

# ORDER OF CISTERCIANS

*of the Strict Observance*

MOUNT MELLERAY ABBEY    MOUNT ST JOSEPH ABBEY

MELLIFONT ABBEY    BETHLEHEM ABBEY



# Safeguarding Children

**Policies & Procedures 2014**



# INTRODUCTION

This document – *Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance in Ireland - Safeguarding Children: Policy and Procedures 2014* – is the interim policy & procedures which have been adopted in our monasteries of Cistercian monks in Ireland while we await the nationwide document due to be produced in 2015 by the NBSCCCI. This document replaces the policies which up to now have been in place in our monasteries and is introduced to ensure that our policy, procedures and practice adhere to the standards outlined in the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2008*. We are committed to ensuring that our policy and procedures enable us to respond to the needs of those we serve in a holistic, realistic and effective healing way.

Cistercian monasteries do not offer an overtly direct service to children and our Guesthouses provide for adults rather than children.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless we are fully committed to the importance of safeguarding children and ensuring that they are welcomed, nurtured, cherished and protected in any contact which they may have with our monasteries and any of our monks, staff or volunteers.

There are two fundamental practices that underpin our safeguarding policy:

- Firstly we endeavour to ensure that we work together with An Garda Síochána, the PSNI, An Tusla, the HSC(NI), the NBSCCCI and our local dioceses.
- Secondly we undertake to respond in a timely manner, ensuring that no child or vulnerable adult is left in an abusive situation. It is imperative that we always act in the best interest of the child.



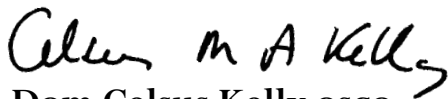
**Dom Erik Varden oco**

*Superior ad nutum of Mt St Bernard (England)  
& Father Immediate and Acting Superior  
of Mount Melleray Abbey*



**Dom Richard Purcell oco**

*Abbot of Mt St Joseph (Roscrea)  
& Pontifical Commissary  
of Mellifont Abbey*



**Dom Celsus Kelly oco**

*Abbot of Bethlehem (Portglenone)*

December 2014

---

<sup>1</sup> The College at Mount Melleray Abbey closed in 1974. Cistercian College Roscrea, which is under the trusteeship of the monks of Mt St Joseph Abbey, is a distinct entity and operates under a separate Safeguarding Policy.

# CONTENTS

## Standards

|            |                                                               |    |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Standard 1 | A written policy on keeping children safe                     | 1  |
| Standard 2 | How to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions | 2  |
| Standard 3 | Preventing harm to children                                   | 9  |
| Standard 4 | Training and education for keeping children safe              | 13 |
| Standard 5 | Communicating the Church's safeguarding message               | 14 |
| Standard 6 | Access to advice and support                                  | 15 |
| Standard 7 | Implementing and monitoring the Standards                     | 16 |

## Appendices

|            |                                                   |    |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| Appendix 1 | Significant Glossary and Terminology              | 17 |
| Appendix 2 | Role of the Designated Officer                    | 19 |
| Appendix 3 | Policy concerning those in formation              | 21 |
| Appendix 4 | Policy for Guests                                 | 23 |
| Appendix 5 | Recording Policy – Data Protection                | 25 |
| Appendix 6 | Information and Communication Technologies Policy | 26 |
| Appendix 7 | 'Whistle-blowing' Policy                          | 27 |

# STANDARD 1

## A written policy on keeping children safe

*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.*

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Cistercian monks are vowed to a celibate way of life and mutual respect among persons. The Cistercian Order views all forms of abuse or exploitation by its members, employees or associated personnel to be morally reprehensible. Sexual abuse is also a crime in civil and church law.
- 1.2 When considering sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, the Cistercian Order maintains a primary concern for the complainant's safety and well-being. Recognising that sexual abuse or sexual exploitation has tragic consequences for those who have been abused, the Cistercian monks in Ireland adopt the following policy which is binding on all personnel and will be reviewed by the Abbot's Councils annually. This policy is augmented by Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland, wherever necessary.
- 1.3 Links to this policy are available on the monasteries' websites.

## STANDARD 2

### How to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions

*Children have a right to be listened to and heard:*

*Church organisations must respond effectively and ensure any allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported both within the Church and to civil authorities.*

#### 2.1 Child Protection Allegations and Suspicions

##### 2.1.1 An Allegation

- a) All allegations or suspicions/concerns which suggest that a child may have been harmed should be notified to the Abbot and the Designated Liaison Person. Where there are reasonable grounds for concern, the Designated Liaison Person will report immediately to An Garda Síochána / PSNI and An Tusla / HSC(NI) as required by the Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2011 and the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2011.
- b) The Designated Liaison Person in conjunction with the Abbot will conduct preliminary inquiries which may include:
  - An interview with the person making the allegation. (see Appendix 2)
  - An interview with the person against whom the allegation is being made.
  - An interview with other knowledgeable persons.
- c) The Abbot seeks appropriate advice.
- d) All allegations of abuse of a minor will be responded to promptly. Based upon the initial inquiries the Abbot takes appropriate action:
  - The person against whom the allegation has been made will be required to take immediate leave from any assignments which involve contact with minors.
  - All the requirements of civil law will be complied with.
  - The complainant and the complainant's family will be attended to with compassion and assisted in obtaining counselling and support.

