

STANDARD 1

CREATING AND MAINTAINING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS GUIDANCE FOR INDICATOR 1.1

1.1C Guidance on Visiting Clergy or Visiting Persons in Any Form of Consecrated Life Seeking to Minister in the Catholic Church in Ireland

All steps must be taken to ensure a safe and nurturing environment within the Church for children. For that reason, it is important that all those who engage in public ministry require confirmation that they are fit for that sacred task. The safeguarding of children within the Irish Catholic Church is of critical importance.

Whilst lay faithful (including lay ministers) are subject to safe recruitment practice (Guidance 1.2), all clergy (secular or religious, bishop, priest or deacon) who seek to minister in the Catholic Church in Ireland must be incardinated. This means that he must belong to a diocese (or its equivalent in canon law), a personal prelature (such as Opus Dei), an institute of religious life (such as the Franciscans) or a society that has this faculty (such as the Society of African Missions).

Incardination has three main purposes:

1. It is pastoral; a cleric is ordained for the service of a particular Church to which he belongs;
2. It is an effective structure for maintaining discipline, creating a bond between the cleric and his competent superior;
3. It provides the individual cleric with a guarantee that his rights are protected.

Further to this, the cleric must be in good standing and enjoy the faculties necessary to minister. In law, a faculty is the authority, privilege or permission to perform an act or function, for example, regarding the Sacraments of Penance and Marriage. A cleric receives his faculties from the ordinary of the place where he has domicile; however, each local ordinary is responsible for ensuring that clergy who minister within their territory are in good standing.

The Church authority has a responsibility to take measures to ensure the safety and welfare of children. It is therefore important that certain checks are carried out to ensure that all clergy are in good standing prior to faculties being received.

Procedures for visiting clergy within Ireland

All clergy incardinated into the diocese or religious order will have been Garda/AccessNI vetted as part of safe recruitment (Guidance 1.1A).

Visiting clergy should follow best practice and contact the local parish priest/superior of a religious house before undertaking ministry in that ecclesiastical jurisdiction. If this ministry is considered to be regulated activity, then the guidance regarding the vetting process must be undertaken and a letter of good standing received (1.1C Template 2) from the ordinary of the cleric.

However, should the cleric be present for one event in a parish or diocese, such as a funeral, baptism or wedding, he should sign the register in the sacristy to declare his presence on a

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particular time and date. Furthermore, should the priest not be incardinated in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that he visits, he must provide his celebret for inspection by the parish priest or duly delegated person, and this should be noted beside the visitor's signature in the register.

Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland⁷ wishing to minister on a short-term basis

When clergy from outside Ireland visit with the intention of being involved in short-term ministry, evidence should be provided that confirms they are priests in good standing and that they are fit for ministry.

Clergy who come from parts of the world where police vetting arrangements are not in existence may seek to minister in Ireland. As a consequence, the statutory route is not always available as a means of confirming that there is no adverse information known about them that would prevent them from carrying out ministry in Ireland.

- a. Prior to visiting Ireland, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all visiting priests must write seeking permission of the Church authority, giving details about the duration of the visit, the type of ministry and the location of ministry being considered. The contact details of the Church authority of the visiting priest must be provided in advance;
- b. Upon receipt of a request from visiting clergy to carry out ministry, the Church authority must acknowledge the same, and then make a request in writing to the visitor (1.1C Template 1) for a celebret or confirmation of good standing (1.1C Template 3), signed by their Church authority;
- c. The visiting priest must be asked to complete a declaration of good standing form (1.1C Template 2);
- d. A vetting check must be carried out through the Garda National Vetting Bureau/AccessNI (Guidance 1.1B);
- e. If the Church authority is satisfied that there are no concerns about the visiting religious, permission should be given in writing to the visitor, outlining the specified ministry, including its duration and location (1.1C Template 4);
- f. A copy of this permission (1.1C Template 4) should be forwarded to the parish priest or local superior of the visitor, and also to the parish priest or local superior of the location of the ministry outlined in the letter;
- g. A copy of the permission (1.1C Template 4) should be stored in the offices of the Church authority, in line with confidentiality and storage of information (Appendix B).

⁷ Visiting clergy refers to those seeking to minister on a short-term basis, for a special event, during holidays, or as part of mission/retreat or other pastoral activity.

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Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister at a one-off event

Visiting clergy should follow best practice and contact the local parish priest/superior of a religious house before undertaking ministry in that ecclesiastical jurisdiction. If this ministry is considered to be regulated activity (as defined in Guidance 1.1B), then the guidance regarding the vetting process should be undertaken and a letter of good standing received (1.1C Template 2) from the ordinary of the cleric.

However, should the cleric be present for one event in a parish or diocese, such as a funeral, baptism or wedding, he should sign the register in the sacristy to declare his presence on a particular time and date. Furthermore, should the priest not be incardinated in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that he visits, he must provide his celebret for inspection by the parish priest or duly delegated person, and this should be noted beside the visitor's signature in the register.

Procedures for visiting persons in any form of consecrated life within and outside Ireland

- a. Prior to their visit, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all visiting religious must write seeking permission of the Church authority, giving details about the duration of the visit, the type of ministry and the location of ministry being considered. Contact details of the Church authority of the visiting religious must be provided in advance;
- b. Upon receipt of request from the visiting religious to carry out ministry, the Church authority must acknowledge the same, and then make a request in writing to the visitor (1.1C Template 1) for a confirmation of good standing (1.1C Template 5), signed by their Church authority;
- c. A vetting check must be processed through the Garda National Vetting Bureau/AccessNI (Guidance 1.1B);
- d. If the Church authority is satisfied that there are no concerns about the visiting religious, permission should be given in writing to the visitor, outlining the specified ministry, including its duration and location (1.1C Template 4);
- e. A copy of this permission (1.1C Template 4) should be forwarded to the parish priest or local superior of the visitor, and also to the parish priest or local superior of the location of the ministry outlined in the letter;
- f. A copy of the permission (1.1C Template 4) should be stored in the offices of the Church authority, in line with confidentiality and storage of information (Appendix B).