

Newsletter

April 2013



New Safeguarding Trust Resources

Safeguarding Trust resources already include a summary card for leaders and an information guide for parents and guardians. Now new material, a card and a poster, are available, designed to inform children and young people about the Church's child protection policy.

Those involved in youth ministry and young people themselves were consulted to ensure that the materials were attractive and age appropriate.



Information for Children & Young People

The information card is designed for children and young people aged from 10-15 years approximately.

The card outlines the Church's commitment to ensuring that all children and young people involved in church run activities are safe and protected from harm.

What can you expect while involved in church run activities?

Children and young people have a right to:

- ✓ Be safe,
- ✓ Be listened to,
- ✓ Be treated with fairness and respect,
- ✓ Be free from bullying,
- ✓ Get help and support if hurt, neglected or badly treated.

We expect you to:

- ✓ Treat other children, young people and adults with respect,
- ✓ Co-operate with leaders' instructions,
- ✓ Tell your leaders about any bullying.



The card outlines the role of the parish panel. It encourages a child or young person who is being bullied, hurt or abused to speak to someone they trust, assuring them that it is not their fault. The Childline helpline number is also included.

Safeguarding Trust poster for children

A colourful, downloadable poster for younger children has been developed. It is amendable for the addition of photos and contact details of panel members. Instructions are provided.



The new resources are free to order from the child protection office.

Junior Leader Training

Junior leaders make a valuable contribution to many Sunday Clubs and other parish children's groups, often as part of the President's Award Scheme. They build significant relationships with younger children and help in the running of activities.

As junior leaders they are in positions of responsibility and as with adult leaders, certain behaviour is expected.

Requests for training for junior leaders were raised through the Children's Ministry Network and it was decided to hold two pilot training sessions in September 2012.

The training sessions were hosted by Rev Cliff Jeffers of Athy parish and Rev Anne Taylor of Rathfarnham parish. Training was facilitated by Church of England Safeguarding trainers Jenny and Ian Price.

The lively interactive training was attended by about 30 young people on each occasion and positive feedback was received.

There are plans to offer the training on a diocesan basis through local trainers.

Online Garda Vetting Application System

Last year the Board of Education announced that it hoped to pilot an online Garda vetting application scheme shortly. Difficulties outside the Board's control have delayed the launch of the pilot.

At last, the early stages of a pilot scheme have commenced that will see applications for Garda vetting completed online, via a secure website.

Each originator (incumbent or other authorised parish panel member), will have the facility to send an invitation by text message to an applicant's mobile phone, inviting them to complete a Garda vetting application form online. The message will reference the position in question and contain a unique time limited pin code. The applicant will use the pin code to access the vetting website. The form will be completed online by the applicant, printed off and signed.

The completed forms will continue to be returned by the originator to the Authorised Signatory at Church House.

The new system will dispense with the current, cumbersome data entry system as data will be submitted directly to the newly named Garda Vetting Bureau via electronic means.

It is envisaged that the entire process will be processed online in the future, pending necessary legislation.

Paper forms will continue to be accepted for a time. Guidance will be provided when the online system becomes operational.



National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012



What is it?

The Act provides a legislative basis for the vetting of persons who seek positions of employment, either paid or voluntary, relating to children or vulnerable persons.

Currently persons applying for such positions are vetted on a non-statutory basis. The Act will make this vetting mandatory.

What type of work requires vetting?

Schedule 1 Part 1 of the Act describes Relevant Work or Activities Relating to Children.

Sections 1, 4, 5 and 7 apply to youth ministry.

1. Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children.
4. Any work or activity which consists of care or supervision of children unless the care or supervision is merely incidental to the care or supervision of persons who are not children.
5. Any work or activity which consists of the provision of educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to children.
7. Any work or activity as a minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of any religious beliefs.

What is 'specified information' (also known as 'soft information')?

The Act provides for the disclosure of 'specified information'. This is information other than details of a criminal conviction. It is information which is considered to give rise to a bona fide concern that a person may harm a child or vulnerable person.

Only information arising from a statutory inquiry or a Garda investigation can constitute 'specified information' to be disclosed in vetting applications. If such information is going to be disclosed, the Chief Bureau Officer must notify the vetting subject of the intention to disclose the information and must inform the subject that he or she may appeal the decision to disclose that information.

The new vetting Act refers to workers with 'access to' and 'contact with' children. This means anyone who would have an opportunity to form a relationship with a child with whom they were working.

New junior leaders of 16 and 17 years who have ongoing contact with children will require to be vetted.

A signed parental consent form, provided by An Garda Síochána, must accompany the application.

Parental consent forms may be obtained by post or email from Renée.

Will re-vetting be required?

The Act provides for the re-vetting of persons previously vetted for their current position. This element of the Act is unlikely to be commenced for a number of years.

Some organisations have a re-vetting policy but it is not currently a Church of Ireland requirement.

When will the Act come into force?

The Bill was signed into law in December 2012. It is expected that it will be commenced shortly on a phased basis.

Want to learn more?

To view or download the Act go to www.oireachtas.ie and follow links.

Notices for parish premises

Has your parish panel ensured that notices are displayed on parish premises providing names and contact details of panel members and contact details for the local HSE Social Work Dept.?



A sample form may be found in Safeguarding Trust Part 9: Section 2: Notices and Forms

The *Safeguarding Trust* policy can be accessed via www.ireland.anglican.org/policy



Closure of the Sunday School Society Resource Centre

www.sundayschoolsociety.ie

The Safeguarding Trust worker's extract should be provided to all workers engaged in youth ministry as part of their induction.

The SSSRC managed the sale of Safeguarding Trust worker's extracts.

Sadly, the Resource Centre has ceased trading and orders should now be placed directly with the child protection office at Church House.

The extract costs €4.50 to include postage. All other Safeguarding Trust resources are available free of charge.

Garda vetting update

Currently it is taking in excess of 3 months for processed Garda vetting forms to be returned to Church House.

Please plan now for your vetting requirements for September and submit as early as possible.

Safeguarding Trust binders

A limited number of Safeguarding Trust binders are still available. Replacement copies are free but please try to arrange collection so as to avoid postage charges.

CONTACT US

Renée English - Child Protection Officer
Direct dial 01 4125662
Email renee.english@rcbdub.org

Dr Ken Fennelly
Direct dial 01 4125609
Email ken.fennelly@rcbdub.org

Eimear Ryan
Direct dial 01 4125604
Email eimear.ryan@rcbdub.org

General Synod Board of Education (RI)
Church of Ireland House
Church Avenue
Rathmines
Dublin 6

Main telephone: 01 4978422
Fax: 01 4978821