### **2.1.2 Pastoral Response to the Complainant**

- a) Anyone who may have been abused or exploited is encouraged to contact the Designated Liaison Person.
- b) When an allegation from an alleged victim is received the complainant is invited to tell his/her story, not only to ascertain the facts, but also to establish and evaluate the complainant's needs.
- c) When an employee receives an allegation from an alleged victim, the employee immediately communicates the information received to the Designated Liaison Person.
- d) After appropriate consultation, the Abbot or Designated Liaison Person normally encourages the complainant to seek counselling with the Towards Healing Counselling and Support Services. In exceptional circumstances other supports may be provided.

### **2.1.3 Intervention with the Respondent**

- a) The Abbot, with the Designated Liaison Person, informs the Respondent of the allegation, requesting that he accept a Support Person who would be known as the "Advisor". It is the responsibility of the Abbot to ensure that the Advisor receives appropriate support and training. The Respondent is informed that he/she may not make contact with the person bringing the allegation or with any person connected to him/her.
- b) The Abbot may consult with the Diocesan Advisory Panel or the NBSCCCI's Case Management Committee at any stage during the inquiry. Based on the credibility of the allegation, the Abbot, in consultation with others, will decide whether or not to suspend the respondent from his/her present duties.
- c) Following the civil investigation, a church process will take place, which may involve a credibility assessment and a risk assessment. All relevant information will be shared with the professionals conducting the assessments.
- d) If the respondent is a monk and he is to receive professional treatment, the Abbot may take the following steps:
  - Have him live at the monastery under a supervised regime.
  - Find some appropriate work or vocational retraining for him.
  - When treatment has been completed, the Abbot, in consultation with treatment professionals and others, establishes an aftercare programme.
- e) On completion of the recommended treatment and the aftercare programme, and on receipt of a positive evaluation, the Abbot, after appropriate consultation, will consider giving this monk a permanent assignment with appropriate safeguards, which will be communicated to supervisors and colleagues.

- f) If at any time the Abbot determines that the monk cannot continue in monastic life, he will seek to have the monk leave the monastery voluntarily. If the monk does not leave voluntarily, the Abbot may initiate a canonical process for dismissal.

#### **2.1.4 Public Statement**

If it is judged to be in the interests of safeguarding children, it may be appropriate for the Abbot to issue a short statement.

## **2.2 Contacts**

### **2.2.1 Designated Liaison Persons**

#### **Mount Melleray Abbey**

Mr Geoff Costello  
Mount Melleray Abbey  
Cappoquin  
Co Waterford  
Tel: (086) 388 5261

#### **Mellifont Abbey**

Br Brian Berkeley ocso  
Mellifont Abbey  
Collon  
Drogheda  
Co Louth  
Tel: (041) 98 26103

#### **Mount St Joseph Abbey (Roscrea)**

Fr Laurence Walsh ocso  
Mount St Joseph Abbey  
Roscrea  
Co Tipperary  
Tel: (0505) 25600

#### **Bethlehem Abbey (Portglenone)**

Dom Celsus Kelly ocso  
Our Lady of Bethlehem Abbey  
11 Ballymena Road  
Portglenone  
Ballymena  
Co Antrim  
BT44 8BL  
Tel: (028) 2582 1211



## 2.2.2 Services

### **An Garda Síochána**

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit  
National Bureau of Criminal Investigation  
Garda Headquarters  
Harcourt Square  
Dublin 2  
Tel: (01) 666 3430  
Email: [dvsaiu@garda.ie](mailto:dvsaiu@garda.ie)

### **An Tusla**

Child and Family Agency  
Block D, Park Gate Business Centre  
Parkgate Street  
Dublin 8  
Tel: (01) 635 2854  
Email: [info@tusla.ie](mailto:info@tusla.ie)

### **Police Service of Northern Ireland**

Child Abuse Investigation Unit  
17 Lodge Road  
Coleraine  
BT52 1LY  
Tel: (0845) 600 8000

