



St. Patrick's Missionary Society



Safeguarding Policy

St. Patrick's Missionary Society
www.spms.org
Charity No. CHY3397 Reg No. 20004231
(January 2025)



Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'

Matthew 19:14

Abuse in any form is unacceptable. ... This is the road that all of us must take: bishops, religious superiors, priests, deacons, consecrated persons, catechists and lay faithful. Each member of the Church, in accord with his or her proper state, is called to assume responsibility for preventing cases of abuse and to work for justice and for healing.



Pope Francis, Address to Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, April 29, 2022.



We affirm the remarkable work of our members in their ministry to children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We commend our efforts in the Society in implementing the Society's Safeguarding Policy.

St Patrick's Missionary Society, General Chapter Acta, 2022

Foreword

Efforts to improve guidelines and standards for the conduct of clergy and religious personnel must be ongoing. As Pope Francis reminds us, “The principles of respect for the dignity of all, for right conduct and a sound way of life must become a universal rule, independent of people’s culture or economic and social condition. Indeed, a culture of safeguarding will only take root if there is a pastoral conversion in this regard among the Church’s leaders.”¹ Safeguarding children and adults at risk is an enduring commitment that requires continuous education, formation and vigilance within the Church.

In St. Patrick’s Missionary Society, we are dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights of children and adults at risk of abuse, ensuring that we create nurturing environments where they are supported and encouraged to reach their full potential. This Safeguarding Policy builds upon the existing safeguarding practices within the Society and reaffirms our commitment to the ongoing work of safeguarding those at risk of abuse in our ministry.

I warmly welcome this policy on behalf of St. Patrick’s Missionary Society and affirm our commitment to its full implementation. I encourage ‘those to whom this policy applies’ to familiarise themselves with this policy and to take responsibility for its application, wherever we live and work.



As we move forward in upholding best practices in safeguarding, let us open our hearts and minds to the voices of children, adults at risk, and all those affected by abuse within the Church. Through prayerful listening and genuine commitment, we can continue to create a safer environment for all.

Rev Richard Filima
Society Leader

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the contribution of the members of the Society Review Committee, their endless work in editing, re-editing and advising on the contents and layout of this document. We appreciate the work of the Safeguarding Advisory Committee in reviewing this policy.

Society Safeguarding Advisory Committee:

Fr Seán Barry
Fr Emmanuel Obi
Fr Willie Dalton
Catherine Theuri
Cleo Yates
Ugonna Ezekwem
Fr Seán Cremin



Contents

Page

FOREWORD.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
CONTENTS.....	iii
GLOSSARY/DEFINITIONS.....	1
KEY MESSAGES.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
PURPOSE OF THE POLICY.....	4
Guiding Principles.....	5
Considerations for local context.....	5
Safeguarding Responsibilities.....	5
STANDARDS OF PRACTICE.....	6
STANDARD 1 – Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments	
What is this Standard?.....	8
Criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 1:.....	8
Safe environment.....	8
Training.....	8
Communication.....	9
Procedures for Standard 1.....	9
Safe Recruitment.....	9
Code of Behaviour.....	10
Safeguarding Awareness and Training.....	10
Communicating the Safeguarding Message.....	11
Risk Assessment and Safe Ministry.....	11
Use of Images.....	11
STANDARD 2 – Responding to Concerns, Suspicions and Allegations of Abuse	
What is this Standard?.....	13
Reporting Flow Chart.....	14
Procedures for Standard 2.....	15
Actions to be taken by Regional/District Safeguarding Person when a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse is received.....	16
STANDARD 3 – Implementation and Monitoring of Standards	
What is this Standard?.....	19
Procedures for Standard 3.....	19
The Implementation of the Policy:	
CLT Level.....	20
Regional and District Level.....	20
Institutions managed by St Patrick's.....	20
APPENDIX 1 Code of Behaviour and Commitment Form.....	22
APPENDIX 2 Roles and Responsibilities.....	26
APPENDIX 3 Detailed Definitions of Types of Abuse.....	30
APPENDIX 4 Reporting Form.....	33
APPENDIX 5 List of Relevant and Related Documents.....	36
APPENDIX 6 Safeguarding Statement/Poster.....	40

Glossary/Definitions

Adults at risk of abuse (hereinafter referred to as Adults at Risk): are aged 18 years or over, who are:

- at risk of experiencing abuse, neglect, or exploitation by a third party and
- lacks mental or physical capacity to protect themselves from harm at this time in their lives.
- is susceptible to abuse of power, (i.e. the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority over another person)

Canon Law: The system of laws and legal principles made and enforced by the Catholic Church's hierarchical authorities to regulate its internal organisation and government, and to order and direct the activities of Catholics toward the mission of the Church.

Child: Everyone below the age of eighteen years (regardless of cultural norms). Often referred to in Canon Law as a minor, one who is below the age of majority recognised by Canon Law as eighteen years of age (can. 97 § 1).

Child abuse: All forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.¹

Church Authority: Those who are invested with authority in the Church and in St Patrick's Missionary Society. (This term does not appear in Canon Law.)

Church personnel: Society members and those who work (voluntarily or paid) for St Patrick's Missionary Society. This includes volunteer priests, lay volunteers, and employees.

Cleric: One who is ordained in sacred ministry in the Catholic Church. Clerics include deacons, priests and bishops.

CLT: Central Leadership Team (of St Patrick's Missionary Society).

Complainant: A person who has made an allegation of abuse.

Grooming (Child): A pattern of behaviour aimed at engaging a child as a precursor to sexual abuse. It includes establishing a 'special' friendship/relationship with the child. Grooming can include the conditioning of parents and other adults to think that the relationship with the child is 'normal' and positive.

Grooming (Adult): The predatory act of manoeuvring another individual into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust and more vulnerable to abusive behaviour

Good Standing: A person in good standing is regarded as having complied with all the safeguarding obligations, and is not subject to any form of allegation, disciplinary process, sanction or suspension.

Mandatory reporting: Refers to the legal obligation under legislation that one is required to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused, or is at risk of being abused. This is applied, by law, in some jurisdictions. Where the requirement of Civil Law demands it, when it has been established that abuse has taken place, the responsibility for mandatory reporting demands that leaders co-operate with Civil authority to the extent that Civil Law demands. (cf. *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* 20).

¹ Definition provided by WHO and sourced from the Australian Institute of Family Studies. See: <https://aifs.gov.au/resources/policy-and-practice-papers/what-child-abuse-and-neglect>

Glossary/Definitions

Ministry with Children/Adults at risk: This includes:

- Any work or service undertaken by Church personnel with children/adults at risk, which is under the authority of their Church body;
- All priests in ministry under the authority of their Church body are to be considered as having ministry with children/adults at risk.

People with specific needs: Any individuals who require a unique set of support services due to their health, mental condition, or age. This might include elderly people, those with disabilities, children, and individuals with chronic illnesses.

Respondent: The person about whom there are child/adult at risk protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.

Safeguarding: The measures taken to protect people's health, well-being and rights, particularly children and adults at risk. These measures allow all people to live in freedom from abuse and harm, especially those who may not be able to protect or advocate for themselves. Safeguarding encompasses the prevention of abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation of children and adults at risk.

Statutory Authorities: The relevant civil authorities in the country of residence.

