

Keeping Children Safe
Safeguarding Children



*The Christian Brothers Child-Protection
and Policy Procedures*

2009



Statement from the European Province Leadership Team

This document has been commissioned and produced by the Leadership Team of the European Province of Christian Brothers. It outlines the policy of the European Province of Christian Brothers on the safeguarding of children and the agreed procedures to implement it.

This document constitutes the written policy on keeping children safe within the ministries of the European Province of Christian Brothers in Ireland. It is derived from our belief that the dignity and bodily integrity of each child to whom we minister is protected and that a safe and positive environment is provided in which they may grow and develop

As a Church organisation working directly or indirectly with people under the age of 18, we recognise the necessity of having a child protection policy which reflects the commitment of the Church to keeping children safe. Therefore in drafting the document, the standards and guidelines issued by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in September 2008 were followed as the definitive reference for all those involved in ministry within the Church across the island of Ireland. The document also sets out to incorporate and complement the best practice contained in the child protection legislation in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as outlined in *Children First* and *Cooperating to Safeguard Children*.

The document has been approved by the Province Leadership Team and signed by the Province Leadership as their official child protection policy. The document clearly describes the understanding and definitions of abuse within the European Province and all personnel who work within the organisation are required to comply with them. In unambiguous terms the policy states that all current child protection concerns must be fully reported to the civil authorities without delay.

In publishing these policies and procedures we do not attempt to address every facet of the issue of child protection and we recognise the need for a review on a regular basis to monitor the procedures in practice and to update the content.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Province Leader of the European Province of Christian Brothers)

Introduction



In reviewing their guidelines for child protection, the Christian Brothers of the European Province adhered closely to the *Safeguarding Children* publication (September 2008) of the National Board for Safeguarding Children. A chapter is devoted to each of the seven issues identified including the standard applied to the management of each issue:

Chapter 1: Standard 1: A written policy on keeping children safe

Chapter 2: Standard 2: Procedures – Responding to Child Protection complaints

Chapter 3 Standard 3: Preventing harm to children

- Recruitment and vetting
- Running safe activities for children
- Codes of behaviour

Chapter 4 Standard 4: Training and education

Chapter 5 Standard 5: Communicating the Church's safeguarding message

- To children
- To parents and adults
- To other organisations

Chapter 6 Standard 6: Access to advice and support

Chapter 7 Standard 7: Implementing and monitoring the Standards

Chapter 1

Standard 1: A written policy on keeping children safe

Policy of the Christian Brothers of the European Province

Ministry to children and to young people is an essential integral part of the Christian Brothers' mission within the Church which in turn received its authority from Jesus Christ. As part of the Church community, the Christian Brothers and their colleagues in ministry give support to parents who have primary responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of their children.

As a condition of service, all staff/volunteers within each place of ministry will accept that the policy for safeguarding children is binding on them and they will be made aware that everyone has to play a part to ensure the highest standards of child protection. No one in a centre of ministry can abdicate the responsibility to be vigilant and to report any suspicion or concerns about the welfare of a child in the manner required by legislation and best practice.

As part of their induction and development, the staff/volunteers of all the ministries to children and young people, will be made familiar with the policy of the European Province of Christian Brothers for safeguarding children and with the understandings and definitions of abuse outlined in Resource 1.

A process of review will be conducted **every year** to monitor the level of implementation of the policy and guidelines and to update their content in line with changes in legislation and growing public sensitivity to the issues.



Aspects of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

This includes any actions that cause physical harm to children. It also involves the failure to act to protect children

Emotional Abuse

Involves any persistent emotional ill-treatment of children

Sexual Abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities.

Neglect

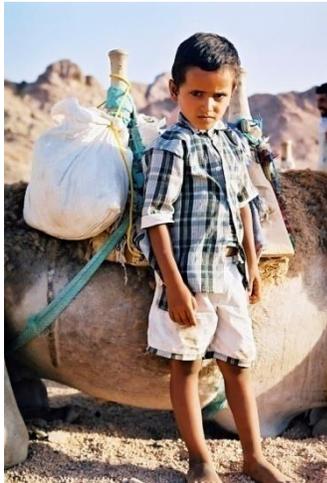
Any omission where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development .

See pages 73-74 of *Safeguarding Children*

Chapter 2

Standard 2: Responding to child abuse allegations and suspicions

Children have the right to be listened to, be heard, and in particular they have the right to a prompt and effective response to allegations and suspicions about their safety and welfare. The Christian Brothers of the European Province have a policy to report these allegations to the appropriate authority both within the Church and the State using reporting procedures to meet all national and international legal requirements.



There is a process in place for dealing with complaints made by adults and children about unacceptable behaviour towards children, with clear timescales for resolving the complaint.

