

## **PARISH OF ST. MARY'S STRANORLAR**

### **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

The Parish of St. Mary's, Stranorlar recognises the importance of ensuring people's right to confidentiality and is committed to keeping confidential all personal information about young people and their families.

The only exception may be when child protection or welfare concerns arise in relation to a young person. In this situation, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in the best interests of the young person as follows:

Information will only be forward on a need-to-know basis in order to safeguard the child/young person.

Giving information to appropriately designated persons and/or statutory authorities or the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality.

Primary carers have a right to know if personal information is being shared and a report is being made to the HSE unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk.

The Parish of St. Mary's is committed to displaying the CHILD PROTECTION POLICY IN THE DIOCESE OF RAPHOE in the Church and Parish Centre.

The names and contact numbers of the Diocesan Child Protection Designated Persons, HSE and GARDA SIOCHANA will be prominently displayed.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Parish of Stranorlar recognizes and upholds the dignity and rights of all children and young people and is committed to their protection and support in a way that promotes their human dignity and integrity as children of God. The Parish values and encourages the participation of children and young people in parish liturgies and in activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development.

In keeping with this we in the Parish undertake to do all on our power to create safe environments for children and young people so as to ensure their protection from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

The Parish has committed itself to putting procedures in place to ensure the welfare and protection of children and young people together with the welfare of those who work with them. We recognize that the management and appropriate handling of child protection and welfare is a skilled and delicate task which requires knowledge, expertise and sensitivity and we are committed to a coordinated and inter-agency approach to ensuring that the welfare of the child and young person is paramount in all we do.

All Church personnel and Volunteers must comply.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING BEST PRACTICE**

### **The Parish of Stranorlar:**

- Values and encourages the active participation of children and young people in the life of the Church in ways that enhance their physical, emotional and spiritual growth within the safe, secure and welcoming environment of the Faith community. Each person should feel valued, encouraged and affirmed;
- Recognizes and upholds the fundamental rights of the individual child and young person to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected. These rights are embedded both in our Gospel values and civil legislation;
- Acknowledges and reaffirms its commitment to the care and protection of children and young people as 'Children of God', with intrinsic dignity and irreducible worth;
- Believes that Child Protection is everyone's responsibility, but accepts that all those working with children and young people in Church ministries have a special duty of care towards them;
- Is committed to 'best practice' in the areas of Child Protection including;
  - The development of effective structures for safeguarding children and young people.
  - Responding to suspicions or allegations of child abuse, which includes cooperating with the relevant civil authorities.
  - Providing pastoral support and training for all Church personnel.
- Is engaging in a process of working towards a set of policies and procedures for those who have responsibility for the protection of children and young people in the life of the Church;
- Is willing to listen to children and young people and involve them, where appropriate in decision-making;
- Promotes an ethos and approach which at all times gives paramount consideration to the welfare of the child and young person;
- Undertakes to inform parents/guardian/primary carers of our Child Protection Policy.
- In the event of a concern about the welfare of a child or young person we will:
  - Respond to the needs of the child\inform the primary carers unless the action puts the child at further risk
  - If there are child protection concerns the Parish is obliged to pass these to the designated person and/or duty social worker
  - In the event of a complaint against a member of staff we will immediately ensure the safety of the child and inform the parents/guardians/primary carers as appropriate.
  - Will provide contact details of H.S.E., Garda Siochana and Diocesan Delegated Persons

## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

*It is necessary that the following Code of Conduct be applied as a minimum standard for all those who work with children and young people. Working within a clear Code of Conduct protects children and all those who work with them in the ministries and pastoral activities of the parish.*