Threshold for Reporting: Where 'those to whom this policy applies' know, believe, or have reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that they have received, that a child or adult at risk;

- have been harmed
- is being harmed
- is at risk of being harmed



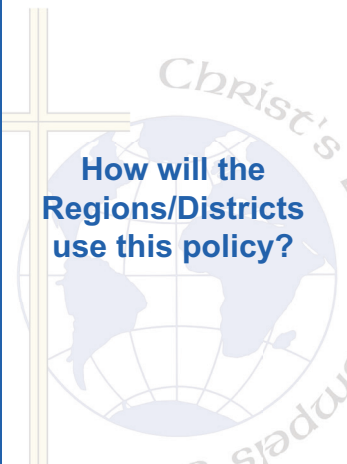

they shall, as soon as practicable report that belief or suspicion to the Safeguarding Person or Regional/District Leader.

UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) – An international convention which outlines in 54 articles the fundamental rights of those under 18 and the obligations of States which sign the Convention to uphold the rights it contains.

Volunteers:

- Priests: Priests who have been seconded from their Diocese or Congregation to work with the Society for a defined period and under contractual obligations with the Society.
- Lay Volunteers: Lay people who volunteer and who are giving their time and expertise at the service of mission within the Society for a defined period of time under contractual obligations with the Society.

Key Messages

<p>Why do we have this policy?</p> 	<p>This policy is an expression of the commitment by St Patrick's Missionary Society (hereinafter "the Society") to the mission of safeguarding, creating safe environments for children and adults at risk, and those working with them. We assume a responsibility for all, to ensure their safety and protection from any intentional or unintentional maltreatment or abuse.</p> <p>This policy extends to all within the Society's care and concern in any type of ministry and within the situations in which we minister – short term or long term. It sets out a commitment to keep all within our communities and ministries safe from any form of abuse.</p> <p>We place this policy in the context of our mission and tradition.</p>
<p>To whom does this policy apply?</p> 	<p>All the members of St Patrick's Missionary Society – temporary and permanent. This includes all our students in our formation programme.</p> <p>All volunteer priests and all lay volunteer missionaries working with the Society.</p> <p>All employees of the Society.</p> <p>Those mentioned above are referred to as 'those to whom this policy applies'.</p>
<p>How will the Regions/Districts use this policy?</p> 	<p>This policy is to be a living, relevant document. It is to be upheld by 'those to whom this policy applies'. It requires that Regional and District Leaders will ensure that all 'those to whom this policy applies' are aware of the centrality of this policy. This, therefore, is not a theoretical document but a commitment to safeguarding practice of the highest standards.</p> <p>This policy complements local Church policy. However, if the local Church does not have an established Safeguarding policy it is the responsibility of the Regional/District Leaders to act according to the Society's Safeguarding Policy.</p>
<p>Where can I find more information?</p> 	<p>Further information on this policy can be found on the Society's website:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.spms.org/safeguarding</p>

Introduction

The Society strives to ensure that everyone who is in contact with us whether directly or indirectly will be treated with the respect and dignity they deserve as people of God. All members of the Society and all those working with us in any capacity have a duty to care for and to safeguard all those with whom we work. This policy sets out procedures and standards of safeguarding which we are expected to follow in order to create environments where everyone is nurtured and encouraged to reach their full potential.

This policy is based on best practice and is in line with Church and international safeguarding standards. It sets out standards for best practice and guidelines for all 'those to whom this policy applies'. It spells out the processes to be followed if an allegation is made against a Society member, employee, or volunteer. It presents a methodology for monitoring and evaluating how the policy is being implemented throughout the Society.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy is an important response to our duty to safeguard all; those within the Society and those for whom the Society is responsible. This policy also informs all 'those to whom this policy applies' of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

The Society is committed to doing whatever it can to safeguard all under its care, so that they may exercise their right to live in safety.

The Society Safeguarding Policy aims to promote good practice by:

- ◆ Providing everyone with an environment that favours their development and ensures protection from abuse;
- ◆ Maintaining a high level of awareness with regard to safeguarding and its practices;
- ◆ Supporting all 'those to whom this policy applies' to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding concerns;
- ◆ Ensuring a culture of prevention of exploitation and abuse;
- ◆ Providing a victim/survivor-first approach.

This revised policy builds on the foundations of past learning and experiences. The policy provides a new focus on leadership and governance to embed a culture of safeguarding in which:

- ◆ The Society has an important role to play in creating and maintaining an environment in which children and adults at risk can grow and flourish in their humanity and come to experience the dignity that Jesus proclaimed.
- ◆ Children and adults at risk will feel welcome and safe.
- ◆ Society personnel will uphold the rights of children and adults at risk in line with Gospel values.

Guiding Principles

1. Gospel Values and Canonical Norms of the Church

The Gospel values of love, dignity, and justice, as demonstrated by Jesus, remind us that the safeguarding of all, and especially children and adults at risk, is an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. Therefore, the sources of this policy are to be found first and foremost in Gospel values, Church documents and in the canonical norms of the Church, inspired by the principles of justice, equity, and charity.

2. International Law

Our approach to safeguarding is also guided by several key international principles and standards as set out in the following:

- ◆ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948.
- ◆ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989.
- ◆ The UN Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979.
- ◆ The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006.
- ◆ African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)

(Further details can be found in Appendix 5 (page 36))

Considerations for Local Context

The Society works in a variety of geographical locations where significant variations in understandings and arrangements for safeguarding can exist.

The Society is committed to giving clear guidance to ‘all those to whom this policy applies’, and other organizations, including donor organizations, on how this Safeguarding policy will be adapted and applied in different locations. As such, this policy will therefore be applied in ways that are sensitive to different cultures but without condoning practices that are abusive to children and adults at risk. It is emphasised that the local culture in any country is subject to the Civil Law of the land. When a country enacts a law, that law takes precedence over any existing cultural practices.