In relation to information received, those making allegations/complaints are advised from the beginning that the protection of the child is the most important consideration and that it takes priority over an individual's request for confidentiality.

In **Resource 2 (i)** a clear step-by-step process is listed on the action to be taken when someone wishes to make allegations or reports suspicions of abuse of a child by staff /volunteers in the ministries of the European Province of the Christian Brothers whether of a current or historical nature.

In **Resource 2 (ii)** the structures and the personnel involved in safeguarding children are identified, and clearly defined roles and sets of responsibilities are listed for these personnel.

In **Resource 2 (iii)** information on the chain of communication is given for people wishing to raise a child protection concern.

In **Resource 2 (iv)** the process is described for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions and referrals.

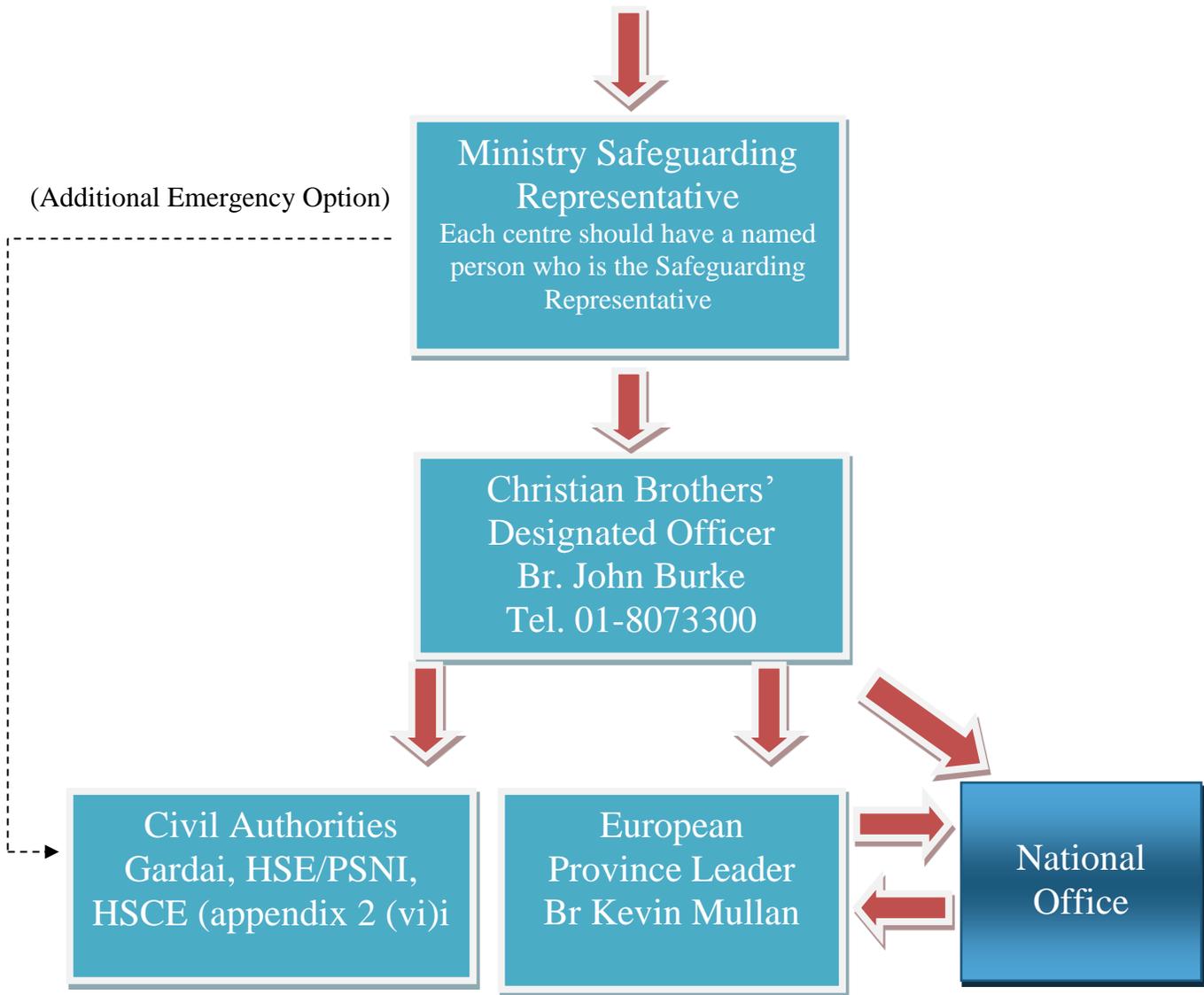
Informed by relevant professional advice, provision is made to store reports securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation. Examples of forms for recording details of complaints can be found in Resource 2 (v).