- Children and young people will be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity.
- Leaders will always engage with children and young people in an open manner and care will be taken not to show favouritism.
- At least 2 Adults will be present at all times when working with children and young people. Leaders will not work alone with children and young people.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that when working with mixed gender groups, leaders of mixed gender will work in pairs.
- Leaders will not smoke or consume alcohol while having responsibility for or in the presence of young people who are in their care.
- Leaders will not undertake any task of a personal nature with children or young people, except in the case of a medical necessity when the welfare of the child or young person depends on it. Any such act undertaken should be explained to the child or young person.
- Leaders will not give their personal details or make contact with children or young people outside organized events. Any contact outside of event times shall only be in relation to the activity.
- Personal details of children and/or young people will be held only by a named leader
- The use of unprescribed drugs or illegal substances by leaders is strictly prohibited.
- Under no circumstances should Church personnel give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.
- Leaders will not be permitted to use inappropriate language or make sexually suggestive comments, either to each other or to children or young people.
- Physical contact between leaders and children and young people will be of an appropriate nature at all times. Leaders will not engage in rough play with each other or with children or young people.
- The right to privacy of children and young people will be respected at all times.
- Where a Church activity involves the use of computers and email, an internet policy will be put in place.
- Permission will be sought form Parents/Guardians/Primary carers for the taking and use of photographs.

- There will be leaders within each group with whom the children and young people can speak about their experiences and raise any concerns.
- Away trips including pilgrimages, day trips and incentive events will be in accordance with the Diocesan Code of Conduct for such activities. This Code will be made known to the children and young people as well as their parents/guardians/principle carers.

### **PARISH CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

*It is important that children and young people know the limits and boundaries appropriate to their own behavior and that of others. This Code reflects the dignity and rights of each child and young person and encourages respectful behavior.*

- Children and young people will treat each other and their leaders with courtesy, respect and dignity.
- Children and young people will respect that fact that leaders will not work alone with them.
- Children and young people will be made aware of the Code to which all adults have to adhere.
- In keeping with civil law, children and young people will not be permitted to consume alcohol, smoke or use illegal substances while participating in activities.
- Inappropriate language or sexually suggestive comments will not be permitted.
- Physical contact will be of an appropriate nature at all times.
- Unruly behavior will not be permitted.

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TO BE CONSULTED AND WILL CONTRIBUTE TO COMPISITION OF AN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

The following list, while not exhaustive, outlines some examples of bullying;

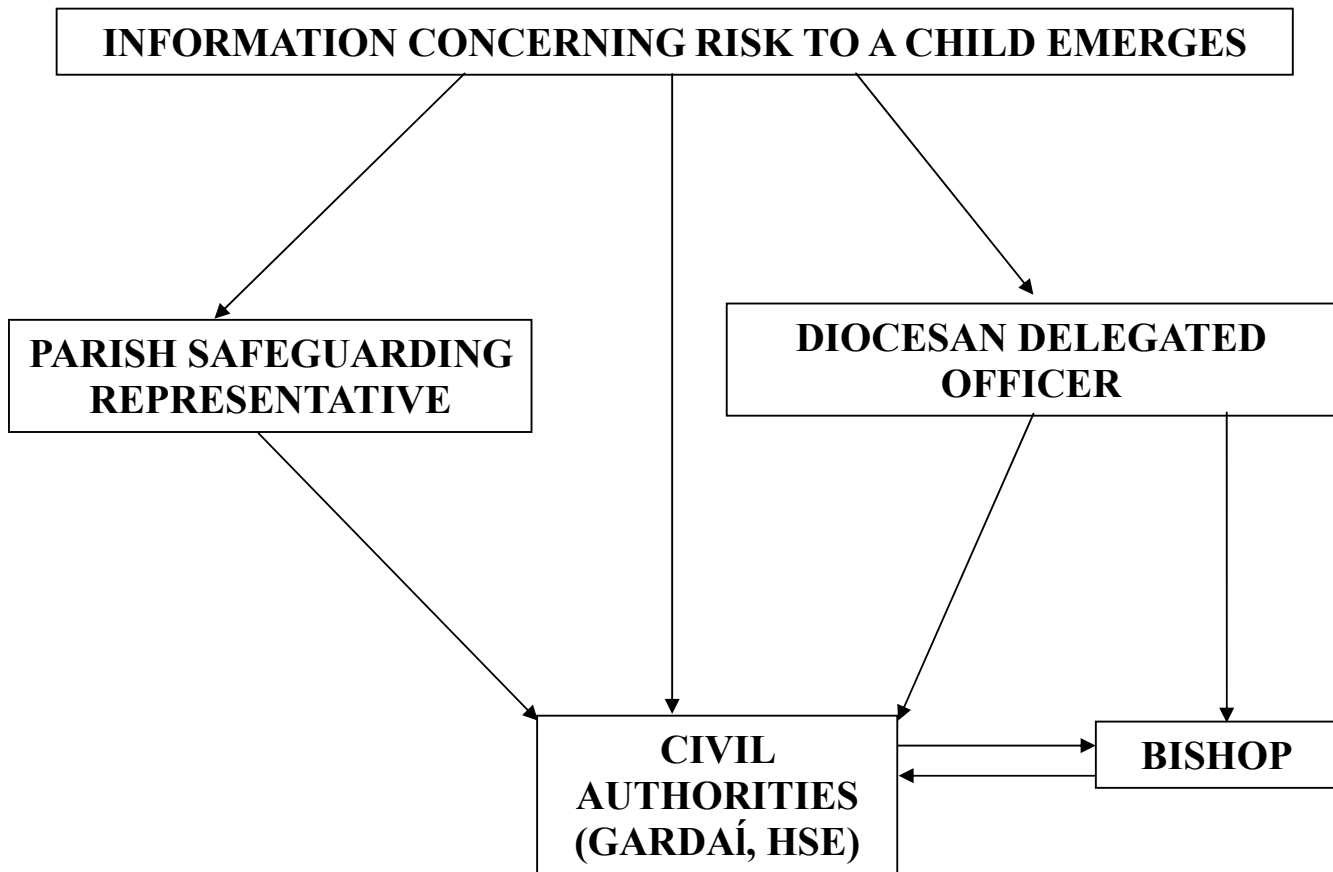
- Name calling
- Fighting/kicking/punching
- Making sarcastic/suggestive comments
- Intimidation
- Threatening
- Ignoring/excluding
- Damaging property
- Spreading rumours
- Sending abusive text messages and mms.
- Inappropriate use of internet sites to make personal comments
- Racial, ethnic or cultural comments.

