

# Diocese of Kilmore - Safeguarding Newsletter February 2026

## Message from Bishop Martin Hayes



Welcome to the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of our annual Safeguarding Newsletter. As a Church, we continually strive to improve our child safeguarding practice, to learn from the mistakes of the past and to ensure effective safeguarding practices and measures are in place in all Church activities. By promoting the voice and involvement of children in our Church we are ensuring the inherent, inviolable and inalienable right of each child to be listened to as required by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this year's newsletter, we will give you an overview of developments in Safeguarding in the Church as well as having a look again at the revised Standards for Safeguarding Children 2024.

We know that the work of safeguarding in the Church is never finished and while I, together with the Director of Safeguarding and the Designated Liaison Person, take a lead role in outlining the key aspects of what needs to be in place to protect children, young people and adults from harm, safeguarding is very much a shared community responsibility in which each one of us has a part to play. It is essential that we ensure that the policies and procedures of safeguarding are implemented fully throughout the Diocese of Kilmore. Once again, I wish to thank most sincerely all the safeguarding personnel at diocesan and parish level whose commitment and diligence can only be commended. Their work and giving of their time so selflessly ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented. I especially wish to thank Suzie Duffy for her dedication and leadership over many years in various safeguarding roles in the Kilmore Diocese and particularly as Director of Safeguarding & Training. I wish her well as she continues in the role of Vetting Liaison Person for the diocese. I am pleased to welcome Ann Brady who was appointed in September 2025 as Director of Safeguarding & Training for the diocese. I also wish to acknowledge the ongoing work of Paul Cullen, Designated Liaison Person and Lucy Uí Mhórdha, Kilmore Diocesan Safeguarding Children Trainer.

Thank you all so much.

With prayerful good wishes.



## Pope Francis; a Shepherd of the People

During the celebration of the funeral Mass of Pope Francis on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025, his life and ministry were celebrated, and he was described as “a Pope among the people”. Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis spoke about and advocated for a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, and he called this approach non-negotiable and irreversible. We give thanks for Pope Francis, for his work on safeguarding, his understanding and commitment to those who might otherwise have been forgotten and lost.

## Pope Leo XIV Safeguarding with Compassion

In June 2025 the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) was received in audience by His Holiness Pope Leo XIV. The meeting marked a significant moment of reflection, dialogue, and renewal of the Church's unwavering commitment to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable people.

Amongst other initiatives, the Commission updated Pope Leo on progress in the Memorare Initiative, a capacity-building programme designed to support local churches—particularly in the Global South—in their efforts to protect minors and care for victims of abuse.

The initiative draws its name from the prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, reminding us that “no one is left unaided.” It offers a practical and pastoral response to Pope Francis's call that each particular Church become “the safest place of all.”

The Memorare Initiative is tailored to each ecclesial context. It respects local autonomy while offering essential support to ensure that all churches, regardless of resources, can uphold their sacred duty to protect the vulnerable.

## Safeguarding in Action



Safeguarding of children does not take place in offices but in parishes and churches around the Diocese where children are actively participating in the life of the Church. This participation is facilitated and supported by clergy and religious who, together with local safeguarding staff and volunteers, ensure those activities are safe and provide the reassurance that parents require when deciding to bring their children to the Church.

Your continued commitment in upholding Safeguarding Standards will mitigate against complacency and ensure we maintain our vigilance regarding those who would seek to harm the most vulnerable in our Church.

Is your child involved in any Church Activity e.g. Children's Choir, Altar Server, Liturgy

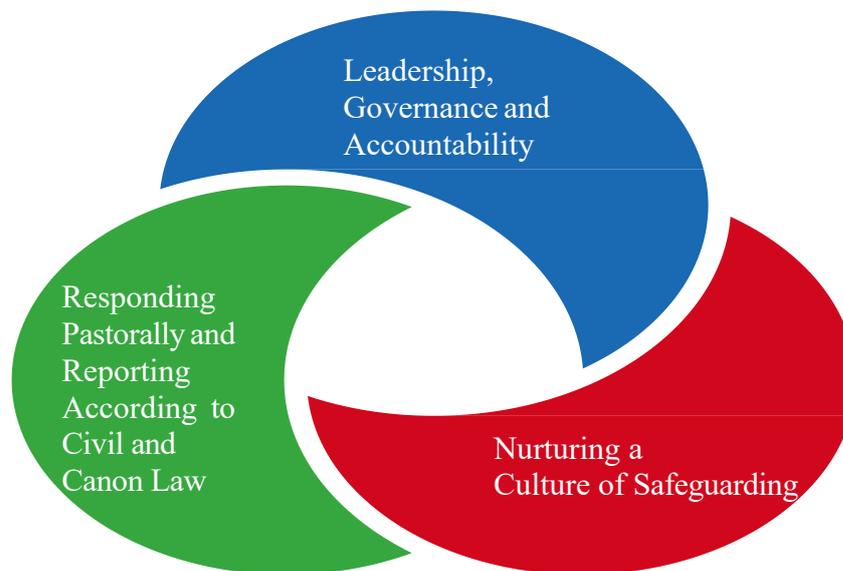
If so, please know that the Leaders and Volunteers involved in all Church Activities for Children have been recruited by the Parish in accordance with the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy.

