

## **CHRISTIAN BROTHERS EUROPEAN PROVINCE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

### **CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

This statement has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and is derived from Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016.

#### **Statement**

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland, the Christian Brothers recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, and are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being while we work in partnership with parents/ guardians to do this. We recognise each child as a gift from God, and we value and encourage the participation of children in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development.

All Church personnel (including clergy, religious, staff and volunteers) have a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

#### **Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm**

The Congregation of Christian Brothers, European Province, as a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland exists to promote the teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes the following ministry with children, as defined in Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016:

#### **List of Ministry with Children**

The following are the official ministries of the Christian Brothers European Province:

The Life Centre, Blarney Street, Cork

The Edmund Rice Network

Westcourt Heritage Centre, Callan, County Kilkenny

Mt Sion Heritage Centre, County Waterford

Westcourt Centre, Barrack Street, Belfast

As outlined in the Safeguarding Children 2016 Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland we are committed to the following principles:

#### **Mandatory reporting**

Each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge, or allegations that a child is being or has been abused:

- physically
- emotionally
- sexually

- through neglect

Suspensions, concerns, knowledge, or allegations may relate to possible abuse by a member of Church personnel, but they can also relate to incidents in the child's family, or elsewhere in the community.

### **Caring for the welfare of all children and the adults who work with them.**

Measures to create and maintain environments that are safe for children, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children and the adults who work with them, will continue to be strengthened and reviewed. This will be done through training support, communications and quality assurance.

### **Responding appropriately to child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.**

Anyone who brings any suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or past abuse of a child to the notice of the Church will be responded to sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child protection procedures and Church requirements.

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person (lay, cleric or religious) who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must be reported to the Church authority. If the allegation relates to a religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority, in this case, the Province Leader of Christian Brothers European Province, and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

All Church personnel will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to complaints of child sexual abuse relating to those in forms of consecrated life, we will act in accordance with the requirements of civil law and canon law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the complainant and respondent.

### **Caring pastorally for complainants and other affected persons**

Those who have suffered child abuse by the Christian Brothers will receive a compassionate and just response, and will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support as they seek to rebuild their lives. An appropriate pastoral response to the family, parish, congregation or order and to the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

### **Caring pastorally for respondents and other affected persons**

In our response to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child sexual abuse, we will respect the rights under civil law and canon law of an accused person. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and Church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered to the respondent.

We will take responsibility for ensuring that a religious who is considered to constitute a danger to children is managed according to a risk management plan. All requisite steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of anyone who has been wrongly accused of abusing a child.

Respondents belong to families and to religious communities. We will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and communities affected by the respondent's changed situation.

## Risk Assessment

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities in the Congregation of the Christian Brothers, European Province, and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse.

RISK IDENTIFIED	PROCEDURE IN PLACE TO MANAGE RISK IDENTIFIED
Those that work with children are unsafe to do so	Indicator 1.1 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
Those that work with children behave inappropriately towards them	Indicator 1.2 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
Children who use our services do not understand the roles and responsibilities in place to encourage positive behaviour	Indicator 1.3 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
The environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to meet effective safeguarding practice	Indicator 1.4 and 1.8 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
External groups who use our property are unsafe to do so	Indicator 1.5 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
Those who wish to behave dangerously or unethically towards children are able to do so	Indicator 1.7 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
Those who wish to exploit children through the use of digital media in our ministries are able to do so	Indicator 1.9 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>

Personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern, or knowledge appropriately	Indicator 2.1 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
Personnel fail to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children	Indicator 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
Children and their parents do not understand the Church's policy, procedures and structure to safeguard children	Indicator 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
The procedures for safeguarding children fail to be implemented	Indicator 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3 of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>
The Province Leader fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons	Indicator 1.1, 6.1 and 2.1, of the Child Safeguarding Policy available from <a href="http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu">http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu</a>

## Procedures

### Procedures

All procedures outlined in the risk assessment above are available at

<http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu> The procedures listed above include the following:

Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/ volunteers of a child availing of our service. This is part of Indicator 2.1 which is available from

<http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu>

Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children. This is part of Indicator 1.1 available from <http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu>

Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm. This is part of Indicators 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 available from <http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu>


Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla. This is part of Indicator 2.1 which is available from <http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu>

Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons. This is part of Indicator 2.1 which is available from <http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu>

Procedure for appointing a relevant person. This is part of Indicators 1.1 and 6.1 which is available from [<http://safeguarding.edmundrice.eu>]

### **Implementation**

The Congregation of Christian Brothers, European Province is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice supports our desire to keep children safe from harm while in our ministries. As part of our annual audit against the relevant indicators of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise, as appropriate.

**Signed:**  \_\_\_\_\_

Br. David Gibson

Province Leader

**Date:** July 2023

For any queries relating to this statement please contact the Designated Liaison Person, Mr John McDermot, +353 86 083 6268