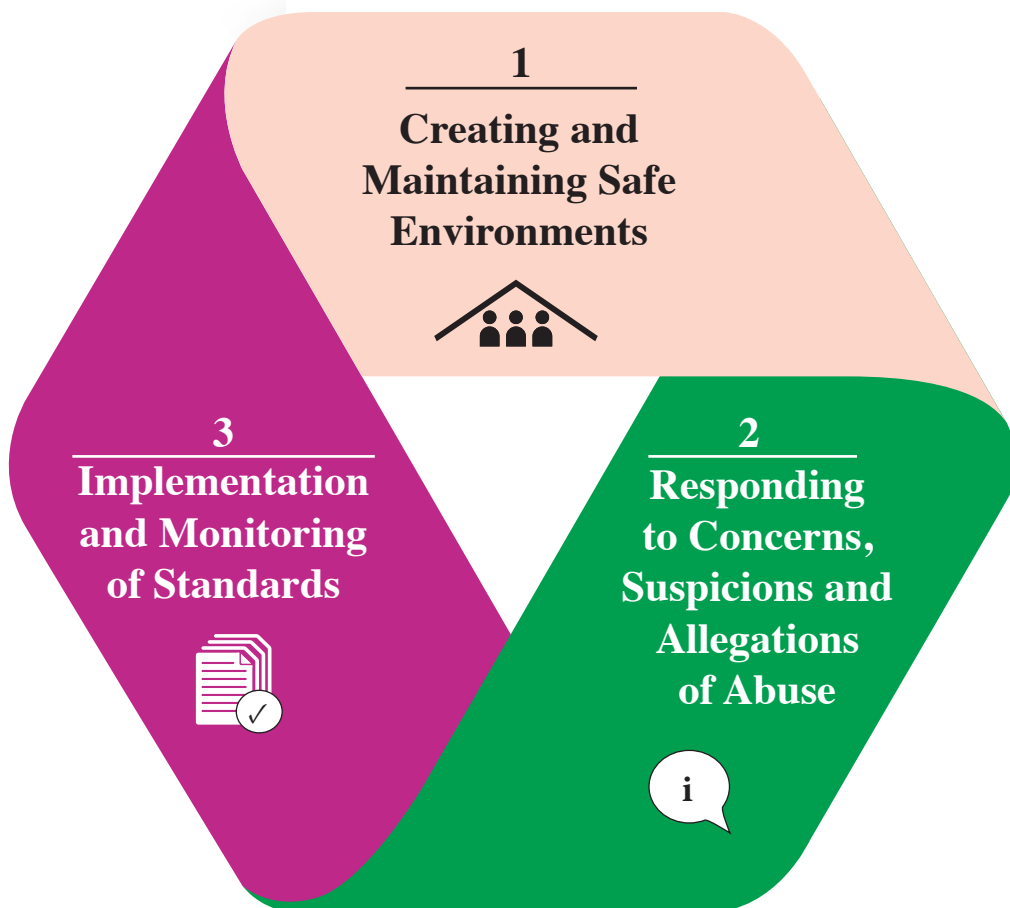
Safeguarding Responsibilities

Those to whom this policy applies	
Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Know, understand, and comply with all aspects of this Safeguarding policy. ➤ Create atmospheres of care, nurturance, safety and wellbeing in their particular sphere of activity. ➤ Attend safeguarding awareness/training session every year. ➤ Participate as appropriate in local networks of human rights promotion and/or abuse prevention. ➤ Be aware of local legislation/regulations regarding abuse of children and adults at risk as well as any particular risk area pertinent to local/national contexts (e.g., in some areas child labour may require more vigilance than in others.)

For roles and responsibilities for safeguarding personnel and leadership see Appendix 2 (page 26).

Standards of Practice

There are three core standards to our Safeguarding Policy:



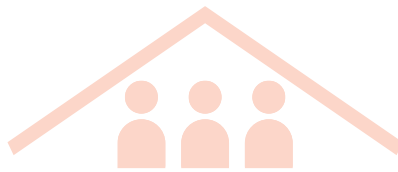
Standard 1 Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments (includes safeguarding awareness and communicating the safeguarding message).

Standard 2 Responding to Concerns, Suspicions and Allegations of Abuse (includes care/support of the victims and management of the respondent – in line with Civil and Canon Law requirements).

Standard 3 Implementation and Monitoring of Standards.

STANDARD 1

CREATING AND MAINTAINING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS





What is this Standard?

- ◆ It describes the creation and maintenance of a culture of safety which includes a safe environment for all, with special consideration for children and adults at risk.
- ◆ It outlines the procedures for safeguarding training.
- ◆ It states the methods used to communicate the safeguarding message.

The Society will promote a culture of safeguarding and the wellbeing of all through their participation in the ministry of the Church. The Society will create and maintain environments that uphold all human rights and that create nurturing, caring conditions where all can flourish in faith and love. Through fostering a culture of care all will feel safe and looked after, and in turn will look out for each other.

Criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 1:

Safe Environment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Every Region/District will appoint a Safeguarding Person and an Assistant, who will ensure the implementation of this policy. ➤ 'Those to whom this policy applies' will receive the necessary induction/training regarding the policy of the Society, and specific policies for their Region/District/area of work. ➤ 'Those to whom this policy applies' will sign the commitment form indicating their commitment to implement this policy and follow procedures fully. (Appendix 2, see page 26) ➤ There are agreed procedures for recruitment and vetting for all "those to whom this policy applies". ➤ There are written guidelines for appropriate standards of behaviour towards children and adults at risk. ➤ The Society encourages a culture where all, including children and adults at risk, are listened to and respected as individuals. ➤ There are clear ways by which 'those to whom this policy applies' and others can raise concerns about unacceptable behaviour towards children and adults at risk. ➤ There are comprehensive risk assessments carried out when working with children and adults at risk. ➤ Ensuring that children and adults at risk are adequately supervised and protected within the environment of the Society. ➤ The Society implements best practice for the appropriate use of information technology including social media. ➤ The Society implements best practice in relation to capturing, using, and storing images of children and adults at risk.
Training: The CLT in consultation with the Society Safeguarding Resource Person and in consultation with Regional and District Leadership will ensure that:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role. ➤ All 'those to whom this policy applies' are inducted into the Safeguarding policy. ➤ All 'those to whom this policy applies' are provided with opportunities to learn how to recognize and respond to concerns about abuse. ➤ Every Regional and District Leader annually reviews training needs and develops a training plan based on this. ➤ Children/adults at risk and their parents/carers are informed of safeguarding and their rights and responsibilities.



Communication:

- The CLT, in consultation with the Society Safeguarding Resource Person and with Regional and District Leaders, will ensure that all 'those to whom this policy applies' are aware of the Society policy.
- The Regional/District Leader will communicate the name/contact of the Safeguarding Person/Assistant to all in their Region/District.
- All will work to ensure that the message is communicated to those whose first language is not English, as well as to people who have specific needs.
- This Safeguarding Policy will be openly displayed and available to everyone.
- Children/adults at risk will be made aware of their right to be safe from abuse, and the person to whom they should speak if they have concerns.
- The Society will establish links with other local/national organisations to promote a safe and caring community and to share best safeguarding practices.
- Information about the Society's commitment to keeping children and adults at risk safe, is openly displayed and available to the public.

Procedures for Standard 1

The Procedures for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 1 are as follows:

(All supporting safeguarding tools and guidance to assist with the implementation of safeguarding practices can be found on www.spms.org/safeguarding)



Safe Recruitment

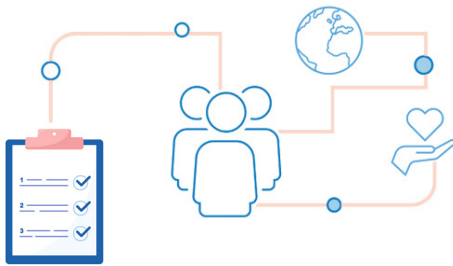
The Society ensures that appropriate steps are taken during recruitment and selection of members, volunteer priests, employees, and lay volunteers.

The Society will not knowingly engage, directly or indirectly, anyone who poses a risk to children and adults at risk and will take all reasonable steps to eliminate from the recruitment process applicants who might pose a risk to children and adults at risk.

The Society is committed to safe recruitment and vetting practices which seek to prevent those who pose a known risk to children and adults at risk from gaining employment or being taken on as volunteers. It will follow best practice during recruitment interviews and follow up on all letters of recommendation. It will require of employees and volunteers to complete and sign a form declaring any previous disciplinary procedures regarding inappropriate behaviour. Anyone who lies or fails to make a disclosure during the recruitment process will be summarily dismissed. They will sign a commitment to comply with and implement the policy. The Safeguarding Policy will be explained to employees and volunteers, and each will be given a copy of the relevant document or where more appropriate a summary of the policy.