They have all been Garda/Access NI Vetted and trained in Safeguarding.

## Child Safeguarding Policy Statement

As part of the adoption of the policy *A Safe and Welcoming Church - Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024*, the policy statement is displayed in all churches in the Diocese of Kilmore:

## NBSCCCI Safeguarding Children Policy Three Standards of Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland



The National Safeguarding Policy is focused on three standards which require monitoring at local level,

1. **Standard: Leadership, Governance and Accountability** - This standard reflects the importance of strong leadership in safeguarding. Meeting criteria for this standard involves demonstrating through sermons, pastoral letters, addresses to meetings, newsletters, face-to-face meetings and personal engagement the Church authority's commitment to fulfil the safeguarding mission of the Church.
2. **Standard: Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding** - This standard involves every aspect of the day-to-day measures that happen across the Church in order to ensure safe environments for children. The standard places responsibility on the Church to ensure children are welcomed, their wellbeing promoted and their rights respected. Criteria to be achieved by the Church authority include appropriate structures for recruitment and vetting of all in ministry with children, procedures for dealing with complaints, codes of behaviour for adults and children along with a focus on risk management.

3. **Standard: Responding Pastorally according to Civil and Canon Law** - This standard looks at responding with support and care to complainants of abuse and their families and ensuring appropriate accompaniment for respondents. The Church must ensure a fair and just process of inquiry and equip and support those tasked with responding to allegations with necessary training and skills.

**Monitoring Compliance with Safeguarding Standards at Local Level**



1. **An Annual Safeguarding Self-Audit** is conducted in all parishes throughout the diocese. The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee examines the audit and addresses any deficits at Parish level. A summary report is submitted to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI). The annual self-audit falls within the Leadership Standard.
2. **Parish Safeguarding Support Visits** which commenced in September 2024 were completed in November 2025 by members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee. The visits were carried out under the remit of being supportive, offering advice and monitoring compliance with the NBSCCCI’s safeguarding standards. Updates were also provided on the NBSCCCI’s new policy and procedures. It is evident that great effort is being put into reinvigorating Church activities for young people after the impact of the covid years on such activities. All clergy, pastoral assistants, safeguarding representatives, leaders, volunteers and parish councils must be commended on their work in this regard.

**Safeguarding Training**



Six full day training sessions and 23 refresher sessions were held in the Diocese between November 2024 and December 2025 incl. Further training days will take place throughout 2026 facilitated by Lucy Uí Mhórdha, Kilmore Diocesan Safeguarding Children Trainer.

**NBSCCCI National Conference 2025**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland held its Bi-Annual Conference from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025. The Theme of the Conference was – *Towards a Restorative and Transitional Justice Process of Engagement with Victims and Survivors of Abuse in the Catholic Church in Ireland*. The Conference was attended by Bishop Martin Hayes, DLP Paul Cullen and Director of Safeguarding & Training Ann Brady from the Kilmore Diocese. The conference was addressed by Reverend Luis Mariano Montemayor, Papal Nuncio and by Religious Bodies and Survivors. The conference provided an enriching experience which it is hoped will build on our collective expertise to help us in ensuring the safety of Children within the Church and additionally allowing us to respond in as sensitive and compassionate a manner as we can to those who have been abused in any way by members of the Church.

**Ecclesiastical Provincial Area Meeting**

His Grace, Archbishop Eamon Martin hosted an Ecclesiastical Provincial Area Meeting in November 2025 in conjunction with the NBSCCCI. The meeting was addressed by personnel from *Towards Peace* and *Towards Healing*. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss common issues of interest and to consider how to further improve Safeguarding Practices. The meeting was attended by Kilmore diocesan personnel, DLP Paul Cullen and Director of Safeguarding and Training, Ann Brady.