Resource 2 (v) contains a recording form template.

In **Resource 2 (vi)** contact details are listed for local child protection services such as the local Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána in the Republic of Ireland and the local health and social services trust and the PSNI in Northern Ireland.

What Happens when child abuse is discovered?

When information concerning risk to a child emerges, the person who discovers the problem should immediately set the process below in train



See *Safeguarding Children* p.40; p.94-95

Structures and Personnel

Local Safeguarding Representative (*Safeguarding Children. 54*)

- Raises awareness
- Disseminates information on *Safeguarding Children*
- Monitors all activities of the local centre

Province Designated Officer (*Safeguarding Children. 55,84-86*)

- Hears the allegations of child abuse and reports to the relevant authorities
- Keeps the the person who reports abuse informed about progress of the inquiry
- Liaises with the National Office
- Carefully records all steps in the procedure

Safeguarding Committee (*Safeguarding Children. 55*)

- Provides training
- Oversees the recruitment of volunteers
- Creates, maintains and monitors a safe environment

Advisory Panel (*Safeguarding Children. 56*)

- Oversees the complaint process
- Supports those making the complaints
- Judges the appropriateness of respondent remaining in pastoral assignment
- Advises on how to uphold the rights of a respondent
- Advises on risk assessment of respondent
- Ensures the needs of the wider community are served

National Board (*Safeguarding Children. 57*)

- Carries out independent advisory, audit and inspection functions
- Produces an annual report on the practice of church organisations regarding the safeguarding of children

The National Office (*Safeguarding Children. 57*)

- Implements the policies and decisions of the National Board
- Undertakes dvisory and audit tasks
- Supports diocesan and congregational Designated Officers
- Monitors practice within the Church organisations
- Considers whether any grievance with is not an allegation can be resolved

Who to tell when abuse happens

Tell someone who will listen and will report it.

OR

Contact the Health and Social Services or An Garda Siochana or a member of the PSNI

OR

Tell someone in the Church or in the Christian Brothers.

Person is kept informed of progress

The Health and Social Services or the Police will keep the person who reports the abuse informed of the progress.

The Local Safeguarding Representative will inform Designated Officer

The Designated Officer will meet with the person who reports to get details of the complaint.

The Designated Officer will inform the Health and Social Services and Police. He will also inform the Province Leader of the Christian Brothers.

The Designated Officer will offer a Support Person to help and advise the person reporting the complaint.

The person accused of abuse will be informed and given the opportunity to respond.

The Designated Officer will inform the person who reports the abuse of the process as it unfolds

Person who reports abuse is kept informed of the process as it unfolds

If the person reporting abuse is unhappy with the manner in which the Christian Brothers dealt with the complaint, he/she can ask for an independent review.

See *Safeguarding Children* p. 77-79

Recording of Allegations and Suspicions of Abuse

1.
Create a child protection case file for every referral that includes a log of actions, events and information received, using the dedicated form for this purpose. Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event but before the end of the day. They must be timed, dated and signed by the author.
2.
Take possession of any written records made by any person in connection with the case and place them on the Child Protection Case File.
3.
Explain the procedures for addressing the allegations of abuse to the person who has raised the issue, and ensure that they sign the data protection declaration of consent. Note that consent is not required to make referrals to the authorities.
4.
Inform the respondent of the details of the allegation and record the content of his/her response. This record should be prepared, agreed with the respondent, and then signed and dated.
5.
When the Designated Officer seeks advice from the Health Service or the Police whether to make a referral or not, he should keep a written record of the outcome of the consultation with the authorities.
6.
Maintain a dialogue with the investigating Officer or Social Worker to monitor the progress of the case. Details of the contacts made should be recorded chronologically on the Child Protection Case File.
7.
Ask in writing for an update from the health and police authorities about the outcome of their investigations.
8.
Detailed records should be kept of the progress of the investigation and this should be supplied to the respondent to avoid leaving him/her 'in limbo'.
9.
A secure location should be acquired in which all paper based records created or received by the organisation are retained. This should only be accessible to assigned staff members.

Child Protection Recording Form

1. About the disclosure/concern

Date of disclosure/concern _____

Time of disclosure/concern _____

How was information received? (attached any written information to this form)

- Telephone Letter Email In person

2. Details of person making disclosure/raising concern

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Relationship to child or alleged victim _____

3. Details of child or alleged victim

Name _____ DOB _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Ethnic origin _____

Language (is interpreter/ signer needed) _____

Disability _____

Special needs _____

Parish / Order (if applicable) _____

4. Parent / Carer details (where appropriate)

Name _____

Address (if different from above) _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Are they aware of the allegation, suspicion or complaint?

