



## **Summary report on the Safeguarding Self-Audit.**

The 2022 Diocesan Parish Safeguarding Self-Audit was carried out to reflect the period between December 2021 and November 2022. Audit forms were distributed to every parish in November 2021. All parishes returned their audits by mid-May 2023. The audit is completed as part of our compliance with the Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016 developed by the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI).

For the 2022 audit, all areas of safeguarding that parishes have responsibility for were included. There was full compliance in return of the audit forms with all parishes returning their completed forms. Overall, there appears to be a strong awareness and compliance with the requirements of safeguarding in parishes. Parishes continued to report the impact of Covid on parish activities, with many citing that children's activities or parish pastoral councils had not resumed since the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Areas of strength include communicating our safeguarding message with posters and leaflets being displayed as required and safeguarding representatives' names being made available locally. Another area of strength is adhering to creating and maintaining a safe environment in the use of joint consent forms and use of registers. There is scope for improvement in our recruitment processes and some parishes are still catching up on completing Garda vetting and safeguarding training post Covid. In a small number of parishes, the audit reflects scope for improvement in the links between local safeguarding representatives and their local priests. The audit also reflects weak links between parish pastoral councils and safeguarding representatives.

An area of weakness and noncompliance with our Child Safeguarding Statement is the lack of localised risk assessments, with a total of nineteen parishes of the thirty-four parishes with children's activities not complying with the need for localised risk assessments to be completed or considering it as not applicable to their parish activity. This requirement is covered in all training sessions and there was specific online training offered in 2022, however, compliance with this requirement remains low.

In addition to the above, this audit highlights the low level of participation of children and young people in parish activities with only thirty-four parishes (59.6%) having children or young people involved with the majority of these participating in the ministry of altar serving. Reflecting on why participation levels are so low, Covid has played a part in some children's activities stopping and not resuming, anecdotally some parishes report challenges in getting

young people and their parents involved due to clashes with other activities such as sports training/matches, they also report challenges in getting adult volunteers for supervision while at the same time some parishes reflected thriving youth ministries with a strong culture of youth involvement.

Findings from this audit will be used to inform the annual training and annual communication plans and for review of the safeguarding three-year strategic plan.

Parish safeguarding personnel, priests and other parish personnel who participated in this auditing process should be commended for their participation and their overall strong awareness of and adherence with safeguarding practices in their parishes.

Summary Report compiled by:

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Diocesan Director of Safeguarding