



Safeguarding Development Newsletter

(Oct. 2018 – Issue 7)



***To everything there is a season,
and a time for every purpose under the heaven.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1).***

SDG Meeting (29 Sept. 2018) Summary Report

OSA Recruitment Policy & Pack

The current 'ad hoc' arrangements for recruitment of staff and volunteers in our parishes/communities are no longer fit for purpose and a more rigorous approach is needed to support child safeguarding.

At a recent meeting of the Provincial Safeguarding Development Group (SDG) it was agreed to consult with Priors and some Ministry Co-ordinators to flesh out the details of a 'Recruitment Policy' that can be easily implemented at local level.

The Provincial will start a consultative process with Priors to explore how to best manage safe recruitment and oversight of all volunteers working in OSA ministries.

Social Media Guidelines



Draft 'Social Media Guidelines' for Child-centred activities in parishes were reviewed by the SGD. Wider consultation with the newly appointed Data Protection Officer and a cluster of parishes will be necessary to explore what limits should/could be applied to photography/social media use during sacraments. Other issues such as how to manage social media contact between co-ordinators and Parent/children will also be explored.

Safeguarding Promotion W/End (17/18 Nov. 2018)

This year our 'Child Safeguarding Weekend – Promoting Safe & Sacred Spaces' will take

place on November 17th/18th to coincide with "International Children's Day" 20 November. We aim to promote the serious message of Child Safeguarding in a fun way.

A letter from two children (Joe and Sue) will be circulated in all parishes/communities, one week before the event (November 10th/11th). In the letter, the children express their curiosity about what happens inside a church and whether it's safe. The following Sunday, the Provincial Fr. John Hennebray will respond to the children's enquiry, in a letter to be read at all Masses. LSGs are encouraged to consider side-line activities to appeal to children and their families.

Local Audits '17 – '18 Overview

At its meeting June 2018 the SDG members proposed that an *Audit Report* be produced for circulation to all friars and LSG members. Individual feedback would still be available however, profiling the good work, as well as noting areas needing improved practice, was considered a way of offering encouragement and saying 'Thanks' to all involved.



Achieved To-date?

- LSGs exist in all 11 churches/houses.
- Prior/Friar (9) or Lay Person (2) acts as Chair.
- Membership ranges from 3 – 7 members.
- Meetings held: 2 – 8 times.

- Average Attendance: 94%.
- Minutes recorded, signed & filed: 9 out of 11 confirm Yes.
- LSG Members Vetted: Yes, but in 6 cases renewal dates are missing (i.e. specific month).
- LSG Members Training: 7 Yes & 4 needing to complete and/or renew.
- Reporting to House Chapter, Pastoral or Parish Team: Yes, for all.

Volunteers & Vetting Policy

Maintaining an up to-date register of volunteers is vitally important. In the case of Vetting the specific month and year should be given so that renewals can be processed timely. Having a soft copy database will present this vital information at a glance. It would be unusual not to have 'Vetting Renewals' as an item in each year's 'Action Plan'.

What of Awareness Raising & Training?

Raising awareness among volunteers is an ongoing responsibility and challenge. Since early 2014 *Information Awareness Sessions* (IS: 1½ Hrs) for all volunteers have been delivered in St. Catherine's Parish, John's Lane, Drogheda, Dungarvan and Limerick. For leaders involved in family masses, children's choirs and/or altar servers for instance, a full day's training (FDT: 5 Hrs.) has been provided in St. Catherine's and Drogheda respectively. Three yearly updates have already commenced and will continue over the coming months (e.g. Limerick Friars & LSG Members 10 Nov.).

Five locations have yet to plan and arrange this essential Safeguarding training. It's a great way of reinforcing the team

dimension of the work among each community of faith. Where such events have not appeared in this year's 'Action Plan' the relevant LSG members need to address this dimension of the work as a matter of priority in consultation with the OSA Safeguarding Trainer.



Planning the Action: How are we doing?

'Progress Reports' and 'Action Plans' are improving though most could be more specific and imaginative. The content of both do not always correspond with each other as is evident when reviewing reports. Current 'Actions Plans' vary greatly from vague aspirations with no target date(s) or person(s) responsible to very focussed and detailed actions linked to local ministries.

GDPR

Data Protection considerations are being addressed by Clare Brophy (Provincial Office Administrator) in a series of information sessions between Nov. & Dec. 2018 (Dates to be confirmed).

Thank You

Local Safeguarding Audits take time and effort to complete. The exercise offers the LSG members a yearly opportunity to take stock, review what has been achieved or not, while making modest plans for the year ahead. Completed audits are extremely valuable records of local Safeguarding practices. Each link in the Provincial chain potentially strengthening the rest.



National Board Conference 2018 'Be Not Afraid'



The Annual Conference of the National Board for Safeguarding Children took place in Kilkenny, 26 & 27 October with over two hundred delegates present. Addressing the theme 'Be Not Afraid', a range of speakers shared their experiences and thoughts on the role of Safeguarding in the Church today. What some of the speaker had to say is profiled in summary below.

Colette O'Doherty, Safeguarding Co-Ordinator with the Ferns Diocese illustrated how her work has created experiences of JOY among young people participating in the Youth Ministry Programme known as *spirit*. In this context, the processing of application forms or vetting clearance, though not without its challenges, provides an active safety net for the real focus of the work, that is, building Church.



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin spoke of Safeguarding as a challenging process of renewal taking place in the Irish Church that involves: *Recognising the Darkness, Creating & Searching for Hope and Witnessing to a lived Good News.*

Patricia, a mother and a grandmother, is also the sister of a priest who was convicted of child abuse and is currently serving a sentence in another jurisdiction. She spoke of her shock and loneliness on

hearing the news and how she feels that family members of Respondent warrant more consideration and support in such circumstances.

Fr. Joe McDonald (PP Ballyfermot) a victim and survivor of clerical sex abuse advocated that more energy should be dedicated to exploring *Why?* such abuse takes place, even though the *Who? What? When?* questions still need to be addressed. He believes that only a gentle and compassionate response will ultimately lead to healing for the abuser and the victim/survivor. For this to be achieved *Courageous Leadership* is required of those in authority.

Sr. Suzie Duffy (Safeguarding Co-Ordinator for Kilmore Diocese) reiterated the need for compassion in journeying with Complainants and the need for wisdom in knowing when to bring such a supportive role to an end.

Finally, some conference speakers shared their hope and wisdom:

Be not afraid.....You did not start it – you can tell. Your Mum will not die, if you tell. You are still his Dad if you feel you failed him, do not do so today. Jesus is the light no darkness can put out.

Be not afraid.....Do the right thing. Tell someone if you know someone else is being hurt. Tell young people about Jesus. Celebrate our faith.