Yes No

5. Details of alleged perpetrator

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Relationship to child/ victim (parent/Priest/teacher etc.) _____

Position in Church/ Order _____

Address at time of incident(s) _____

Current contact with children if known (sit on board of governors of school, runs youth activities etc) _____

Any additional information

6. Details of concern, allegation or complaint

(Include dates / times and location the incident(s) occurred, witnesses, if known. Does the child / victim know this referral is being made?)

7. Action taken

Has the matter been referred to civil authorities?

Yes No

If yes

Date _____ Time _____

If no explain why _____

Who was it referred to?

Name _____

Designation _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Email _____

Has the matter been referred to a member of the Church?

Yes

No

If yes

Date _____ Time _____

If no explain why _____

Who was it referred to?

Name _____

Designation _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Email _____

8. Next Steps

What actions were agreed and by whom when the matter was referred on to civil / Church authority?

Are there any immediate child protection concerns? If so please record what they are and state what actions have been taken by whom to address them:

9. Designated Officer details:

Date form sent _____

10. Details of person completing the form

Name: _____

Tel _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Position in Church _____

Parish/Order _____

Form completed:

Date _____ Time _____

Signed: _____

(A copy must be retained by the recipient and filed in a secure location, and a copy must be sent to the designated officer and civil / statutory authorities)

Chapter 3

Standard 3: Preventing Harm to Children



It is important that all possible steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people working with children in the ministries of the Province. While the vast majority of people who want to work with children are well-motivated, good recruitment and selection procedures are required to screen out those who are not suitable and to enhance the prospects of identifying the best person for the post.

In all the ministries of the Province, care is taken to develop a culture of safety that minimises risk to children by having reliable recruitment and vetting practices to prevent those who pose a risk to children from holding positions of trust

The procedures for recruitment to all the ministries of the European Province of Christian Brothers engaged with young people and children follow agreed methods for recruiting [**Resource 3 (i)**] including the use of standard templates for application forms, reference and declaration forms, evidence of registration with or access to agencies that are in a position to provide details of an applicant's past behaviour, such as An Garda Síochána Central Vetting Unit or Access Northern Ireland [**Resource 3 (ii)**]

In the recruitment and induction processes of staff/volunteers in the ministries of the European Province of Christian Brothers, attention is given to the need for children to have access to good role models they can trust, and who will respect and nurture their spiritual, physical and emotional development.

In the induction period of staff/volunteers, clear guidelines are presented that set out the norms of acceptable behaviour as an essential part of keeping children safe. Guidelines are provided on the personal/intimate care of children with disabilities, including appropriate/inappropriate touch.

There are processes for dealing with children's unacceptable behaviour that do not involve physical punishment and any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment. In **Resource 3 (iii)** suggestions for the development of a code of positive behaviour are found. Inclusion is an important element in the characteristic spirit of ministries conducted by the European Province of Christian Brothers. As part of their formation, guidance is given to the children/young people on the expected and acceptable code of behaviour towards each other. Through continuing staff

development programmes, members of staff are made aware that discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.

In **Resource 3 (iv)** suggestions for the development of anti-bullying and anti-racist policies are provided.

Resource 3 (v) contains guidelines on a child welfare plan for transporting children/young people when taking them on trips, overnight stays, pilgrimages and retreats. There are clear guidelines for European Province ministry staff/ volunteers on what to do to keep children safe before, during and after they have been involved in activities.

All ministry outlets of the Province are encouraged to offer a caring community where everyone is cherished and valued. Pastoral care programmes for staff and children/young people are an essential element and the provision must include the opportunity for private discussion with those who hold positions of authority. This also provides an opportunity whereby personnel can raise allegations and suspicions about unacceptable behaviour towards children by other personnel or volunteers.

It will be important for each ministry centre to draw up guidelines for the use of information technology (such as mobile phones, email, digital cameras, websites, the Internet) to ensure that children/young people are safeguarded from abuse and exploitation.



Procedures for Recruiting Staff/Volunteers:

The procedures for recruiting personnel require that:

1. All vacancies (paid or voluntary) should be openly advertised
2. A clear job description is developed
3. Applicants must complete the following forms
 - Application form
 - Declaration form
 - Garda Vetting forms
4. Applicants must provide proof of photo Identification
5. Applicants must submit names of two referees (*not family members*) who can provide references. References must be received in writing. Verbal contact must be made with all referees
6. Up-to-date files in respect of all personnel be kept in the ministry centre. These would include application forms, references and other relevant documentation
7. An interview takes place with at least two interviewers present
8. All personnel must undertake a recognised programme of Child Protection Training

Please note that training support, and all relevant forms are provided during the courses, organized by the Province Designated Officer, for local safeguarding representatives.