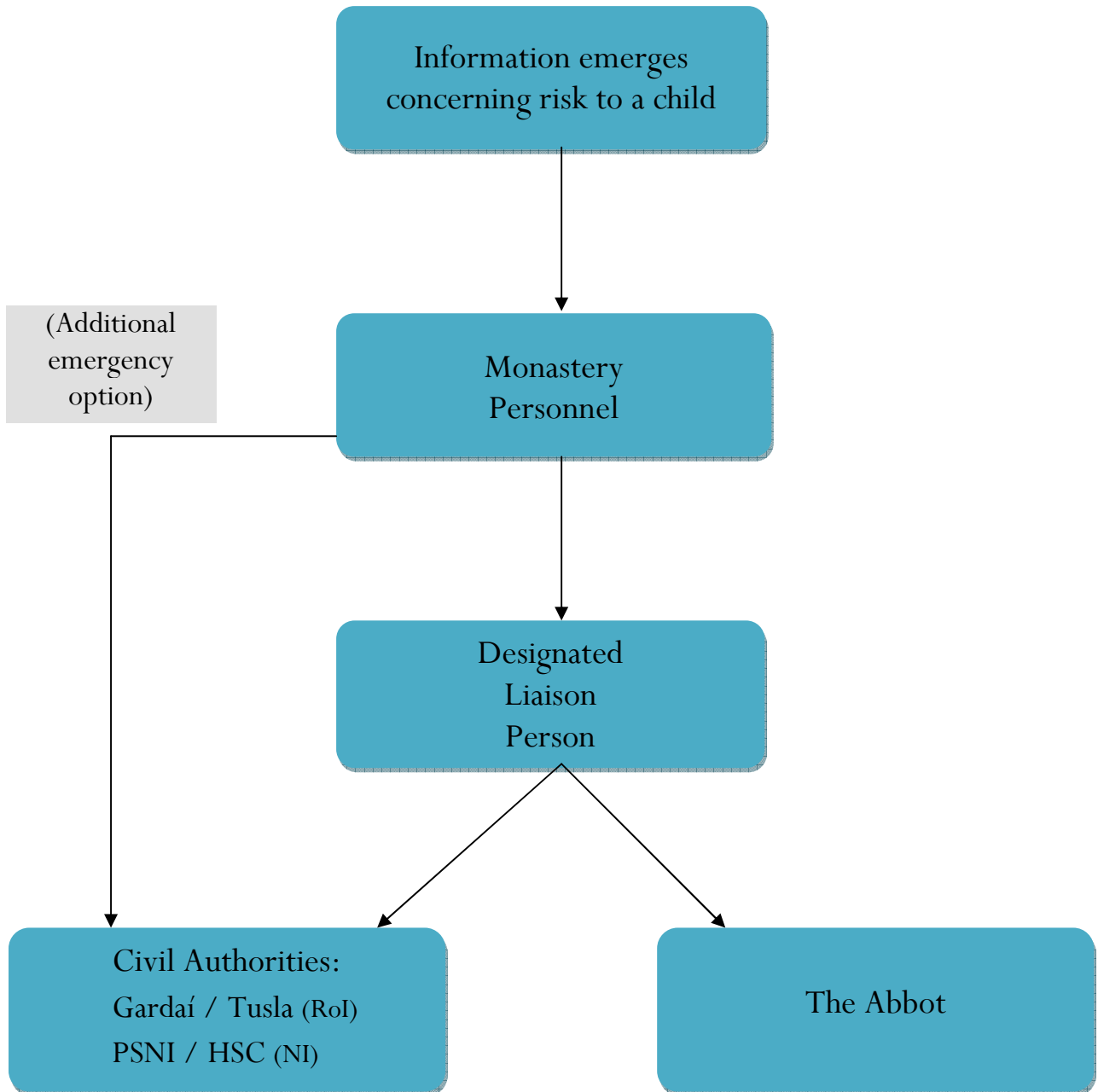
### **Health & Social Care (NI)**

Gateway Services  
110 Saintfield Road  
BELFAST  
BT8 6HD  
Tel: (028) 9050 7000  
Tel: (028) 9504 9999 (*Emergency / Out of Hours*)

### **Towards Healing** (*Counselling and Support Services*)

P.O. Box 5654  
Dublin 14  
Tel: 1800 303 416 (RoI)  
Tel: 0800 0963315 (NI)  
Email: [coordinator@towardshealing.ie](mailto:coordinator@towardshealing.ie)

## 2.3 Reporting Procedure



## 2.4 Responding to an Allegation

If a child begins to tell you about abuse it is important that you:

### 2.4.1 Do:

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully and take them seriously
- Ask questions for clarification only if you are unclear what the child is saying
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Reassure the child that, in disclosing the abuse, they have done the right thing
- Tell them they are not to blame for the abuse
- Let them know you will do what you can to help
- Report the child's disclosure to the Designated Liaison Person immediately (unless the allegation in anyway involves the Designation Liaison Person whereby you will report the matter to the Abbot)

2.4.2 As soon as possible, write down everything that you were told by the child, using their own words to describe the abuse. Sign and date this record and pass it onto the Designated Liaison Person.

