwardgrimes@hotmail.com](mailto:fredwardgrimes@hotmail.com) **Tel:** 01 492 85 57

#### AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

Sexual Assault Investigation Unit,  
Harcourt Square, Dublin 2.

**Tel:** 01 666 34 35

A list of all Garda Stations in the country is available on [www.garda.ie/stations](http://www.garda.ie/stations)

#### POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND (PSNI)

**Tel:** 0044 (0)845 600 8000

**Website:** [www.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk)

#### CHILD AND FAMILY AGENCY

**Tel:** 01 635 2854

**Website:** [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Contact details of local Health and Social Services Board (Eastern, Northern, Southern or Western) are available at: [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/child\\_protection\\_guidance](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/child_protection_guidance)

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

**Tel:** 01 505 30 18 (Office)

**Website:** [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie)



## Appendix B – Safeguarding Support Agencies

### TOWARDS HEALING

Offers counselling and other support services to survivors (and their families) who have been abused by members of the clergy / religious orders.

#### Freephone :

Ireland: 1800 303 416

UK: 0800 0963315

**Website:** [www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)

### SPIRITUAL SUPPORT SERVICE

Columba Centre, St. Patrick's College,  
Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

**Email:** [spiritualsupport@iecon.ie](mailto:spiritualsupport@iecon.ie)

**Tel:** 01 505 3028

### ONE IN FOUR

A support service for women and men (and their families) who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence.

**Tel:** 01 662 4070

**Website:** [www.oneinfour.ie](http://www.oneinfour.ie)

### CHILDLINE

Provides a 24-hour listening service for all children up to the age of 18 years.

**Tel:** 1800 666 666

**Website:** [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

### IRISH SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN (ISPCC)

Provides a range of services to children and young people

**Tel:** 01 676 7960

**Website:** [www.ispcc.ie](http://www.ispcc.ie)

### THE SAMARITANS

Provide confidential, non-judgemental 24-hour support for people experiencing distress or despair.

**Tel:** 1850 609 0900

**Website:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)



## Appendix C – Abbreviations

<b>CFA</b>	Child and Family Agency (also known as Tusla)
<b>DLP</b>	Designated Liaison Person
<b>GCVU</b>	Garda Central Vetting Unit
<b>HSC</b>	Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team
<b>HSE</b>	Health Service Executive
<b>IMU</b>	Irish Missionary Union
<b>ISPCC</b>	Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
<b>NBSCCCI</b>	National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland
<b>NI</b>	Northern Ireland
<b>PLT</b>	Provincial Leadership Team
<b>ROI</b>	Republic of Ireland
<b>SSC</b>	Spiritan Safeguarding Committee
<b>SSO</b>	Spiritan Safeguarding Office
<b>SSR</b>	Spiritan Safeguarding Representative
<b>SVO</b>	Spiritan Vetting Officer

## NOTES



## NOTES



**Irish Spiritan Provincialate**

Temple Park, Richmond Avenue South, Dublin 6.

Tel.: 01-4977 230 / 01-4975 127 Fax: 01-4975 399

[www.spiritan.ie](http://www.spiritan.ie)