

Child Safeguarding Statement of the Augustinian Order



OSA Safeguarding – Promoting Safe & Sacred Spaces

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 (see www.safeguarding.ie). The policy of the Catholic Church in Ireland is based on standards of practice which contain indicators that assist in reaching these standards. These indicators can be used in assessing and managing risk.

Name & Contact Details of Service Provider

Order of St. Augustine in Ireland,
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The Augustinian Order, as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children, is committed to ensuring their safety and well-being and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to do this. Augustinians recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

All Augustinian personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

Nature of Service and Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

The Augustinian Order as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. Examples of ministries undertaken with children, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016: *Children's Choirs, Gospel Choirs, Folk Groups, Altar Servers, Readers, Sacramental Preparation, Faith Formation and Catechetical Programmes.*

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland we are committed to the following principles:

Mandatory Reporting

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:

Physically, emotionally, sexually and/or through neglect.

Suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of Church personnel, but they can also relate to incidents in the child's family, or elsewhere in the community.

Caring for the Welfare of All Children and the Adults who Work with them

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training support, communications and quality assurance.

Responding Appropriately to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities. Church personnel in receipt of such information can avail of the support of the OSA Designated Liaison Person (DLP). These reports will be done irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to clergy and all those in forms of consecrated life, Church authorities will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

Caring Pastorally for Complainants and Other Affected Persons

Those who have suffered child abuse by Church personnel will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support as they seek to rebuild their lives. An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order and to the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

Caring Pastorally for Respondents and Other Affected Persons

This Church body in its response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child sexual abuse will respect the rights under civil law and canon law of an accused cleric or religious or other Church personnel. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered to the respondent. The Church authority will take responsibility for ensuring that any cleric or religious who is considered to constitute a danger to children is managed according to a risk management plan.

All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child.

Respondents belong to families and diocesan or religious communities. The Church authority will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities in Augustinian Churches and Ministries and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse.

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
<p>1. Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a child by Church personnel.</p>	<p>Safe Recruitment including Vetting Requirement (Indicator 1.1) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guidance-Volunteer-Recruitment.pdf</p> <p>Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment (Indicator 1.4) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guidance-Volunteers-Working-with-Children.pdf</p>
<p>2. Risk of harm through bullying (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a child by Church personnel or peers.</p>	<p>Expected Standards of Adult Behaviour (Indicator 1.2) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OSA-Adult-Code-of-Behaviour-Jan-2018-1.pdf & https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OSA-Adult-Code-of-Behaviour-Insert-Jan-2018.pdf</p> <p>Effective Practice in Encouraging Children's & Young People's Positive Behaviour (Indicator 1.3) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OSA-Child-friendly-Leaflet-Jan-2018.pdf & https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guidance-Developing-a-Code-of-Conduct-for-Children-6-12-yrs..pdf & https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guidance-Developing-a-Group-Code-or-Contract-13-18yrs..pdf</p>
<p>3. The environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to protect them from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015).</p>	<p>Effective Practice in the Safe Care of All Children (Indicator 1.4) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OSA-Child-Guardian-Joint-Consent-Form.pdf &</p> <p>Effective Risk Assessment When Working with Children (Indicator 1.8) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guidance-Child-Safeguarding-Risk-Assessment.pdf & https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Child-Safeguarding-Risk-Assessment-Template_V_2-171121.pdf</p> <p>Completed copies available in each relevant church & separately stored securely at Safeguarding Office.</p>

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
4. Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to children involved with external groups who use Church property and are unsafe to do so.	Safe Use of Church Property by External Groups (Indicator 1.5) as evidenced in Section 3.3 of the <i>Safeguarding Progress Report</i> (sample) completed annually by each Local Safeguarding Group across the Augustinian Province: available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/OSA-Local-SafeG.-Progress-Report-May-21-April-22.pdf
5. Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) through the use of digital media (photography, video and social media).	Effective Practice for the Use of IT & Social Media (Indicator 1.9) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OSA-IT-Guidelines-for-use-in-a-Church-Context-Mar-2019.pdf
6. Church personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately.	Policies, Public Notices & Procedures to communicate willingness & responsiveness of Augustinian Order (Indicator 2.1) available as follows: Webpage - https://augustinians.ie/do-you-have-a-concern/ Church Notices - https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/One-Church-Policy-Statement-Contact-Details-Nov.-2022.pdf Complaints Policy – https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Complaints-Policy-Jan.-2020-v2011.pdf and Complaints Form - https://augustinians.ie/promoting-safe-and-sacred-spaces/ Whistleblowing Policy – https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Whistleblowing-Policy-July-2022.pdf
7. Church personnel fail to take action during and following any investigation into allegations of abuse against clerics and religious to ensure children are protected from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015).	Regarding (Indicators 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4) see (p.2) above: 'Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations' & 'Caring pastorally for respondents and other affected persons'. Contact details for Augustinian Designated Liaison Person (Indicator 4.1) & Statutory Agencies displayed on Webpage – https://augustinians.ie/do-you-have-a-concern/
8. Church personnel fail to support those who are victims of abuse.	Regarding (Indicators 31, 3.2 & 3.3) see (p.2) above: 'Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations' & 'Caring pastorally for complainants & other affected persons'. Contact details for Augustinian Designated Liaison Person (Indicator 4.1) & Statutory Agencies displayed on Webpage – https://augustinians.ie/do-you-have-a-concern/
9. Church personnel fail to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children.	Training, Refresher & Customised Courses offered by NBSCCCI Registered Trainer on a 3 yearly cycle in addressing (Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 & 5.4) as evidenced in Section 2, 5 & 6b. of the <i>Safeguarding Progress Report</i> (sample) completed annually by each Local Safeguarding Group across the Augustinian Province: available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/OSA-Local-SafeG.-Progress-Report-May-21-April-22.pdf