<p><b><u>Towards Healing</u></b> is a counselling support service, provided by independent and fully accredited and specialised counsellors, for survivors of Institutional, Clerical and Religious abuse.</p> <p>Tuesday to Friday: 9.00am - 5.00pm.          Freephone: 1800 303416          Hearing Impaired Text Line: 085 8022859          Email: <a href="mailto:info@towardshealing.ie">info@towardshealing.ie</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.towardshealing.ie">www.towardshealing.ie</a></p> 	<p><b><u>Towards Peace</u></b> provides spiritual support in a safe supportive space, where people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context can be accompanied as they seek their own experience of spiritual peace, one step at a time.</p> <p>Monday and Tuesday: 9.00am – 4.00pm, Wednesday: 9.00am -12.00 noon          Phone: 01 5053028 / 086 7710533          Out of Office Hours: 086 7710533          Email: <a href="mailto:towardspeace@iecon.ie">towardspeace@iecon.ie</a>          Website: <a href="http://www.towardspeace.ie">www.towardspeace.ie</a></p> 
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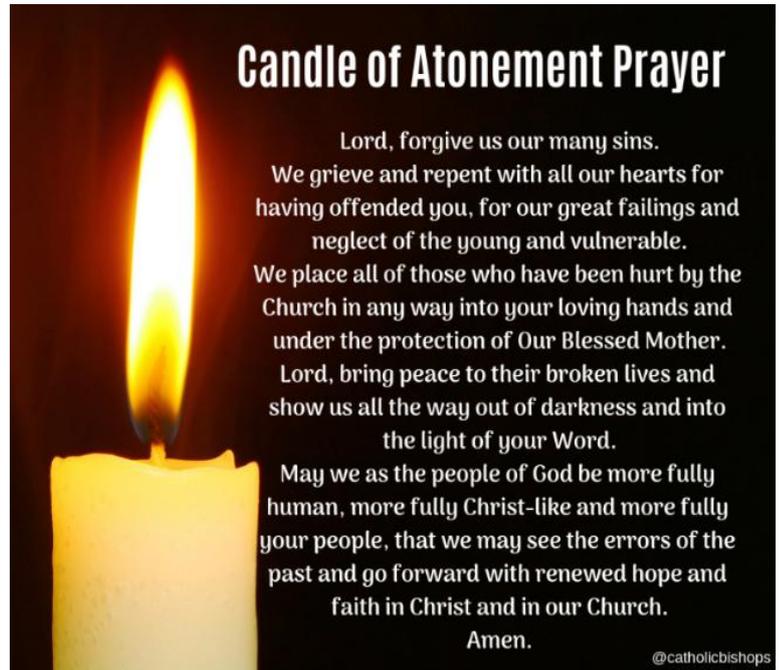
Annual Safeguarding Sunday will be held throughout the diocese on the weekend of the 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> February 2026. Safeguarding Sunday is an opportunity to create a greater awareness of safeguarding in our parishes and to recognise the significant contribution of the faithful in ensuring adherence to our Diocesan Safeguarding Children Policy and our Diocesan Adult Safeguarding Policy.

Universal Day of Prayer for Victims & Survivors of Clerical Abuse falls on Friday 20th February 2026. This day is not only for victims and survivors, who have been so severely injured, either inside or outside the Church, but also for families and communities affected by grief for their loved ones.

Healing of the impact of abuse by Church personnel is one of the ongoing priorities of our National Synodal Process.

All parishes and religious communities are invited to organise their own service or moment of prayer, encouraged to light a Candle of Atonement and include a prayer for victims.

***Bishop Martin Hayes will celebrate Mass at 10.00am in the Cathedral of Saints Patrick and Felim, Cavan on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026. All are welcome.***



Feedback in relation to safeguarding practices is always welcome. Each parish holds an annual safeguarding information session at which feedback on safeguarding practices is sought from those who attend. Please give your feedback during these information sessions. The parish safeguarding representative will forward them to the diocesan safeguarding office

If you have a safeguarding concern or wish to raise a matter from the past, you may contact any of the following. A concern can also be about someone who has been abused, and their abuser is now deceased.

***Kilmore Diocese:***

Paul Cullen,  
Kilmore Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Cullies, Cavan, Co. Cavan. 049 4375004, ext. 109  
Email: [safeguardingdlp@kilmorediocese.ie](mailto:safeguardingdlp@kilmorediocese.ie) Website: [www.kilmorediocese.ie](http://www.kilmorediocese.ie) 085 2578490

***An Garda Síochána:***

S.C.M.U., Garda National Protective Services Bureau, Navan Road Cabra West, Dublin 7. D07 TW80  
Email: [GNPSB\\_SCMU@garda.ie](mailto:GNPSB_SCMU@garda.ie) 01 6663903

***PSNI:***

20 Queen Street, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. BT74 7JR 101 (non-emergency)  
Online reporting: [www.psni.police.uk/advice\\_information/child-protection/](http://www.psni.police.uk/advice_information/child-protection/) 999 (emergency)

***Tusla:***

Child and Family Agency, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Cavan, Co. Cavan. 049 4369800  
Health Care Unit, Rooskey, Co. Monaghan. 047 30400

***HSC:***

Gateway Team, Derry: 028 71314090 (from NI), 048 71314090 (from ROI)  
(Mon - Thurs: 9.00am - 5.00pm, Fri: 9.00am - 4.30pm)

***NBSCCCI:***

National Office for Safeguarding Children, New House, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. 01 5053124  
Email: [admin@safeguarding.ie](mailto:admin@safeguarding.ie)