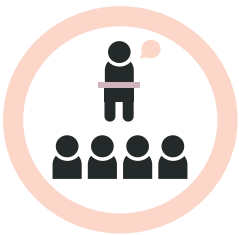
Code of Behaviour (See Appendix 1)



The Society's code of behaviour is an integral component of safeguarding and forms part of the contractual terms and conditions of 'all those to whom this policy applies'. The code of behaviour applies both in professional and personal life in relation to safeguarding. Special considerations are made to safeguarding children and adults at risk and to preventing the sexual exploitation and/or abuse of any individual.

By signing the code of behaviour, all those 'to whom this policy applies' commit themselves to:

- Work actively to promote the best interests of all and specifically children and adults at risk and act in line with the Society's Safeguarding Policy and relevant guides;
- Encourage children and adults at risk to feel comfortable to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like.
- Know where and how to make a complaint, when necessary.



Safeguarding Awareness and Training

Raising awareness and providing appropriate training are crucial for improving safeguarding practices. It is essential that all 'those to whom this policy applies' are aware of the safeguarding standards and their obligations to implement them.

The following initiatives are in place to ensure that all 'those to whom this policy applies' are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the Safeguarding Policy:

- ✓ The Society's induction programme covers the Safeguarding Policy and supporting documents.
- ✓ A training workshop will provide information on the relevance and impact of the Safeguarding Policy and the accompanying guidance documents.
- ✓ Those with special roles and responsibilities in Safeguarding will receive specialised training.
- ✓ All relevant documentation for the Safeguarding Policy, accompanying forms and tools will be accessible on the Society's website:
www.spms.org/safeguarding

Safeguarding Awareness Programmes for 'those to whom this policy applies' will include:

- raising awareness of the need for the safeguarding of children /adults at risk
- raising awareness of the fundamental rights of children/adults at risk
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Civil Law of the Country in relation to Safeguarding of Children
- Canon Law in relation to the Safeguarding of Children.
- Encouraging co-responsibility and commitment in the implementation of policies, guidelines, and procedures.
- Cultural Issues including appropriate touch.



Communicating the Safeguarding Message

Communication materials about the Safeguarding Policy, such as posters, will contain the following information:

the policy statement (see Appendix 6, page 40);

how to make a complaint about abuse, exploitation and/or harassment.

Safeguarding material will be available in a language appropriate to the country in which this policy applies.

All relevant documentation for the Safeguarding Policy, accompanying forms and tools will be accessible on the Society's website: www.spms.org/safeguarding



Risk Assessment And Safe Ministry

A Risk Assessment will be carried out regularly within each parish, project, and institution under the direction of the person in charge. The risk assessment will include planning on how to mitigate against any possible risk and putting controls in place to create and maintain a safe environment for all.

Use of Images



The use of photos on websites and in other online/hard copy publications can pose direct and indirect risks to children/adults at risk.

We will seek to keep children and adults at risk safe by not taking photos or videos or using images of anyone considered or known to be at risk.

In matters of safeguarding, the Society will be responsible only for images it plans to use for its own purposes.

Photographs (or videos) taken at events organised by family and schools such as communions, confirmations, weddings and funerals (including when the photographer is employed by the school or family for these occasions) do not fall under the responsibility of the Society, unless they are being taken for Society purposes.

Please see our image policy "Guidelines on the use of Images" at www.spms.org/safeguarding

STANDARD 2

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE



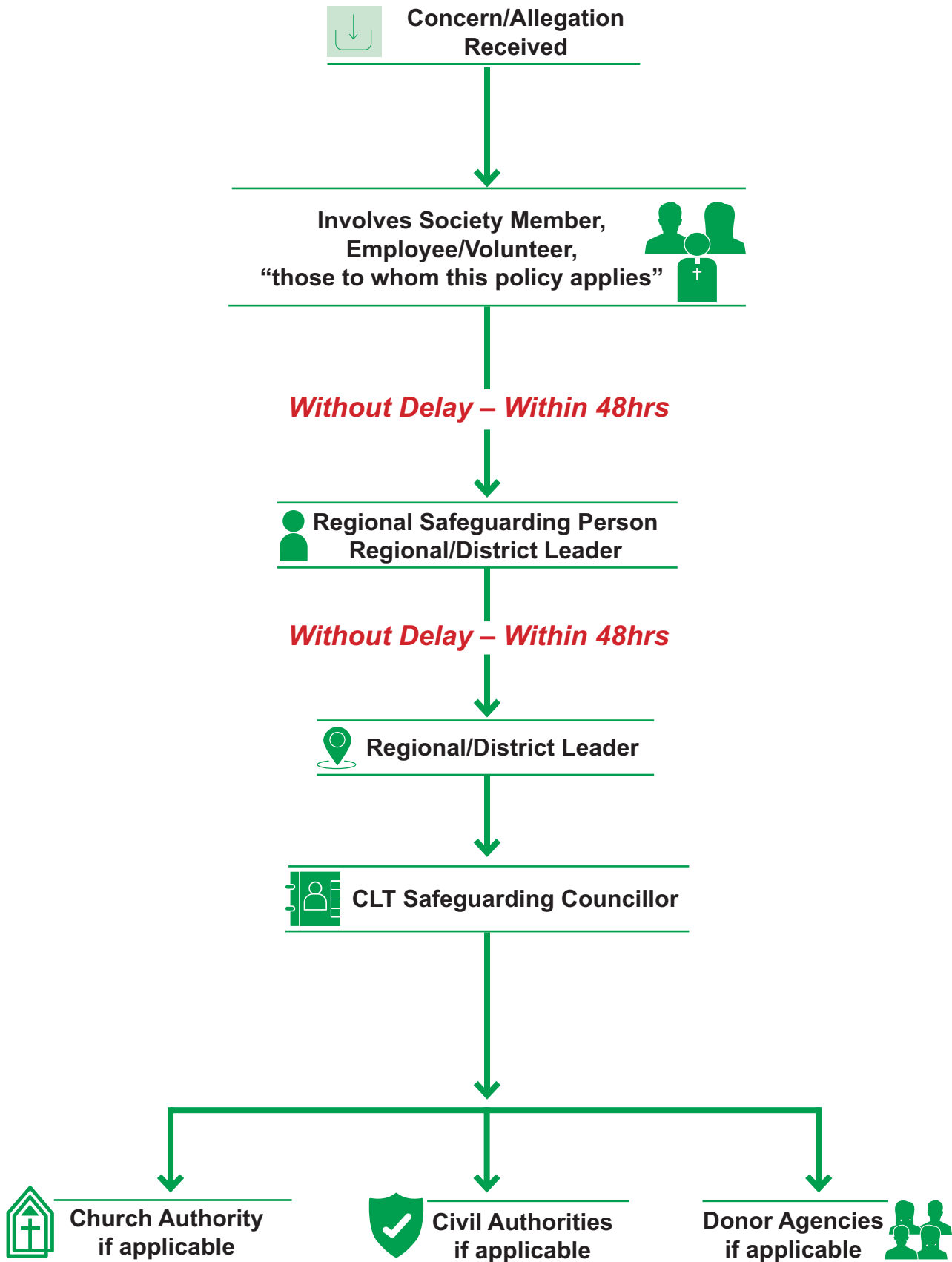
What is this Standard?

Responding to allegations of abuse; adherence to Civil and Canon Law; caring for complainants and victims; management of the respondent, and ensuring a just process of inquiry.

Criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 2 are as follows:

- ✓ There are clear procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on what action to take if allegations are received relating to the safety or welfare of a child or adult at risk of abuse.
- ✓ The procedures are available to everyone (including children, adults at risk, parents/guardians/carers). Consideration is given to making sure that the information provided is easily understandable.
- ✓ The procedures are consistent with the Guiding Principles (Gospel Values, Canon Law, Civil Law and International Law) and best practice in the protection of children and adults at risk. They also take account of issues that arise because of different local contexts.
- ✓ There is a process for recording allegations and referrals, as well as systems to ensure this confidential information is securely stored.
- ✓ There is guidance on confidentiality and information sharing.
- ✓ Support is available for victims/complainants, respondents, members, employees which may include the offer of the accompaniment of a support person during and following an incident or allegation of abuse or a complaint. The Society may need to refer people to relevant specialist services.
- ✓ The rights under Civil and Canon Law of a respondent will be upheld. A presumption of innocence will be maintained unless evidence of guilt is clear. All respondents will be offered pastoral and legal support.

REPORTING FLOWCHART



Procedures for Standard 2

All supporting safeguarding tools and guidance to assist with the implementation of safeguarding practices can be found on www.spms.org/safeguarding

The Society will be responsible for this Standard through the following procedures:

- All allegations, suspicions, and concerns of abuse that are credible and meet the threshold for reporting will be reported to civil and canonical entities immediately.
- Under no circumstances should a child/adult at risk of abuse be left in a situation that exposes him/her to abuse or to the risk of abuse and every effort should be made to ensure that this does not happen. It is not the responsibility of the person to whom the report has been made to decide whether exploitation or abuse has occurred. All allegations, suspicions, and concerns of abuse will normally be passed on immediately to the Regional/District Safeguarding Person or to the Regional/District Leader.
- The Society will offer a caring, compassionate and pastoral response to the alleged victim.
- The Society will offer a support person to the alleged victim.
- The respondent will be offered pastoral support and an adviser. The rights under Civil and Canon Law of the respondent will be upheld. A presumption of innocence will be maintained.
- The Society is committed to ensuring adherence to confidentiality in the management of complaints and allegations.
- The Society ensures that written records reflect that all safeguarding action is taken in line with appropriate data protection and information sharing protocols.
- An individual who makes a false allegation against another person will be reported to the civil authorities.

Actions to be taken by Regional/District Safeguarding Person when a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse is received against "those to whom this policy applies".

The Complainant:

1. Respond immediately in a caring, compassionate and pastoral way to any concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse in a manner that respects the individual circumstances of the complainant
2. Ensure, on receiving any complaint, that the first priority is always the safety and welfare of the child or adult at risk of abuse and that no child or adult is ever left in a situation that could place them in immediate danger.
3. Ensure that all information relating to the allegation has been recorded on the Safeguarding Reporting Form. (Reference Appendix 4, page 33)
4. Report the suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of abuse without delay/within 48 hours to the Regional/District Leader, who will report to the CLT Safeguarding Councillor. If the allegations is against the Regional/District Leader, reporting is directly to the CLT Safeguarding Councillor.
5. Meet the complainant in the presence of another person and the complainant will be invited to bring someone to the meeting.
6. If the complainant is a minor, he/she will only be interviewed, with the consent of the parents/guardian and, in their presence, by someone competent/trained. To conduct such an interview without this consent can amount to an offence.
7. Ask the complainant to provide a detailed account of the allegation. Inform the complainant that you will keep a record of this meeting.
8. Include all the details, even those which may not appear important at the time.
9. Compile a case file and store all original copies of information in a safe and secure location with limited access.
10. Assure complainant of confidentiality; that only those people who need to know will receive information about the allegation. However, no guarantee of absolute confidentiality can be given.
11. The record of the interview will be read to the complainant for accuracy checks and they will be requested to sign it.
12. Offer a Support Person and counselling to the complainant.
13. Inform the complainant of the Society's reporting policy and obligation to follow Society, civil and canonical procedures.
14. If the complainant is not the alleged victim, a meeting will be arranged with the alleged victim and support will be offered to them.

After the Interview:

1. Provide the Regional/District Leader with the written details of the complaint including the name of the respondent, etc.
2. Ensure that the Society complies with all civil reporting requirements
3. Always maintain professional confidentiality so that only those people who need to know will receive information about the complaint. However, no guarantee of absolute confidentiality can be given.

Actions contd.

Respondent

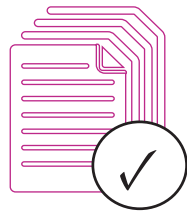
1. After the respondent has been informed of a complaint by the Regional/District Leader, the Safeguarding Person, in the presence of another person, will meet the respondent with his/her adviser.
2. At this meeting the respondent will be informed:
 - Of the nature and detail of the complaint, and the name of the complainant (if safe to do so)
 - Of their right not to respond to anything presented to them
 - That the matter is being investigated in accordance with Canon Law
 - That the respondent is not obliged, in law, to respond or furnish evidence
 - That any information given may be subject to the scrutiny of the civil authorities
 - That the respondent is entitled to the assistance of civil and canonical legal advisers
 - That, should the respondent wish to speak freely, a careful note will be taken and checked for accuracy and they will be requested to sign it.

The Safeguarding Person will:

1. Discuss with the respondent and his/her adviser the question of obtaining spiritual and therapeutic support.
2. Provide a written report of the meeting as soon as possible to the Regional/District Leader.
3. Ensure that the allegation is reported to the civil authorities in consultation with the Regional/District Leader.

STANDARD 3

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS





What is this Standard?

Compliance with this policy and the implementation of safeguarding standards will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The criteria for ensuring the successful implementation of Standard 3 are as follows:

- In each Region/District there is a written action plan for implementation of the safeguarding policy showing what steps will be taken to keep all parties safe, who is responsible for implementation and when these actions will be completed.
- Human and financial resources necessary for implementing the plan are made available.
- All incidents, allegations of abuse and complaints are responded to in line with this policy.
- An annual audit of compliance with the Society Safeguarding Policy is carried out by Safeguarding Personnel.
- An external evaluation of compliance and implementation of this policy will be carried out every three years. The CLT will decide on the manner of this external evaluation.
- After the External Evaluation, Society/Regional/District Policies and practices are reviewed. To prepare for this review, wide consultation with parents/guardians, children, and adults at risk will be carried out.

Procedures for Standard 3

All supporting safeguarding tools and guidance to assist with the implementation of safeguarding practices can be found on www.spms.org/safeguarding

The Society will be accountable for this Standard through the following procedures:

- 1 The Safeguarding Councillor on CLT will compile an Annual Report on safeguarding. This Report will be presented to the Society Advisory Committee and circulated to all members.
- 2 There will be an annual meeting of safeguarding personnel and leaders – to discuss and share learning on safeguarding.
- 3 CLT, together with the Regional and District Leadership, will monitor the implementation of this policy during their visitations.
- 4 'Those to whom this policy applies' will implement these standards in all pastoral activities.
- 5 CLT, in collaboration with the Society Safeguarding Advisory Committee, will approve this policy and review it every three years, after an external evaluation.