## **GOOD PRACTICE WITHIN THE PARISH - BASIC PROCEDURES**

*In order to support the Parish Policy, it is necessary that the following procedures be implemented:*

- Code of Behaviour for Adults and separate Code of Behaviour for Children and young people
- A duty roster for adults to ensure adequate supervision of children and young people at all times.
- Signed Parental/Guardian consent forms for all participants/activities, ensuring that the role of the parent as primary carer is recognized. These forms shall be held by the Group Leader only
- Contact information for parents/guardians with at least 2 contact numbers.
- A clearly communicated Accident and Emergency plan in line with the venue in which the event takes place.
- Attendance Records to be kept in a secure place.
- Incident/Accident report Book to be held by Group Leader
- Medical and treatment information for children and young people
- A clearly defined process for the recruitment and supervision of adults working with children and young people which will include:
  - Volunteer/employment application forms
  - Declaration forms for all adult leaders (both Clergy and Laity)
  - Garda clearance checks as available.
  - Induction and training records
  - Attendance records.
- Procedures for review of all policies, procedures and training on an annual basis or as new information/guidelines become available.

# REPORTING FLOW CHART



## **DIOCESAN DELEGATED PERSONS**

Mrs Georgina O'Brien, Corgary, Ballybofey.  
Tel: 074/9132965

Very Rev Kieran McAteer, PP  
Parochial House, Ballybofey  
Tel: 074-9131135

## **GARDA SÍOCHÁNA:**

Ballybofey: 074/9131007  
Letterkenny: 074/9167100

## **PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr Frank Feely, Glenview Park,

Ms Brid Devenney,  
Blackrock Drive,

## **H.S.E.**

Letterkenny :074 9123770  
074 9123672

Donegal Town: 074 9723540

If you or anyone you know requires support or pastoral care in relation to a child protection or child abuse issue in connection with Church personnel, please contact the following Pastoral Care Person:

PASTORAL CARE PERSON: Helen Murphy, Psychotherapist.  
047 9127025 or 087 652 5931