### 2.4.3 Do not:

- Dismiss the concerns
- Panic
- Probe for more information/ask other questions
- 'Promise not to tell anyone' or say 'you'll keep it a secret'
- Make negative comments about the accused person
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Disclose details of the allegation to anyone else, even if the allegation involves them in any way

2.4.4 Find an opportunity to explain that it is likely that this information will need to be shared with others and at the end of the discussion tell them what you plan to do next and with whom this information will be shared.

2.4.5 **Remember:** It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of the concerns about the child.

## 2.5 **Guidance on the Seal of Confession**

Within the Sacrament of Penance, practises need to be considered that ensure the safety of all those involved, while providing the required privacy for the person receiving the sacrament. A priest must be clear about the status of any conversation relating to an allegation of abuse and ensure that there is no misunderstanding about whether or not the conversation is in the context of confession. Because of the obligation of the sacramental seal, a priest exercising a function under child safeguarding procedures should not celebrate the sacrament of penance with a person whom he knows is a respondent or a complainant in a child abuse case.

## Standard 3

### Preventing harm to children

*Children should have access to good role models they can trust, who will respect and nurture their spiritual, physical and emotional development. They also have a right to an environment free from abuse and neglect.*

#### 3.1 Safe Recruitment and Vetting Policy

##### 3.1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all those employed either in a contractual, pastoral or voluntary role by the Cistercians are recruited safely and are suitable for whatever job/role with children they are being asked to undertake.

##### 3.1.2 Selection and Recruitment of Employees and Volunteers

It is important that all steps are taken to prevent unsuitable persons gaining access to children. Those responsible for the recruitment of employees and/or volunteers on behalf of the Cistercians will first assess the level of contact with children and the potential risk involved in each post before recruiting employees or volunteers. In doing so they will follow the steps outlined in the Recruitment Checklist. *(See 3.2 below and Appendix 1)*

##### 3.1.3 Declaration Form

All those recruited as employees or volunteers by the Cistercians will be asked to complete a Declaration Form.

##### 3.1.4 Questions

Establishing a fuller picture of the character and attitudes of an applicant is an important part of the safe recruitment process. During any formal interview the opportunity will be taken to assess the applicant's values, motivations, abilities, experience and suitability. *(See p.68 of Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland)*

##### 3.1.5 Garda Vetting / Access NI Disclosure

The Garda vetting procedures of the State should be utilised for all employees and long term volunteers. All applicants to the noviciate will be required to have completed the Garda Vetting Application Form as clearly stated in the Child Protection Policy Concerning those in Formation (Appendix 3).

### **3.1.6 Transfer of monks from one monastery to another**

In the case of a monk from another monastery who transfers to or from, or resides in a monastery in Ireland for a period of more than 6 weeks, a formal statement from his superior which addresses any child safeguarding concerns is required in advance.

### **3.1.7 Staff Formation**

*Training in best practice*

All staff shall be given training in safeguarding children. The training will include best practice in dealing with children and young people and especially how to respond if concerns about child protection arise.

All staff shall therefore be provided with the name and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person for safeguarding and child protection and shall be made aware of the procedures for reporting suspicions or allegations of child abuse. They shall be made aware of the commitment in the Church's procedure to act in accordance with the principle that the welfare of children is always the paramount consideration.

### **3.1.8 Confidentiality**

As with all personnel records held by the Cistercians, information obtained through the recruitment process is kept confidential.

## **3.2 Recruitment Checklist**

- Step 1: Identify the contact the person will have with children
- Step 2: Define their role
- Step 3: Create a job description
- Step 4: Consider selection criteria
- Step 5: Application Form or CV request
- Step 6: Interview
- Step 7: References sought
- Step 8: Declaration Form Completed
- Step 9: Garda Vetting / Access NI Disclosure completed
- Step 10: Contract of employment
- Step 11: Induction

## **3.3 Code of Behaviour**

### **3.3.1 It is important for all monks, employees, volunteers and others in contact with children to:**

- Treat all children with respect
- Provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow

- Operate within the Church principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- Be visible to others when working with children whenever possible
- Challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour
- Develop a culture in which they can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly
- Respect each child's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of their rights, as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.

### **3.3.2 In general, it is inappropriate to:**

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Take children to your own home, or into the monastic enclosure, especially where they will be alone with you

### **3.3.3 Monks, employees, volunteers and others must never:**

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse

### **3.3.4 Monks, employees, volunteers and others must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:**

- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- Discriminate against, show different treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others

## **3.4 Operating Safe Activities**

Although the Cistercian monks do not provide direct services to children, should an occasion arise whereby they are involved in organising activities involving children, all steps must be taken to ensure that the environment is safe and that there is appropriate and adequate supervision and monitoring in place. A named Safeguarding Person must be present throughout the activity. Any other body

accessing and operating activities for children in the grounds of a Cistercian monastery must have its own policies and the guestmaster of the relevant monastery must be satisfied that these are in place before agreeing to their presence.



