



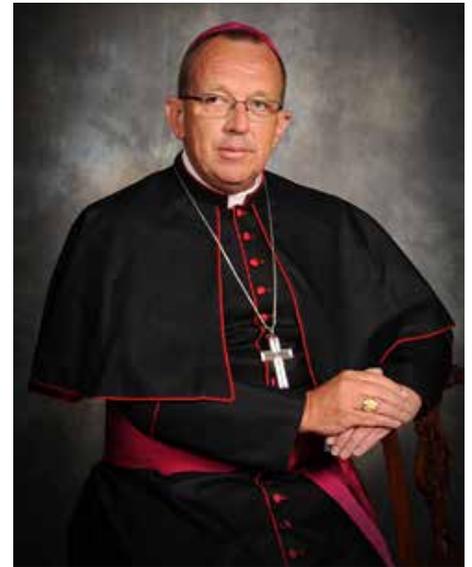
Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Meath

Newsletter

Welcome to our new Bishop of Meath

Bishop Tom Deenihan was born in the parish of Blackpool in Cork city on 20 June 1967. He attended the North Monastery Christian Brothers School in the city. After completing post-primary education, he studied in the national seminary of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. On 1 June 1991 he was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Cork & Ross. Since his ordination as a priest, Bishop Deenihan worked in Glanmire Parish (1991-1994), taught in Saint Goban's College Bantry (1994-2003) during which time he also worked in the parishes of Schull, Kealkil and Bantry.

In 2003, Bishop John Buckley, Bishop of Cork & Ross, appointed him as Diocesan Advisor for Post-Primary Catechetics and, in 2006, as Diocesan Secretary and Diocesan Education Secretary. On a national level, Bishop-elect Deenihan has served as the General Secretary of the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association from 2013 to 2016, and as acting-executive secretary to the Council for Education and to the Commission for Catholic Education and Formation of the Irish Episcopal Conference from 2016.



Safeguarding Awareness Day: Sunday 14 October 2018

On Sunday 14 October 2018, Diocesan Safeguarding Day should be marked during one Mass in each of the 69 parishes in the Diocese of Meath. Parish safeguarding representatives can be invited to read a short explanatory note (similar to the text below) in parishes on that weekend.

The Diocese of Meath values and encourages the participation of children and young people in parish liturgies and diocesan activities. Safeguarding is about creating an environment that facilitates such involvement so that children can grow strong in their faith as they experience the love of Jesus in his Church. Everyone who ministers in the parish is a representative of the Church and must observe safeguarding practices and guidelines. Good safeguarding practice is integral to ministry – it is not an optional extra.

Parish safeguarding representative are women and men who work with our local priests to ensure that diocesan safeguarding policies and practices are followed. We are trained for this role and access advice and support from the Diocesan Child Safeguarding Committee.

Bishop Deenihan is deeply grateful to all the priests, parish staff and volunteers who help to make our parishes safe places for children.

During 2018, the Diocese of Meath implemented the three new pieces of legislation arising from the Children First Act, namely the new rules on data protection (GDPR), Mandated Persons and the adoption of the Child Safety Statement, which includes ensuring that the following measures are in place in all parishes:

- Adopting a child-centred approach, valuing children and demonstrating our respect for them.
- Obtaining the consent of parents for the involvement of their children in parish activities.
- Choosing carefully those who work with children and vulnerable adults in our parishes.
- Ensuring parish workers and volunteers behave appropriately towards children and vulnerable adults.
- Making proper arrangements for activities involving children, including ensuring adequate adult supervision of such activities.
- Keeping good records of parish activities involving children.
- Anyone who has a concern for the safety or welfare of a child should contact the Diocesan Designated Officer, whose contact details are listed in the Church porch. People can also take such concerns directly to the following civil authorities:
Gardaí, in an emergency
Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, if the concern relates to a child.

What should we be doing in September?

For volunteers

- Ask new volunteers to fill out the volunteer application (Form 4:2), Personal Reference Request (Form 4:3) if applicable, Confidential Declaration (Form 4:4) and the agreement for church personnel (Form 4:6)
- Give any new volunteers a copy of the code of behaviour for church personnel (Form 1:4) and the code of behaviour for adults (Form 4:7)
- Make sure the Garda vetting process is completed before the new volunteer begins.
- Ensure the volunteer is inducted in training and support (see Form 1:23), including procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns to the DLP and civil authorities.

For altar servers and members of children's choir

- Get the child and parent consent forms completed
- When the consent forms are returned, give a copy of the code of behaviour for children taking part in church-related activities to each participant
- If external (non-parish) groups are using parish property for child-related activities, please ensure that they complete the relevant Form 4:18.