The implementation of the policy requires:

Structures to be put in place at:

- **CLT Level**
- **Regional and District Level**
- **Institutions managed by St. Patrick's – Schools, Projects**
- **Formation Houses**



CLT Level

- ◆ CLT Safeguarding Councillor
- ◆ Society Safeguarding Advisory Committee
- ◆ Society Safeguarding Resource Person



Regional and District Level

- ◆ Regional/District Leader
- ◆ Region/District Safeguarding Committee
- ◆ Regional and District Safeguarding Person and Assistant



**Institutions managed by St. Patrick's –
Formation Houses, Schools, Parishes and Projects**

- ◆ Local Safeguarding Person



APPENDIX 1:

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND COMMITMENT FORM



It is important for all ‘those to whom this policy applies’ to;

- be aware of the Safeguarding policy
- treat all with respect and dignity
- treat all equally
- model positive and appropriate behaviour to all with whom they come into contact
- challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour
- develop a culture of openness, honesty and safety
- be visible to others when working with children. If the pastoral care of a child necessitates the arrangement of a meeting alone with them, care should be taken that this does not take place in an isolated environment.
- develop a culture where all have permission to tell and talk about any concerns or worries that they may have
- respect everyone’s boundaries and support them to develop their own sense of rights

<p>You must never:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse anyone ➤ develop relationships with others that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive ➤ act in any way that may be abusive or may place anyone at risk of abuse ➤ use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive ➤ do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do themselves ➤ condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive ➤ act in any way that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade ➤ discriminate against, show different treatment or favour particular people to the exclusion of others ➤ develop sexual relationships with children or adults at risk
<p>In general, it is inappropriate to:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ spend excessive time alone with a child away from others ➤ take children away to your own home, especially where they will be alone with you

Processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour:

All 'those to whom this policy applies' will be made aware that there are processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment. The following are suitable processes for dealing with such behaviour:

- Personal counselling
- Meeting with the child and his/her parent/guardian/carer



Discriminatory behaviour or language:

Discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views, whether it is perpetrated by adults towards children, or by children towards other children. In particular, all forms of bullying are rejected.

Care of children with special needs:

Children with special needs are highly treasured persons in the Christian Community. Those who work with them are invited to walk with them in the spirit of the Beatitudes and to provide them with person-centred care.

However, children with special needs are also highly vulnerable precisely because they may not be able to defend themselves or make a complaint and because they may be totally dependent for their physical care on an adult who could abuse them. Children with special needs may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

Care for children with special needs should promote their wellbeing by, for example, training them in life skills where appropriate in order that they can perform for themselves things of a personal nature such as bathing, using the toilet and dressing.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Touch

We may touch others in greetings, showing we care, to signal an agreement, to comfort someone, among other reasons.



Acceptable touch should make one feel respected and safe. This will vary from culture to culture, and it is therefore important that one is acquainted with the local cultural practices.



Unacceptable touch: These involve actions that can be deemed to be invasive of the personal space of another individual as well as unacceptable displays of affection in ministry to children. These include full frontal hugs, touching bottoms, chests or genital areas, lying down or sleeping beside children, massages, patting children on the thigh, knee or leg, tickling or wrestling, touching or hugging from behind, games involving inappropriate touching, kisses on the mouth, inappropriate compliments that relate to physique or body development.



COMMITMENT FORM

St. Patrick's Missionary Society

I confirm that I have read and understood the Code of Behaviour and I agree to abide by the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures of the Society/Region.

I confirm that I have read and fully understand the following:

- Please tick:
- Local Safeguarding Policy
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Society Safeguarding Policy

I agree to accept, abide by and apply the above Safeguarding Policy and Code of Behaviour in their entirety.

Signed: _____ Role: _____

Printed name: _____ Date: _____

Witness to signature: _____

APPENDIX 2:

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES
Central Leadership Team (CLT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop and keep updated a comprehensive written Safeguarding policy that outlines good practice, reinforces international standards of care and complies with Church and Civil Law. ➤ Ensure Society-wide dissemination of the policy to 'all those to whom this policy applies'. ➤ Appoint and supervise competent personnel with specific responsibilities to implement various facets of this policy. ➤ Define a structure and process for review and accountability throughout the Society. This will include effective communication processes and channels between the CLT and all authority levels across the Society. ➤ Oversee and review that each authority level of the Society has competent regional, national, and local policies that are made known and implemented. ➤ Obtain legal and other expert consultation for the Society when required. ➤ Prepare an annual report to be made available to Regions/Districts on the status of safeguarding across the Society. It may include statistics on allegations and resolutions, any significant developments, special situations that have arisen, ongoing training and formation activities.
CLT Safeguarding Councillor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Liaison person for CLT in matters pertaining to Safeguarding. ➤ Liaise with the Society Safeguarding Resource Person and Regional/District Leaders and Safeguarding Personnel on the implementation of the Safeguarding policy. ➤ Will be a member of the Society Safeguarding Advisory Committee and report to the Society Leader and Leadership Team. ➤ Will receive any allegations from Regional/District Leaders and co-ordinate the Society response to any Safeguarding issues.
Society Safeguarding Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appointed by the CLT to ensure oversight of the implementation of the Safeguarding policy. ➤ Offer advice on a confidential basis collectively and in their respective disciplines, when required. ➤ Will report to the Society Leader.
Society Safeguarding Resource Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist the CLT in the oversight and monitoring of safeguarding practices within the Society, according to the direction and roles specified by the CLT. ➤ Assist in reviewing the Safeguarding policy. ➤ Work with CLT in implementing the Society Safeguarding policy. ➤ Together with the CLT Safeguarding Councillor, devise a safeguarding strategic plan for the Society. ➤ Together with the CLT Safeguarding Councillor, liaise with Regional/District Leaders ensuring implementation of the Society Safeguarding policy. ➤ Be a member of the Society Safeguarding Advisory Committee.

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES (Contd.)
Regional/District Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure appropriate safeguarding structures and personnel are in place across the Region/District. ➤ Ensure there are adequate resources for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Safeguarding policy. ➤ Oversee and monitor the implementation of the Safeguarding policy in one's Region or District. ➤ Appoint Safeguarding personnel (e.g., Safeguarding Person, Safeguarding Committees, etc.) to assist the Region/District in overseeing and implementing this policy and all safeguarding issues within the Region/District. ➤ Together with the Safeguarding persons ensures that local ministry safeguarding policies are in place and reviewed. ➤ Support the Safeguarding Person in dealing with all concerns and allegations of abuse. ➤ Cooperate with any investigations by the civil authorities. ➤ Inform the Local Ordinary (to comply with Canon Law). Any data protection conflict will only be determined after significant consultation with Civil, Canon Lawyers and the CLT Safeguarding Councillor. ➤ Prepare an annual report for CLT on the status of safeguarding in the Region/ District. It may include statistics on allegations and resolution(s), the status of the implementation of the local policy and safeguarding training, any significant developments, etc. ➤ Oversee effective integration of this policy and its principles within any areas in which the Society cares for those who may be at risk due to necessary dependence on others. This would apply to care of aging and/or infirm priests as well as to younger persons in formation. ➤ Know the requirements of the Society Safeguarding policy. ➤ Develop, disseminate and keep updated (every three years or when necessary) a Safeguarding policy in their area of authority that corresponds to the Society and Regional/District Policies and ensures compliance with Civil Law and local regulations of reporting. ➤ Together with the Safeguarding Personnel/Committee develop an annual training plan following a training needs analysis for all those 'to whom this policy applies'. Training is to include updated pedagogy and practice in all areas of children's rights and human rights. ➤ Ensure there are structures of accountability in place. ➤ Following the resolution of an allegation, conduct a thorough evaluation of the processes and procedures used in managing it. ➤ Submit an annual report on the adherence to the Safeguarding policy within the Region/District.