### **3.5 Guidelines for the use of Information Technology**

The Cistercians are committed to best practise in this area. Photographic, digital and video images of children will not be published by the Cistercians without the consent of the parent or guardian of the child.

The Cistercians reserve the right to monitor and log any and all aspects of its computer systems including, but not limited to, monitoring websites visited by users, monitoring chat and newsgroups, monitoring file downloads, and all communications sent and received by users.

Computer and network resources shall not be used to disseminate, view, store or generate pornographic text or images, or any other unauthorised materials such as abusive, obscene, threatening, defamatory, offensive or harassing images or material. Breaches will be regarded as a serious offence. Offenders shall be liable for disciplinary action, including possible termination of service, suspension or expulsion, civil and /or criminal charges.

## STANDARD 4

### Training and Education for keeping Children Safe

*All Church personnel should be offered training in child protection  
To maintain high standards and good practice.*

#### 4.0 Training and Education

The Cistercians are committed to best practise in safeguarding children. It is understood that everyone in the Church who comes into contact with children has a role to play in their protection. Training provides individuals with knowledge and skills in safeguarding children and the confidence to perform their roles. A training session also provides a forum where individuals are able to seek clarification on a range of issues.

All personnel employed by or working with the Cistercians who come into contact with children are offered training in child safeguarding and good practice. The Designated Liaison Person from each monastery attends training sessions each year to maintain high standards.

The training programme offered to staff is reviewed each year and a Training Register is kept up to date.

## STANDARD 5

### Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message

*Children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church.*

#### 5.0 Communications Policy

##### 5.1 Introduction

Safeguarding Notices are displayed in prominent places including the Monastery Reception, Guest House and the Church Porch. The Notice is a statement of the child safeguarding and protection policy and contains contact details for:

- The Designated Liaison Person for that monastery
- An Garda Síochána / PSNI
- An Tusla / HSC(NI)
- Support Services

This information is also displayed on the website of each monastery, which also provides access to this policy document.

5.2 All personnel employed by or working with the Cistercian monks have a working knowledge of our safeguarding procedures and policy.

5.3 The Cistercian monks operate a policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness. We are committed to working closely with statutory authorities and the NBSCCC.

## **STANDARD 6**

### **Access to Advice and Support**

*Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.*

*Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.*

#### **6.0 Advice and Support**

- 6.1** The Cistercians are committed to ensuring that those who have suffered child abuse receive a compassionate and just response and are offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.
- 6.2** Those who have harmed others are to be assisted to face the reality of their abusive behaviour and facilitated to seek healing.
- 6.3** Mindful of these needs the Cistercians have the following measures in place:
- All Safeguarding Notices displayed in prominent locations contain information and guidance about where and how to get advice and support.
  - The Designated Liaison Person will provide information about where and how to get specific help and advice, whether the abused person is a child or an adult and whether the abuse is current or historical.
  - Appropriate pastoral support is offered to a complainant whether an allegation concerns current or historical abuse.
  - The Cistercians advise and support a perpetrator of abuse to avail of appropriate remedial and therapeutic help to enable him/her confront the gravity of abuse and thus reduce the risk of reoffending. The progress will be reviewed on a regular basis and the Risk Management Plan will be amended accordingly. The NBSCCCI will be consulted when a Credibility or Risk Assessment is required to ensure that the assessor is appropriate.

## STANDARD 7

### Implementing and Monitoring the Seven Standards

*To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across all Church organisations. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside of the Church organisations can help to improve the effectiveness of any measures taken.*

#### 7.0 Implementation and Monitoring

7.1 The Cistercians are committed to ensuring that all of our policies, procedures and codes of conduct are kept up to date.

7.2 To achieve this commitment the Cistercians will ensure that:

- Appropriate resources are in place for the implementation of safeguarding policy. Where we do not have such a resource in-house we will seek the assistance of our Diocesan resources and those of the NBSCCCI.
- Each Cistercian monastery conducts an annual review of the implementation of its policy and procedures and updates any changes in legislation and guidance.
- A record is kept of training attended.
- Personnel are invited to give their views on measures contained in our policy and procedures.
- All incidents, allegations and suspicions of abuse within the Order of Cistercians are recorded and stored securely, in line with data safeguarding legislation.

