

# **St. Brigid's Parish Safeguarding Policy**

## **Vision and Mission of our Safeguarding Policy Document**

This is our St. Brigid's Parish safeguarding policy document. It describes how our parish will promote and deliver safeguarding for children and adults at risk. Our policy is ultimately based on the values of the Gospel, especially the call to love one another and not to cause harm to anyone.

We recognise that some in the Church have failed in the past to live in accordance with the message of the Gospel and that many persons have suffered greatly, and that we must act to ensure that we do not fail again.

Our policy document outlines what standards we will comply with and the actions we are now taking to make our parish a safe and welcoming place for children and adults at risk. It summarises how the Parish Safeguarding Committee will deliver on these commitments, which are based on guidelines issued by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office. The Diocesan guidelines implement standards laid down by the National Board for the whole Catholic Church in Ireland.

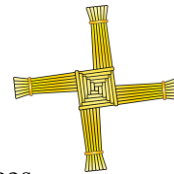
## **The Applicable Standards**

St. Brigid's Parish recognizes its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk, in relation to all parish activities. It will ensure that safeguarding practices comply with the following:

- Guidelines and policies issued by the National Board for the Safeguarding of Children in the Catholic Church.
- Policies issued on behalf of the Diocese of Down and Connor which is the body responsible for safeguarding in all parishes in the Diocese, including St. Brigid's.
- All legal and regulatory requirements laid down by lawful authorities in Northern Ireland on safeguarding issues.
- All best practice standards promoted by lawful authorities and experts generally in the field of child safeguarding.

## **Scope of our Safeguarding Policy**

The policy applies to all who are active in the parish, including clergy, employed staff, volunteers, and to those groups using the Parish Centre for various activities as approved by



the parish. It covers all activities and services provided by the parish, including church services, children's groups, youth events, outreach to adults at risk and all non-parish commercial bodies using parish property and supplying services such as webcam and security cameras.

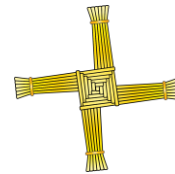
### **Aims of the Safeguarding Policy**

- To ensure that all parishioners, especially children, young people, and adults at risk are safe from harm and abuse.
- To provide a safe and nurturing environment where people can grow in faith and trust.
- To ensure all staff, volunteers, and clergy are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and are equipped to act when concerns arise.
- To ensure that any concerns are reported to the statutory authorities such as social services and police and to the appropriate Church authority.
- To comply with policy guidelines issued by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.
- To raise awareness that safeguarding concerns are also a matter for parishioners and to encourage them to raise any such concerns with volunteers, group leaders, the Parish Safeguarding Committee and the parish priest.

### **Parish Priest and the Parish Safeguarding Committee**

The Parish Priest will appoint members to serve on the Parish Safeguarding Committee and will ensure that St. Brigid's Parish policy on safeguarding is implemented. The committee will meet regularly and will:

- Act as the main point of contact on safeguarding policy with the parish priest, group leaders and volunteers and all groups involved in the work of the parish.
- Ensure all safeguarding incidents are reported to relevant authorities.
- Liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Office when necessary.
- Ensure this parish safeguarding policy is reviewed and kept up to date.
- Ensure that recruitment, vetting and training of volunteers is carried out in accordance with requirements laid down by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.
- Ensure that each group using the Parish Centre complies with the parish protocol for the use of the Parish Centre or, where applicable, signs the licence issued by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office which applies to non-parish bodies.
- Ensure that all codes of practice affecting groups, volunteers and all participants are complied with, and that leaders and volunteers have signed a general agreement at the time of their appointment to comply with the spirit and letter of safeguarding requirements.



## Complying with Policy Guidelines

The Diocesan Safeguarding Office has issued a comprehensive series of policies, guidelines and codes of conduct in its Parish Resource Pack dealing with the following matters:

- Code of Behaviour Guidance for adults at risk and for children
- Dealing with breaches of Codes of Behaviour
- Guidance on Anti Bullying and on Whistleblowing
- Complaints procedure.
- General guidelines on the safe care of children. This deals with a wide range of issues affecting all events in the parish where children are involved such as contact with children, supervision ratios for activities, risk assessment, activities outside the parish, transport of children, overnight stays and so on.
- Guidance on the use of technology.
- Use of CCTV on church property and webcam use for church services.

The Parish Safeguarding Committee will ensure the above policies are implemented in the parish. It will ensure that all volunteers, groups and others working in the parish are made aware of the need to comply with those policies and it will provide advice and assistance to them for those purposes.

The committee will maintain a database of information required to achieve its safeguarding objectives. Personal information received by the committee is used only to achieve its safeguarding objectives and not for any other purpose. It will be treated in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and data protection principles generally.

## Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

All persons have a legal and moral duty to report concerns about actual or possible harm to children or to adults at risk. There are no exceptions to this duty to report.

These concerns are **not** investigated by the parish. They are investigated independently by the police or by a social service agency or by the Designated Liaison Person of the Diocese.

Please refer to our “**Reporting a Concern**” document on this web page for details on how to report a safeguarding matter to the authorities.