Resource 3, p. 63 of *Safeguarding Children* provides useful materials to assist the recruitment process.

Sample Forms for Use in the Recruitment Process

- **Confidential Application Form**
- **Confidential Reference Form.**
- **Declaration Form**

Confidential Application Form
Paid and Voluntary Staff in the ministries of the European Province of the
Christian Brother

Ministry Centre: _____

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Tel. no.: _____ Email: _____

Are you: (please tick)

Employed

Unemployed

Student

Homemaker

Retired

Other

Previous Work Experience

Have you previously been involved in voluntary work: Yes No

If yes, please give details:

Why do you want to get involved with this ministry?

Have you previously received any training for working with children? Yes No
If yes, please give details:

List your spare time hobbies, interests or activities ?

Any other relevant information?

Is there any medical or other reason why you may be deemed unsuitable to work with young people? Yes No If yes, please give details:

Please provide the names and addresses of two people (not relatives) whom we could contact for a reference, preferably people who are familiar with your work with children

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Tel. No. _____

Tel. No. _____

Email _____

Email _____

I declare that the above information is true and that I am fit to serve in paid employment or as a volunteer in this ministry centre. I agree to abide by and accept the terms and conditions of participation and accept and abide by the Code of Conduct as outlined in the Christian Brother Policy Document. I will also provide photo ID and comply with Garda Vetting requirements.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Adapted from: Dept. of Health and Children *Our Duty to Care: the Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Dublin Stationery Office 2001 pp 41 – 2

Confidential Reference Form

_____ has expressed an interest in working

in the _____ Ministry Centre and he/she has nominated you as a referee.

The position involves substantial access to children / young people and as an organisation being committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason to be concerned about this person's suitability to work with children and/or young people..

Yes

No

If you have answered 'yes', we will contact you in confidence.

If you complete this reference, the contents will remain confidential, and will be shared only with the applicant's immediate supervisor. We would appreciate complete candour in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person? : _____

In what capacity? _____

List the applicant's attributes which makes you consider him/her suitable for the position

Describe the Applicant's personality

Please rate this person on the following:

	Poor	Average	Good	V/Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self-Motivation					
Ability to motivate					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Position: _____

Declaration Form to be completed by Staff and Volunteers (*Confidential*)

Surname: _____

First name _____

Address _____

Tel. _____

Date of Birth _____ Place of Birth: _____

Previous addresses in the last 3 years

Are known by any other name: _____

Do you have any prosecutions pending or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution or of a bind-over order?

Yes No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s), the court responsible for dealing with the matter, and the approximate date of the court hearing

Nature of offence: _____

Date of offence: _____

Court: _____

Court Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Sample code of positive behaviour

It is important for all employees and volunteers and others in contact with children to:

- treat all children with respect
- provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- operate within the State and Church principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- be visible to others when working with children whenever possible
- challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour
- develop a culture where children can talk openly about their contacts with staff and others
- respect each child's boundaries and help them to develop an awareness of their rights and what to do if they have a problem.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- spend excessive time alone with children
- take children to your own home
- be alone with a child without the necessary professional safeguards

Employees, volunteers and others must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- develop sexual relationships with children
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

Employees, volunteers and others must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:

- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- have a child/ children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- discriminate against, show different treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

Adapted from *Safeguarding Children* p. 69

Inclusive Anti-Bullying Policy

Children and young people are to be consulted about drawing up an all-inclusive anti-bullying and anti-racist policy

The following are some examples of bullying. However, this list is not exhaustive and the children and young people will have many other points to list:

- Name Calling
- Fighting/kicking/punching
- Making suggestive comments
- Intimidation
- Threatening
- Ignoring/excluding
- Damaging property
- Spreading rumours
- Sending abusive text messages
- Spreading rumours

From the Kerry *Diocesan Committee Draft Document* (2009) for Safeguarding Children p. 9

Trips Away From Home: Basic Guidelines

1. All trips need careful advance planning including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance must be in place
2. Written parental consent must be obtained well in advance specifically for each trip and related activities
3. A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents or guardians
4. There must be adequate and, where possible, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls
5. Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of trips away
6. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips
7. Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same gender as the group being supervised
8. If, in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be in a children's dormitory or bedroom without another adult they should (a) immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility and (b) make a diary note of the circumstances
9. The roles and responsibilities of young people must be clearly communicated to them having first been outlined and agreed upon with them and their parents prior to departure
10. The task required of young helpers will be appropriate to their age and capacity. Young people will not be asked to carry out personal care tasks
11. Care will be taken to ensure that leaders do not work alone with young people
12. There must be a named person from the ministry centre to whose immediate attention all concerns and/or complaints can be brought
13. All concerns and/or complaints will be followed through in a timely and efficient manner

Activity Permission Form for Children/Young People

Activity permission form for persons under 18 years

1. **Name of Church organisation** _____

Venue/Activity/Group/Event _____

Date/Time _____

Name of Group Leader/person responsible _____

2. **Name of Child/Young Person**

Address

Telephone No _____

Date of Birth _____

Give details of any medical condition of which the Organisers ought to be aware, please include details of any medication which has to be taken or any dietary requirements.
(This information will be treated with confidence).