# APPENDIX 1

## Significant Glossary and Terminology

**Advisor** is a person appointed to offer support to a person who has had an allegation or concern raised against them.

**Abuser, Offender, Perpetrator, Respondent** are all words used to describe someone who poses a risk to children or young people. While it mostly refers to sexual abuse, the terms cover all forms of deliberate harm to children as referred to below under 'Child Abuse'. Offender describes someone who has been convicted and found guilty of a criminal offence by a court of law. Respondent refers to a person against whom an allegation has been made.

**Child Abuse** as defined under four headings in Children First (2011) and outlined below. Similarly any form of sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult or another person shall be deemed to constitute a serious matter, whether initiated by the respondent or not.

**Neglect** can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults and medical care. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his/her wellbeing and /or development are severely affected.

**Emotional Abuse** is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a child rather than a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

**Physical Abuse** is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from the wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

**Complaint** is a generic term used to describe a report or an account of actual or suspected abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

**Complainant** is a term used to describe a person who has made a complaint of abuse.

**Designated Liaison Person** is a person who has specific responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding procedures are followed.

**Retrospective Disclosure** is a disclosure made by an adult who suffered abuse during his/her childhood.

**Support Person** is the person appointed to support anyone making an allegation or disclosure, or raising a concern about actual or suspected abuse.

**Victim** is the term used for the person who has been abused. They sometimes are referred to as “Survivors”.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Role of the Designated Liaison Person**

#### **Introduction**

It is the Designated Liaison Person's responsibility to receive information where it is alleged or suspected that a child has been or is being abused by any member of the Church, including volunteers. Where the allegation is made against the Designated Liaison Person of one monastery, the information must be passed to a Designated Liaison Person from another monastery or relevant Diocese. The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for managing the allegation /disclosure or concern, from start to finish including:

- The preliminary internal enquiry
- Referral to An Garda Síochána / PSNI & An Tusla / HSC(NI)
- Any subsequent internal investigations.

He/she is also responsible for ensuring that the person raising the concern/suspicion or making an allegation and the respondent are regularly informed about how the inquiry into the matter is progressing. Where an external investigation is being conducted, advice and agreement about what and how much information to share must be obtained from the statutory agencies.

**Where the subject of an allegation is a child**, the matter must be immediately referred to An Tusla / HSC(NI). If for any reason An Tusla / HSC(NI) are not contactable the matter must be immediately referred to An Garda Síochána / PSNI.

**Where an adult is making an allegation about historical abuse** the individual should be referred to the Designated Liaison Person who will subsequently arrange to meet with them. The Designated Liaison Person will seek a detailed account of the allegation and carefully record what is said. He/she will check the accuracy of this record with the person making the allegation. Sufficient information should be sought to ensure that the Victim feels heard, that the Respondent can be informed of the allegation and that appropriate referrals can be made to An Garda Síochána / PSNI & An Tusla / HSC(NI).

#### **The role of the Designated Liaison Person is to:**

- Receive information about the allegation.
- Ensure that the procedure about how to manage allegations of abuse involving monks, employees and volunteers, as outlined in this Policy Document, have been followed and that appropriate referrals are made to the statutory authorities.
- Create a child protection file for every referral that includes a log of actions, events and information received using the templates provided by the



NBSCCCI. Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event. They must be dated and signed by the author.

- Ensure that any written records made by any person in connection with the case are placed on the file.
- Explain the procedures for addressing the allegation to the person who has made the complaint.
- As outlined on p.19, when the allegation relates to a child the matter must be referred immediately to the statutory authorities. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation and any decisions relating to this is the responsibility of the statutory authorities.
- Inform the Abbot/Superior and the NBSCCCI that a complaint has been received and outline to them any immediate action that may need to be taken in order to ensure the safety of children.
- 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.
- Alert the Advisor to be on standby.
- Conduct an initial interview with the respondent as soon as possible, unless the statutory authorities require that such an interview be deferred. The respondent shall be given information about his/her entitlement to seek legal advice, both civil and canonical, and also given information about the child protection process. The respondent will be advised that he/she is not obliged, in law, to respond and that any information provided by him/her will be taken into account in the investigation. The Designated Liaison Person and the Abbot should then inform the respondent of the nature and detail of the allegation and the name of the person making that allegation. This information is to enable the respondent to be able to offer a response. The Respondent shall be offered the services of an Advisor. A written record of the interview must be prepared, agreed with the respondent, signed and dated.
- Ensure that the referrals to the statutory authorities have been forwarded.
- Ensure the availability of the Diocesan Advisory Panel or NBSCCCI's Case Management Committee, if required, to seek appropriate advice.
- Maintain a dialogue with the Investigation Officer or Social Worker to monitor progress. He/she should ensure that these contacts are recorded on file.
- Conduct an internal investigation at the conclusion of the external investigation and ensure that child protection concerns and appropriate disciplinary action are addressed. When the Respondent is a monk the requirements of Canon Law must be addressed.