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
10. Children and their parents do not understand the Church's policy, procedures and structure to safeguard children and protect them from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015).	Regarding (Indicators 5., 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 & 6.4) Safeguarding Policy (summary booklet) available on request in each church as reflected in Church Notices. Safeguarding W/End designated each September to promote message during all liturgies. Safeguarding Resources, Guidance and Newsletters (3/4 annually) circulated to all Local Safeguarding Groups in maintaining and developing a proactive culture of preventative care. See https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Local-Safeguarding-Group-Terms-of-Reference..pdf
11. The procedures for safeguarding children from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) fail to be implemented.	In fulfilment of (Indicators 7.1, 7.2 & 7.3) all Local Safeguarding Groups complete an annual Progress Report based on the activities of the past year and a set of actions for the coming year: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/OSA-Local-SafeG.-Progress-Report-May-21-April-22.pdf These reports are assessment by the Provincial Safeguarding Development Group (https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OSA-SDG-Terms-of-Reference.pdf) and where needs are identified they are included in the SDG's work programme for the year ahead. A written report is subsequently submitted to the Provincial Leadership Council and confirmation of same submitted to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland. See www.safeguarding.ie
12. The Church authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons.	Procedures to meeting Indicators 1.1 (See Bullet Pt. 1 above), 2.1 (See Bullet Pt. 6 above) and 6.1 - https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OSA-Child-Safeguarding-Development-Plan-2020-2023.pdf in addition to: Contact details for both Augustinian Safeguarding Officer and Designated Liaison Person (Indicator 4.1) - https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/One-Church-Policy-Statement-Contact-Details-Nov.-2022.pdf & Statutory Agencies displayed on Webpage – https://augustinians.ie/do-you-have-a-concern/ An up to-date list of Mandated Persons is maintained on an encrypted site by the Provincial & Designated Liaison Person and reviewed annually.
13. Risk of harm of a child (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) being disclosed during the Sacrament of Reconciliation.	Policies, Public Notices & Procedures to communicate willingness & responsiveness of Augustinian Order (Indicator 2.1) available as follows: Contact details for Augustinian Designated Liaison Person (Indicator 4.1) & Statutory Agencies Webpage - https://augustinians.ie/do-you-have-a-concern/ Church Notices - https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/One-Church-Policy-Statement-Contact-Details-Nov.-2022.pdf Complaints Policy - https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Complaints-Policy-Jan.-2020-v2011.pdf and Complaint Form - https://augustinians.ie/promoting-safe-and-sacred-spaces/ Whistleblowing Policy – https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Whistleblowing-Policy-July-2022.pdf

Localised Risk Assessment

Alongside the risks listed in the table above, all parishes/religious communities within the Augustinian Province in Ireland individually risk assess their activities with children and put in place procedures to manage these risks.

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Local activity with children is risk assessed in each location in which the activity takes place as part of Indicator 1.8 of <i>Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016</i> .	Effective Practice in the Safe Care of All Children (Indicator 1.4) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/OSA-Child-Guardian-Joint-Consent-Form.pdf & Effective Risk Assessment When Working with Children (Indicator 1.8) available at: https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guidance-Child-Safeguarding-Risk-Assessment.pdf & https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Child-Safeguarding-Risk-Assessment-Template_V_2-171121.pdf Completed copies available in each relevant church & separately stored securely at Safeguarding Office.

Procedures

All procedures outlined in the risk assessment above are available at <https://augustinians.ie/promoting-safe-and-sacred-spaces/> The procedures listed above include the following:

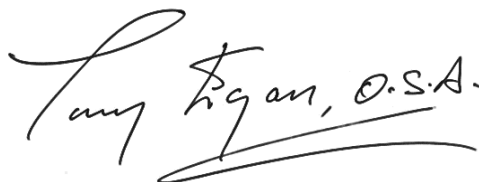
- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/ volunteers of a child availing of our service. This is part of Indicator 2.1 which is available from <https://augustinians.ie/do-you-have-a-concern/>
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children. This is part of Indicator 1.1 available from <https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guidance-Volunteer-Recruitment.pdf> and Creating and Maintaining Safe Environment (Indicator 1.4) available at: <https://augustinians.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guidance-Volunteers-Working-with-Children.pdf>
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm. This is part of Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 available from <https://augustinians.ie/promoting-safe-and-sacred-spaces/>
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla. This is part of Indicator 2.1 which is available from <https://augustinians.ie/do-you-have-a-concern/>

- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons. This is part of Indicator 2.1 which is available from the Provincial and/or the Designated Liaison Person.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person. This is part of Indicators 1.1 and 6.1 which is available from <https://augustinians.ie/promoting-safe-and-sacred-spaces/> & <https://augustinians.ie/do-you-have-a-concern/>

Implementation

The Augustinian Order is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice support our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

Signed:



Date: 15 December 2022.

Augustinian Provincial

For any queries relating to this statement please contact:

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OSA Safeguarding: Promoting Safe & Sacred Spaces