Next Safeguarding Training Day: Saturday 3 November in Trim

The next full day training course will take place on Saturday 3 November in Trim Castle Hotel. A booking form, booking fee and a closing date for bookings will be arranged. Please note that this training is only intended for new parish safeguarding representatives.

What should I do if someone makes a child abuse disclosure to me?

If a person asks to speak to you in confidence (outside of the confessional), it is very important that you explain at the very outset that any information that relates to the abuse of children must be shared with the civil authorities and the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). Once this has been clarified, you can proceed to listen to what they have to say. In doing so, you should:

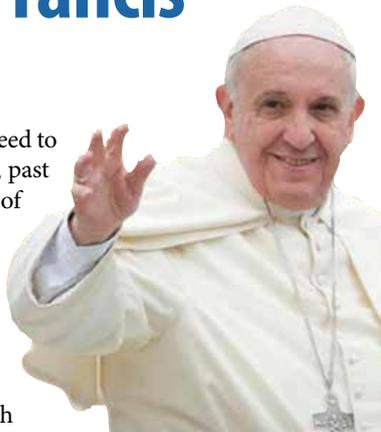
- Remain calm
- Listen carefully and in a manner that conveys that the complainant is being heard and taken seriously
- Give the person the opportunity to tell the story in his or her own time
- Ask questions only for the purposes of clarification, such as 'can you tell me what you mean by that?'
- Avoid expressing judgements about the person against whom the allegation is being made
- Explain that you will be passing on the information immediately to the DLP who will, in turn, notify the Gardai and Tusla
- Inform the complainant that he or she has the right to take the complaint directly to the civil authorities, that is, to the Gardai and/or Tusla
- Make a note of what you have been told and pass this on to the DLP
- If the complaint relates to a member of Church personnel, tell the complainant that the support services of the Diocese will be made available to him or her and that you will pass his/her contact details to the Support Person so that support can be offered.

If the person is a minor, you should ask to speak to a parent or guardian so as to inform them of the reporting requirements. If the child is not happy for you to do this, seek advice from the DLP.

New obligations apply to clergy as mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015, particularly to report harm of children to Tusla. If in any doubt, it is essential that you contact the DLP without any delay whatsoever. The DLP for this Diocese is Fr Sean Henry, who can be contacted at 086 157 4774.

Quote from Pope Francis in Ireland

A recurrent theme of my visit has been the Church's need to acknowledge and remedy, with honesty and courage, past failures – grave sins – with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Among these, women who were mistreated. In recent years, you as a body have resolutely moved forward. With the help of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Church in Ireland, you have set in place a stringent set of norms aimed at ensuring the safety of young persons. In Ireland, as elsewhere, the honesty and integrity with which the Church chooses to confront this painful chapter of her history can offer an example and a warning to society as a whole. Continue on this path Whenever you and your people feel that you are a "little flock" facing challenges and difficulties, do not grow discouraged. As Saint John of the Cross teaches us, it is in the dark night that the light of faith shines purest in our hearts.



Training in October 2018

In light of previous experience, particularly crowded meetings in Navan and elsewhere, it was decided to arrange six (rather than four) meetings in the following locations and dates:

8th October 8pm-9pm

St Mary's Pastoral Centre, Drogheda

15th October 8pm-9pm

St Anne's Parish Centre, Navan

16th October 8pm-9pm

Parish Centre, Ashbourne

18th October 8pm-9pm

Parish Centre, Tullamore

22nd October 8pm-9pm

Trim Castle Hotel

23rd October 8pm-9pm

Parish Community Centre, Mullingar

Please note that, since these update information sessions take place only once per year, all priests and parish safeguarding representatives are required to attend. In this way, we can fulfil our obligation under the law to ensure that Church personnel are appropriately trained for working with children.

The first part of the session will focus on completing the parish audit. Copies of the audit who will be circulated by email to all parishes in advance of the meeting. Please bring a copy of the audit to the meeting.

The second part of the session will address three new pieces of legislation Mandated Persons; Safety Statement; GDPR.

Safeguarding Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for calling us for the service of others.

We pray for a generosity of spirit to ensure children are protected.

We pray for a compassionate heart so that we can reach out to those who are wounded by abuse.

We pray for courage and determination as we seek the safety of everyone in our parishes.

We pray that you will help us to do your will at all times and in all places,

Amen.



Contacting Safeguarding Trainers

Most priests and parish safeguarding representatives are now familiar with our new contact address: meathsafeguarding@gmail.com.

Fr Joe Campbell is replacing Fr Paul Crosbie as a member of our Safeguarding Resource Team. We thank Fr Paul for his support over many years and we looking forward to working with Fr Joe in his new role.

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