3. I have read all the information provided concerning the programme of the above activity. I hereby give permission for my son/daughter/ward to participate in the above activity.

3. The Christian Brothers only accept liability or responsibility for an incident or accident caused by the negligence or breach of statutory duty of the Christian Brothers, its servants or agents.

Signed _____ Date _____
(Parent/Guardian)

Address

(if different from above)

Any additional contact telephone numbers available during the period of the activity

Chapter 4

Standard 4: Staff/Volunteer Formation and Development



Everyone who comes into contact with children and young people in the ministries of the European Province of Christian Brothers has a role to play in their protection. To carry out this role confidently and effectively they need to be aware of child protection issues and to have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe. They can only perform their role confidently if they are aware of the issues and have the necessary understanding and skills.

As part of their induction programme into ministry staff/volunteers are familiarised with the European Province of Christian Brothers' policies on child protection in general and with how these standards are applied within the particular ministry in which they work.

All personnel within the ministries of the European Province of the Christian Brothers that are involved in either providing or overseeing activities with children are provided with appropriate child protection training. Specialised training is provided to those who have a designated child protection/ welfare role.

For the ongoing training of staff/volunteers, use is made of the training programmes approved by the National Board for Safeguarding Children, especially for those with specific responsibilities such as recruiting and selecting staff, dealing with complaints, disciplinary processes, managing risk or acting as Designated Officer.

It is very important to establish a culture within the ministries of the European Province whereby children feel they can have open and honest discussions about anything that is worrying them. To develop this type of culture it is important to engage in regular reflection on the life of each ministry.

Resource 4 (i) contains elements of programmes for on-going formation and development of staff /volunteers.

Elements in the Design and Implementation of Programmes for On-going Formation and Development of Staff/Volunteers

1. Consultation in the design stage with the National Board to ensure compliance with current legislation, best knowledge and practice
2. Identification of training needs using templates of the type given in *Safeguarding Children* p. 71
3. Familiarisation with the *Safeguarding Children* document and the Christian Brothers' guidelines
4. Development of the knowledge, skills and beliefs of the participants of the type outlined in the reflection questions of page 68 of the *Safeguarding Children* document.
5. Development of the ability to recognise the signs of child abuse (page 75-76 of the *Safeguarding Children* document)
6. Design of sets of guidelines to inform practice in the ministry centre on such issues as:
 - Personal intimate care of children with disabilities (*Safeguarding Children* p.30)
 - Time with children spent away from home (Resource 3 (v) of Christian Brother Guidelines)
 - Supervision protocols
 - Appropriate use of information technology – mobile phones, email, digital camera, websites and internet
 - The expected and acceptable behaviour of children towards other children (Resource 3 (iv) of Christian Brother Guidelines)
 - The appropriate/expected behaviour of adults towards children (Resource 3(iii) of Christian Brother Guidelines)
 - Dealing appropriately with unacceptable behaviour of children
 - Creating an environment where concerns about child protection issues can be raised

Chapter 5

Standard 5: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message



The foreword to *Safeguarding Children* recalled the words of Pope Benedict XVI in the *ad limina* address of the Irish Bishops on 28 October 2006 in which he spoke of the ‘deep wounds’ caused by the abuse of children within the Church and he stressed the need to, “establish the truth of what happened in the past, to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent it from occurring again, to ensure that the principles of justice are fully respected.”

Each ministry of the European Province of the Christian Brothers is concerned to play its part in re-establishing the integrity of the Church and its missions by making clear its commitment to keeping children safe and by modelling best practice. The staff/volunteers wish to show by word and example that children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church.

In the development of the life of the ministry, styles of leadership and communication are encouraged which reflect a commitment to transparency and openness. Children and young people, as part of their formation within the community of the ministry centre, are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and to whom to speak to if they have concerns. The child protection statement of each ministry shall incorporate the standards of safeguarding children identified by the Church and it shall be openly displayed and available to relevant parties .

Everyone in the ministry should know who the Province Designated Officer is and how to contact him. Each child or young person is also provided with contact details of local child protection services, such as Health and Social Care Trusts/ Health Service Executive, PSNI, An Garda Síochána, and telephone help-lines. Each ministry, either alone or as a network, establishes links with statutory child protection agencies to develop good working relationships in order to keep children safe.