## APPENDIX 3

### Policy Concerning those in Formation

#### **Introduction**

A proper selection and formation process for those presenting themselves for the monastic life has a vital part to play in ensuring the care and protection of children and young people in the Church.

#### **Selection of Candidates**

It is important that those who are accepted into formal training for the monastic life have achieved a sufficient level of maturity to allow them to engage in and benefit from a programme of formation. In making this determination, the Abbot and Novice Master shall seek the assistance of those competent in this area, as well as those who know the prospective candidate.

The selection of candidates for the monastic life should be regarded as an integral process involving the Novice Master and the Abbot.

References from responsible people who have known the candidate over a long period of time are also important aids to the selection process.

#### **Vetting / Disclosure**

The Garda Vetting / Access NI Disclosure procedures are utilised. All applicants to the noviciate will be required to have completed Vetting/Disclosure.

#### **Formation**

##### *Personal Formation*

The programme of formation includes a sound human formation drawing on the insights of the human sciences. It is particularly important that the process of formation fosters the growth and integration of the affective life of the individual, including his sexuality in the context of a celibate lifestyle.

It is essential that formation personnel are satisfied that the future monk can relate appropriately both to children and adults before presenting him for simple and solemn profession of vows.

##### *Health Policy*

Each candidate accepted into the noviciate should be in good physical and mental health so that he can participate actively in the monastic life of the community.

The applicant will be informed of this policy early in the process of inquiry into the noviciate. Psychological tests and behavioural tests may be a required part of the admissions process. Psychological testing is paid for by the community. The results of these assessments will be shared with the applicants but shall be the property of the Abbot.

### *Training in best practice*

Those in formation for the monastic life shall be given comprehensive training in safe and best practice in working with children and young people. This training will include, at the earliest possible stage, the provision of clear information about how to respond if concerns about child protection arise in the context of formation or outside it. All those in formation shall be provided with the name and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person and shall be made of the procedures for reporting allegations/concerns. They shall be made aware of the commitment in the Church's procedures to act in accordance with the principle that the welfare of children is always the paramount consideration.

### *Transfer from other Dioceses and Jurisdictions*

Diocesan priests or religious from other congregations may seek to enter the noviciate with a view to joining the Order of Cistercians. The order's responsibility for the safety and well-being of children and young people includes ensuring that proper procedures are in place in relation to reviewing such applications. In these cases also the Garda Vetting / Access NI Disclosure procedures should be utilised. All applicants to the noviciate will be required to have completed Garda Vetting / Access NI Disclosure.

Prior to permitting any priest or religious to enter the noviciate, the Abbot and Novice Master shall seek detailed information about the suitability of the candidate for the monastic life from his Bishop or Religious Superior.

All such applicant priests and religious shall be made aware of the code of good practice for working with children and young people and shall be required to give an undertaking that they will abide by it.

The Abbot and Novice Master shall undertake to ensure that no priest or religious who has been deemed to have committed any form of child abuse is received into the noviciate.

### **Confidentiality**

As with all personnel records held by the Order of Cistercians, information obtained through the application form, reference information, interviews, criminal background check, etc. is kept confidential.

Should the candidate leave the noviciate or the monastery at a later stage, records are retained even after the date of departure. Should the candidate proceed to make simple profession, these records may be passed to the appropriate superior. Should the candidate then profess solemn vows, this file will then be joined to the monk's other records held by the Abbot.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Policy for Guests**

#### **Welcoming guests to the Guesthouse**

Persons under the age of eighteen do not normally come to stay in our monastery guesthouses, as the monasteries do not engage in residential youth ministry. When persons under eighteen are to be accommodated in the guesthouse, (e.g. for a school retreat) they must be accompanied by and under the direct care of a visiting adult, (e.g. a teacher from the school concerned). This arrangement must be confirmed by the Guestmaster. Guests over the age of eighteen who are suffering from a mental or physical disability shall, where possible, only be received if accompanied by a carer or companion. In the case of elderly guests who may be deemed to be vulnerable, special care shall be taken to ensure that their physical wellbeing is attended to. Spiritual accompaniment shall only be provided in nominated appropriate rooms. Persons who have a history of abusing children or vulnerable adults may not stay in the guesthouse unless accompanied by an appropriate adult who is aware of the risk presented and able to provide appropriate supervision. Such an arrangement is not permitted if any minors are also guests.

#### **Training in best practise**

Those charged with running the monastery guesthouse or involved in the spiritual accompaniment of guests shall abide by the Cistercian Order's Safeguarding Policy and shall be supplied with copies of this document. They shall be made aware of the procedures for reporting suspicions or allegations of child abuse outlined in the Safeguarding Policy. They shall be made aware of the commitment in the Church's procedures to act in accordance with the principle that the welfare of children is always the paramount consideration. A similar consideration for the protection of vulnerable adults shall be explained to them.