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES (Contd.)
Regional/District Safeguarding Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appointed by the Regional/District leader to ensure oversight of the implementation of the Safeguarding policy. ➤ Will consist of a member of the Regional/District Leadership, Regional/District Safeguarding Person and external experts;. ➤ Will report to the Regional/District Leader.
Regional/District Safeguarding Person/s + Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assist and direct the implementation of the Safeguarding policy, including awareness raising and training on safeguarding within the Region/District. ➤ Receive all reports of concerns and/or allegations of abuse and report these to the Regional/District Leader and, where applicable, to the civil authorities. ➤ Develop an annual training plan following a training needs analysis for all those 'to whom this policy applies'. Training is to include updated education and practice in all areas of children's rights and human rights. ➤ Conduct an annual audit of safeguarding practices within the Region/District and prepare the annual report on Safeguarding. ➤ Cooperate with any investigations by the civil authorities.
Support Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appointed by the Regional/District Leader, in consultation with the complainant. ➤ Will keep the complainant informed of the process of the case. ➤ Will help direct the complainant to counselling and support. ➤ Will record any meetings or contact they have with the complainant, and will inform the Safeguarding Person of issues that may arise during these meetings i.e. disclosure of other abuses, requests to meet with the Regional/District Leader. ➤ Will uphold the three standards in practice and behaviour.
Adviser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appointed by the Regional/District Leader, in consultation with the respondent. ➤ Will support the respondent emotionally and advise on a way forward. ➤ Will keep the respondent informed of the process of the case. ➤ Will help direct the respondent to counselling and support. ➤ Will record any meetings or contact they have with the respondent, and liaise when necessary with the Safeguarding Person and/or Regional/District Leader regarding any issues that may arise during these meetings i.e. requests re accommodation needs, requests re spiritual directions, reporting any further disclosures. ➤ Will uphold the three standards in practice and behaviour.

APPENDIX 3:

DETAILED DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF ABUSE

Type of Abuse	Child	Adult at Risk
Emotional	Is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency, and security are not met.	Includes emotional abuse, threats of abuse or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
Neglect	Can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant abuse or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and the failure to access appropriate medical care or treatment.	Neglect and acts of omission include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services and/or the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
Physical	Is actual or likely physical injury to a child such as hitting, kicking or shaking, throwing, burning, scalding, or otherwise causing physical abuse to a child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.	Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
Sexual	Refers to any sexual activity or behaviour involving a child that is carried out by an adult or an older child for the purpose of sexual gratification, manipulation, or exploitation. This abuse can take various forms and includes both physical and non-physical actions.	Refers to any form of sexual activity or behaviour directed at an individual who is unable to consent or protect themselves due to physical or mental disabilities, age-related conditions, or other impairments. The abuse typically involves manipulation, coercion, or force and can be perpetrated by caregivers, family members, or others in positions of authority or trust.
Discriminatory	Discriminatory abuse is the unequal treatment of a person based on age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, marriage, pregnancy, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.	Discriminatory abuse is the unequal treatment of a person based on age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Type of Abuse	Child	Adult at Risk
Online	Refers to any form of exploitation, manipulation, or harm inflicted on a child through digital platforms such as social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, or other internet-based communication tools. It involves the use of technology to harass, coerce, or sexually exploit a child, and can take many different forms.	Refers to the exploitation, manipulation, or harm of an adult who is unable to protect themselves due to age, disability, illness, or mental incapacity, through the use of digital platforms such as social media, messaging apps, or other internet-based communication tools. This form of abuse often involves taking advantage of the individual's vulnerability for personal, financial, or sexual gain.
Bullying	Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against another person and others.	
Sexual Harassment	Involves actions or remarks of a sexual nature that are unwanted and make the victim feel uncomfortable, threatened, or violated. Sexual harassment can occur between people of any gender, and it can happen in various settings. It may include any unwelcome sexual behaviour, advances, or conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, especially in workplaces, schools, or public spaces.	
Institutional Abuse	Abuse may occur within residential care and acute settings and any other in-patient settings, and may involve poor standards of care, rigid routines and inadequate responses to complex needs.	
Spiritual Abuse	Abuse of a person that invokes a person's religious beliefs and faith to perpetrate harm. Spiritual abuse can occur as a secondary experience of abuse when abuse is perpetrated by someone in a position of spiritual authority and trust within the Church and can negatively impact a person's spirituality. Spiritual abuse is defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God.	
Abuse of Power	Abuse of position, function or duty to take advantage of another. This can take many forms and include situations where a person has power over another person by virtue of their relationship (e.g. employer and employee, teacher and student, coach and athlete, parent or guardian and child, clergy/ religious and parishioner) and uses that power to their advantage.	
Trafficking	Often referred to as human trafficking, is the illegal act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring, or receiving individuals through force, coercion, fraud, or exploitation. The primary purpose of trafficking is to use people for forced labour, sexual exploitation, or other forms of involuntary servitude.	

APPENDIX 4:

REPORTING FORM

This form should be completed when someone becomes aware of an incident, complaint or concern regarding the abuse or exploitation of a child or an adult at risk, or in the event of an alleged breach of the Safeguarding Policy or Code of Behaviour. The completed form should be given to the Safeguarding Person.

Please only complete the details that are known to you at the time of receiving or becoming aware of the incident, complaint or concern. If forwarding by email, please ensure that the document is password protected and the receiver is advised of the password by means other than email e.g., phone, WhatsApp, text.

(To download a copy for use, please see Resources on: [www website page link here](http://www.website.page.link.here))



REPORTING FORM ST. PATRICK'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

ABOUT THE DISCLOSURE/CONCERN

Date of disclosure/concern: Time of disclosure/concern:

How was the information received? *(Attach any written information to this form)*

Please circle: Letter Email In Person

DETAILS OF PERSON MAKING DISCLOSURE/RAISING CONCERN

Name (please print): _____
 Address: _____
 Tel: _____ Mobile No: _____

If not the subject of the concern, does the person reporting know the person and how?

DETAILS OF CHILD / ADULT TO WHOM THE CONCERN RELATES TO

Name (please print): _____ DOB:
 Address: _____
 Gender: _____

DETAILS OF PARENT/ CARER (WHERE APPROPRIATE OR KNOWN)

Name (please print): _____
 Address (if different from above): _____
 Tel: _____ Mobile No: _____
 Are they aware of the allegation, suspicion, or complaint? Yes No

DETAILS OF THE ALLEGED RESPONDENT

Name: _____ Occupation: _____
 Address: _____

DETAILS OF CONCERN, ALLEGATION OR COMPLAINT

(Include dates/times, location of incident(s) occurred, witnesses if known. Include complainant's words where possible. Does the child or adult know this concern is being raised?)

NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING THIS FORM:

Print Name: _____
 Signature: _____
 Mobile No: _____
 Email: _____
 Date: _____

NAME OF SAFEGUARDING PERSON WHO RECEIVED THIS FORM:

Print Name: _____
 Signature: _____
 Mobile No: _____
 Email: _____
 Date: _____

APPENDIX 5:

LIST OF RELEVANT AND RELATED DOCUMENTS & INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL AND CANON LAW



St. Patrick's Missionary Society Documents:

- ◆ Data Protection Policy (Revised 2017)
- ◆ Integrity in Ministry (Revised 2019)
- ◆ Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk as a Pastoral Ministry, East Africa (June 2023)

Others:

- ◆ The Code of Canon Law especially *Book II (CIC 1983)* and the *Revised Book VI (promulgated 8 December 2021)*
- ◆ Universal Guidelines Framework, Tutela Minorum, Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (March 2024)
- ◆ Safeguarding Children, Policy and Procedures, Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (2014)
- ◆ Draft Policy on Safeguarding Minors & Vulnerable Persons, Nigeria, (2023)
- ◆ The Child & Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy, ECM, Malawi (2023)
- ◆ Safeguarding Our Children, The Southern Africa Catholic Bishops Conference (2021)
- ◆ The ZCCB Child Protection Policy, Zambia (2017)
- ◆ A Safe and Welcoming Church – Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024
- ◆ National Safeguarding Policy, Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency, England & Wales (2023)
- ◆ In God's Image, Version 2, Safeguarding for the Catholic Church of Scotland, 2022
- ◆ Pastoral Care for Victims of Sexual Abuse, National Conference of Bishops, Brazil (2019)
- ◆ Grenada: Revised Common Norms for Diocesan Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons of the AEC (2013)
- ◆ African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)

International Law

The UNCRC (1989) is ratified in 196 states (except the United States, which has signed the Convention but is yet to ratify it). The four general principles of the UNCRC are:

- Survival and development;
- Non-discrimination;
- Child participation and the right to be heard;
- Best interests of the child.

Of the 54 articles contained within the UNCRC, the most relevant statements are detailed below:

- Article 2** Children have the right to protection against discrimination.
- Article 3** All adults should always do what is best for a child.
- Article 6** Children have the right to survive and develop.
- Article 12** Children have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.
- Article 19** Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- Article 34** Children have the right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Where children are the main participants of activities 'those to whom this policy applies' should discuss the specific child safeguarding provisions that need to be put in place. These provisions should be rights-based, considering the provisions of the UNCRC and rights enshrined in national legislation.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. The Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally respected and protected, in particular:

Article 3 Everyone has the right to life, to be free, and to feel safe.

This policy outlines procedures to prevent and respond to potential incidents of exploitation and abuse of children and adults at risk and fulfills our commitment to a “do no harm” approach. Do no harm refers to an organization’s responsibility to take all measures to prevent harm and to mitigate the harm it may inadvertently cause because of its communities, ministries and organizational activities.

Canon Law

Canon Law: In the Catholic Church, Canon Law is the system of laws and legal principles made and enforced by the Church’s hierarchical authorities to regulate its internal organisation and government, and to order and direct the activities of Catholics toward the mission of the Church.

Collecting the proofs: As defined in *Canon 695 §2* – part of the process of dismissal is to gather facts, on the imputability of the offence.

Delict: A crime in Canon Law; an external violation of a law or precept gravely imputable by reason of malice or negligence (cf. *can. 1321 §2*).

Preliminary investigation: This is a canonical term, which refers to the process by which a Church Authority determines whether an alleged delict, which has reached the threshold of a semblance of truth, is not manifestly false or frivolous and remains a case to answer, by investigation about the facts, circumstances and imputability of the alleged delict. (cf. *can. 1717 §1*).

SST: *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela* defines the Church’s grave delicts or crimes against the faith and sacraments for which the Dicastery of the Doctrine of the Faith has exclusive authority for prosecution and judgement.

VELM: *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* is a motu proprio first issued in May 2019 by Pope Francis *ad experimentum* and, which has since March 2023, been confirmed by Pope Francis as a stable document for safeguarding procedures. It established new procedural norms to combat sexual abuse and ensure that Bishops and their equivalents are held accountable for their actions.

The Code of Canon Law: especially *Book II (CIC 1983)* and the *Revised Book VI (promulgated 8 December 2021)* concerning sanctions in the Church. *Can. 1390* on the offences against human dignity and liberty states:

§ 1. A cleric is to be punished with deprivation of office and with other just penalties, not excluding, where the case calls for it, dismissal from the clerical state, if he:

1° commits an offence against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue with a minor or with a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason or with one to whom the law recognises equal protection;

2° grooms or induces a minor or a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason or one to whom the law recognises equal protection to expose himself or herself pornographically or to take part in pornographic exhibitions, whether real or simulated;

3° immorally acquires, retains, exhibits or distributes, in whatever manner and by whatever technology, pornographic images of minors or of persons who habitually have an imperfect use of reason.

§ 2. A member of an Institute of Consecrated Life or of a Society of Apostolic Life, or any one of the faithful who enjoys a dignity or performs an office or function in the Church, who commits an offence mentioned in § 1 or in can. 1395 § 3 is to be punished according to the provision of can. 1336 §§ 2-4, with the addition of other penalties according to the gravity of the offence.

The Church's penal process is found in Can. 1717-1731 of the Code of Canon Law.

The *Motu Proprio Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela (2001)*, (current version 2021), promulgated the *Normae de Gravioribus Delictis* and grants the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith the exclusive competence to treat cases of the most grave delicts including the sexual abuse (which includes pedopornography) of a minor under the age of eighteen or with a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason by a cleric (cf. *SST art. 6, nn. 1-2*)

The Motu Proprio Vos estis Lux Mundi (March 2023), which confirms the previous *VELM (2019)*, issued *ad experimentum*, indicates that the first responsibility for the implementation of the norms of safeguarding falls on ecclesiastical authorities (that is bishops and superiors) and encourages co-operation with civil authority especially in reporting of abuse to civil authorities when required by Civil Law (*VELM, art. 20*).

The Normae de Gravioribus Delictis (2021), provides in article 10, for the manner of acting when a delict is alleged to have been committed. It states:

§1 Whenever the Ordinary or Hierarch receives a report of a more grave delict, which has at least the semblance of truth, and after having completed the preliminary investigation according to the norm of can. 1717 CIC and can. 1468 CCEO, he is to communicate the matter to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which, unless it calls the case to itself due to particular circumstances, will direct the Ordinary or Hierarch how to proceed further.

§2 The Ordinary or Hierarch may impose, from the beginning of the preliminary investigation, those measures which are established in can. 1722 CIC or in can. 1473 CCEO.

§3 If a case is referred directly to the Congregation without a preliminary investigation having been undertaken, the initial steps of the process, which fall by common law to the Ordinary or Hierarch, may be carried out by the Congregation itself, which will provide for those matters either directly or through its Delegate.

Vademecum on certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of minors committed by clerics (June 2022).

APPENDIX 6:

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT / POSTER



Safeguarding Policy Statement

St. Patrick's Missionary Society

St. Patrick's Missionary Society recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all, and is committed to ensuring their safety. The Society recognises each person as a gift from God and values and encourages the participation of everyone in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

We have a responsibility to safeguard everybody through promoting a safe and caring environment that supports the best interests of all and prevents abuse.

St Patrick's Missionary Society is committed to the implementation of this Safeguarding Statement and the practices and procedures that support our commitment to keep everybody safe from harm while engaged in Church activities.

If you have a Safeguarding concern, please contact:

Name: _____



Telephone Number: _____



Email address: _____

Alternatively, you can report your concern directly to the Civil Authority.