Chapter 6

Standard 6: Access to Advice and Support

The European Province of Christian Brothers recognises its duty to ensure that advice and support is available to help personnel, colleagues and volunteers to play their part in protecting children and to exercise their duty to ensure that advice and support is available to all involved.

They affirm the right of those who have suffered child abuse to receive a compassionate and just response. Children, in particular, need someone to turn to when they are being abused. Often they do not know where to go for help. **Resource 6 (i)** offers suggestions on how to respond to a child making an allegation of abuse.

As part of their response to the issue of safeguarding children, the Province Leadership Team has a dedicated a person called the Province Designated Officer to undertake special responsibilities for keeping children safe. (Resource 2 (ii) of *Keeping Children Safe; Safeguarding Children* p. 84-86) He is offered time and resources to access specialist advice, support and information on child protection issues.

Through him and his support staff, contacts are established at a national and/or local level with the relevant child protection/welfare agencies and help-lines are identified that can provide information, support and assistance to children who have been abused.

The Designated Officer is informed by a set of clear guidelines on the manner in which he responds to and supports a child who is suspected of having been abused whether that abuse is by someone within the ministries of the European Province or in the wider community, including family members or peers.

As soon as the Designated Officer is informed of the name and contact details of persons who have experienced abuse he will contact them and give them information on how to seek the support which they require. A support person is assigned to them.

Appropriate support is also offered to those who have perpetrated abuse to help them to face up to the reality of abuse as well as to promote healing in a manner which does not compromise children's safety. They are given an advisor to deal with the allegations of abuse. The respective roles of the Support Person and the Advisor are described in **Resource 6 (ii)** and **Resource 6 (iii)**

Resource 6 (ii) lists information for children and young people about sources of support as well as lists of contacts for specialised advice services

Guidelines for Responding to a Child Making an Allegation of Abuse

A child who is being abused will occasionally tell an adult if the child feels that he or she can trust this person. The important thing to remember is that if a child does tell you, he/she is doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if you are asked not to do anything with the information.

IF A CHILD BEGINS TO TELL YOU ABOUT ABUSE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO:

- stay calm
- listen carefully and take them seriously
- ask questions for clarification only if you are unclear what the child is saying
- allow the child to continue at his/ her own pace
- reassure the child that, in disclosing the abuse, they have done the right thing
- tell them they are not to blame for the abuse
- let them know you will do what you can to help
- report the child's disclosure to your manager or the designated person immediately (or in the absence of the designated person, or if the disclosure in any way involves the designated person, then seek advice from the National Safeguarding Board Support Team).

As soon as possible, write down everything that you were told by the child, using their own words to describe the abuse. Sign and date this record and pass it onto the designated person.

IF A CHILD BEGINS TO TELL YOU ABOUT ABUSE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO NOT:

- dismiss the concerns
- panic
- probe for more information/ ask other questions
- 'promise not to tell anyone' or say 'you'll keep it a secret'
- make negative comments about the accused person
- make assumptions or speculate
- disclose details of the allegation to anyone else – even if the allegations involve them in any way.

Find an opportunity to explain that it is likely that this information will need to be shared with others and at the end of the discussion tell them what you plan to do next and with whom this information will be shared.

Remember: It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of the concerns about the child.

Role of the Support Person

The European Province Leadership Team selects Support People to be available to those who make an allegation/disclose abuse under these procedures. The person (which can be a child or adult) making the allegation will be offered a choice between a male or female Support Person.

The role of the Support Person is to assist, where appropriate, with communication between the child or adult making an allegation/disclosure and the Designated Officer, to facilitate the child or adult in gaining access to information and help, and to represent their concerns during the inquiry process.

The Support Person needs to be clear about his/her role and should receive appropriate training.

The Support Person is not a counsellor to the child or adult, and must not be or act as their therapist.

Support People must be particularly attentive to the expressed needs and objectives of the child or adult, and the fact that some may be reluctant to seek help. Support People should, therefore, consider how any therapeutic or spiritual needs of a child or adult who has made an allegation/ disclosed abuse may be met and will be mindful of his/her ongoing vulnerability during this process.

In addition, the Support Person should:

- consider any wishes of the child or adult disclosing abuse, in regard to a pastoral response by the Church to his or her family
- be available to the child or adult throughout the course of the inquiry process, and thereafter as required
- ensure the child or adult is kept informed of developments in relation to them
- represent the wishes and any therapeutic needs of the child or adult to the Designated Officer, as required
- arrange, if considered helpful, a meeting between the child or adult and the Church authority, such as the priest, or Bishop.