The Guestmaster will exercise due vigilance regarding those who come to the guesthouse, and where he deems it appropriate, he may require guests to provide references before accepting their booking. Should a guest act in a suspicious manner he or she will be required to leave.

Some monastery guesthouses are accustomed to welcoming guests who are in a fragile emotional or mental state and the prudent judgement of the Guestmaster in consultation with the Abbot or Prior shall be applied to ensure that these people are appropriately cared for during their stay.

#### **Confidentiality**

The Guestmaster and those monks involved in the running of the guesthouse or in the spiritual accompaniment of guests may in the course of their duties come across information of a confidential nature regarding safeguarding of children. The procedures outlined in this Safeguarding Policy must be followed, including informing the

Designated Liaison Person and the Abbot, who shall then be responsible for informing the appropriate civil authorities.

### **Residential Groups**

Residential groups of various kinds are welcome to stay in the monastery guesthouse. The Guestmaster is responsible for ensuring that these groups have their own safeguarding policies which are in line with the standards and guidelines stipulated by the NBSCCCI.

### **Day Visitors**

The Cistercian monks welcome day visitors and pilgrims. This Safeguarding Policy must be accessible to them and applies to all visitors and it must be adhered to in the interests of safeguarding children.

# APPENDIX 5

## Recording Policy – Data Protection

### Introduction

The NBSCCCI in its document ‘Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland’ stipulated that there shall be “a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions, and referrals. These will be stored securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation.” The Cistercians undertake to meet these requirements through the adoption and implementation of this Recording Policy.

### Recording Policy

When an incident, allegation, suspicion or referral arises against any monk, member of staff or volunteer, a case record will be created. It will record the information that has come to light, the actions taken, by whom and when. It will be accurate, fair, and kept up to date. The contents will be typed, where possible, to ensure legibility. The subject of the case file will be asked to agree to the creation of the file and to its content. Access to the content will be given on an agreed basis only, unless there is a clear requirement to share the information with others to prevent harm coming to a child or young person.

The case file will adhere to the structure outlined by the NBSCCCI and will be stored securely in a fireproof, locked cabinet. All Case Management safeguarding files must be retained for a period of 100 years and all other files pertaining to safeguarding should be stored for a period of 30 years.

### Confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality that applies to the records recognises the right of subjects to have their privacy protected. Information gathered or stored on them will not be shared with others unless one of the following applies:

- Permission has been given by the subject to share the information with others
- There is a clear need to share the information to protect a child or young person
- A court order or legal obligation requires disclosure
- There is an overwhelming public interest in disclosure

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **‘Whistle-blowing’ Policy**

#### **Introduction**

The Cistercian Order is committed to high standards of ethical, moral and legal conduct. In line with this commitment and the Order’s commitment to open communication, this policy aims to provide an avenue for employees and volunteers to raise concerns and reassurance that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for ‘whistle-blowing’.

This policy is intended to act as a procedure by which properly grounded concerns can be reported and to cover protections for you if you raise concerns regarding behaviour or activity within the Order of Cistercians relating to:

- Incorrect financial reporting
- Unlawful activity
- Safeguarding and abuse of children
- Activities that are not in line with the Cistercian monks policies
- Activities, which otherwise amount to serious improper conduct.

#### **Safeguards**

##### *Harassments or Victimisation*

Harassment or victimisation for reporting concerns under this policy will not be tolerated.

##### *Confidentiality*

Every effort will be made to treat the complainant’s identity with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

##### *Anonymous Allegations*

All complainants are encouraged to give their names when making allegations because appropriate follow-up questions and investigation may not be possible unless the source of the information is identified. Concerns expressed anonymously will be explored, but consideration will be given to the seriousness of the issue, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

##### *Bad Faith Allegations*

Allegations made in bad faith may result in disciplinary action.

#### **Procedure**

##### *Process for Raising a Concern*

The whistle-blower procedure is intended to be used for serious and sensitive issues. Such concerns, including those relating to financial reporting and unethical or illegal conduct may be reported directly to the appropriate civil authorities or the Monastery

Bursar. Employment related concerns should be reported through your line manager or the Bursar or one of the Monastery Superiors.

#### *Safeguarding and Child Protection*

Any concerns relating to safeguarding and Child protection should be reported to the Designated Liaison Person as outlined in the reporting procedure in section 2.3 on page 6 of this document.

#### *Timing*

The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it is to take action.

### **Process of Handling a Report**

The Abbot/Superior will set up an initial inquiry to determine whether an investigation is appropriate, and the form that it should take. Some concerns may be resolved without the need for an investigation.

If further information or a formal investigation is required, it is important that the person raising the concern will be kept informed of developments and offered appropriate support.