Under no circumstances should the same Support Person be provided for the child or adult making the allegation / disclosure of abuse and for the respondent.

Adapted from *Safeguarding Children* p.58



Role of the Advisor

The European Province Leadership shall make available an Adviser to be available to the respondent. Advisers shall represent the needs of the respondent to the Leadership Team, and assist, where appropriate, with the care of the respondent and with communication between the respondent, the Designated Officer and the Leadership Team and the ministry centre. The respondent's adviser shall not be the respondent's therapist or spiritual adviser.

Advisers should be particularly alert to the sense of isolation and vulnerability which a respondent may experience following an allegation of this nature. He or she will:

- accompany, if so requested, and be available after the respondent's meeting with the Leadership Team and the Designated Officer
- inform the respondent of his or her right to obtain advice in both civil and Canon Law
- identify any therapeutic or other needs of the respondent and suggest how these may be met
- consider the wishes of the respondent in regard to a pastoral response by the Province Leadership Team to his or her family
- be available to the respondent throughout the inquiry process, and thereafter as required
- ensure that the respondent is kept informed of developments in regard to the inquiry
- represent the needs and wishes of the respondent to the Designated Officer, as required.

Advisers should receive appropriate training. Under no circumstances should the person acting as Advisor to the respondent be the same person as the person assuming the role of Support Person provided for the child or adult making the allegation/ disclosure of abuse.

Taken from *Safeguarding Children* p.59

Chapter 7

Standard 7: Implementing and Monitoring the Standards



To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across all the ministries of the European Province of Christian Brothers which serve children or young people. Checks are needed to ensure that policies are being implemented consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside of the ministries are sought in order to improve the effectiveness of the safeguards put in place.

The European Province Leadership Team is careful to set aside adequate funding to finance the implementation and evaluation of the child protection procedures.

The Province Designated Officer, working in collaboration with the Province Leadership Team and the Advisory Panel, develops a plan of action to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies put in place to keep children safe.

In the spirit of transparency being advocated by the Province Leadership Team, an evaluation report is made available containing, amongst other findings, the number of incidents of abuse and the number of complaints.



Timeline

September 2008	Publication of Safeguarding Children
October 2008	Designated Officer appointed to the European Province
November 2008	Examination of the document <i>Safeguarding Children</i>
December 2008	Decision by Province Leadership Team to adopt the standards and norms of the <i>Safeguarding Children</i> document as the foundation of the Christian Brothers guiding document. A drafting committee was put in place to propose guidelines for child protection in the European Province ministries. Four drafts were completed.
June 2009	The fifth draft document <i>Keeping Children Safe</i> will be presented to the Province Leadership Team.
July 2009	The modified document will be presented to the National Board for Safeguarding Children
July-September 2009	Recruitment to the Advisory Panel Recruitment of Support People and Advisors
September 2009	Appointment of local representatives
September 2009	Seminar for local representatives to launch <i>Keeping Children Safe</i> to have it disseminated to all those involved in ministry
Oct-November 2009	Familiarisation of ministry staff with <i>Safeguarding Children</i> and <i>Keeping Children Safe</i> documents. The Design and display of information material in the ministry centres to inform children and staff of the policies of the Church, the European Province.
October 2010	Review of implementation of <i>Safeguarding Children</i> and <i>Keeping</i>

Children Safe documents examining what measures have been taken to keep children safe, who was responsible for implementing the measures and a timeline for their completion. The review will take into account the view of staff/volunteers, children/young people, parents/carers on policies and practices for keeping children safe.

Ongoing

All incidents , allegations/suspicious of abuse are processed, acted on, recorded and stored securely

Meetings of the Advisory Panel

On-going training of Designated Officer and the Local Representatives,

Support People and Advisors

Recruitment and on-going training of support staff for the Designated Officer

Tasks Requiring to be Done

1. Identify the ministry centres for which the guidelines are intended
2. Appoint a safeguarding representative for each centre
3. Recruit the Advisory Panel or panel of advisors
4. Appoint a Keeping Children Safe Committee to include:
 - Appoint or re-appoint a Designated Officer
 - Deputy Designated Officer
 - Co-ordinator for Keeping Children Safe
 - Ministry Centre Representatives
5. Produce a flyer/brochure giving an outline of what is involved in our child protection policy and who have been appointed to implement it (Kerry Diocese template)
6. Discuss, modify and approve *Keeping Children Safe*
7. Arrange a meeting with the National Office for consultation
8. Discuss, modify and approve details of the timeline
9. Arrange for posters to be produced for display in the ministry centres, giving the essential information
10. Prepare a budget for the Child Protection Services
11. Produce a record management policy for the Province Centre with the assistance of Karen and Michelle