



**Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy  
of the  
World Meeting of Families 2018 (WMOF2018)  
June 2018**

Introduction: Child Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland

Section 1: The Safeguarding Statement of WMOF2018

Section 2: The Safeguarding Structure of WMOF2018

Section 3: The Creation and Maintenance of Safe Environments

Section 4: Definitions of Child Abuse

Section 5: Dealing with Child Protection Concerns

Appendix 1: Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Appendix 2: Responding to a Disclosure of Child Abuse

Appendix 3: Vetting

Appendix 4: Confidentiality, Data Protection and Record Keeping

Appendix 5: WMOF2018 contact details



## Introduction

### Child Safeguarding in the Catholic Church in Ireland

In 2005, the Irish Bishops' Conference, along with the Conference of Religious in Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union (now amalgamated as the Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland), committed to develop a unified approach to child protection across the Catholic Church in Ireland, the so-called 'one-Church' approach. In order to achieve this, the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) was established to:

- develop policy, procedures and practice guidelines on all aspects of child safeguarding within the Catholic Church in Ireland,
- provide advice and support to Church bodies on all aspects of child safeguarding and management of cases,
- monitor the child safeguarding practice of dioceses and religious orders in Ireland.

In 2008, NBSCCCI published *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. Following extensive consultation with the dioceses, religious orders and others this document was revised, amended and reissued in 2016 as *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. This document contains the 'Child Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Constituent Members of the Catholic Church in Ireland' in which the members:

*"Recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children, are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being, and will 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 environment that supports their interests and prevents abuse".*

*Safeguarding Children* is set out as seven safeguarding standards:

- Standard 1: Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments,
- Standard 2: Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or Allegations,
- Standard 3: Care and Support for the Complainant,
- Standard 4: Care and Management of the Respondent,
- Standard 5: Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe,
- Standard 6: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message,
- Standard 7: Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards



This is the child safeguarding and protection policy of the World Meeting of Families 2018 (WMOF2018). It sets out the arrangements for the implementation of the child safeguarding policy of the Irish Catholic Church for WMOF2018, with particular reference to Standards 1, 2, 5 and 6.

WMOF2018 is being hosted by the Archdiocese of Dublin. Any situation not anticipated in this document will be dealt with in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Dublin. For example, an allegation of abuse made against a WMOF2018 staff member or volunteer will be dealt with in accordance with diocesan human resources and volunteer policies (as well as the child protection measures outlined in this document).

Safeguarding refers to all the policies, procedures and practices that contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment for children. Child protection concerns are concerns that a child may have been abused, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. The work of child protection consists in the recognition of, response to, and reporting of such concerns.

A child, as defined by the *Child Care Act 1991*, is a person under the age of 18 years excluding a person who is or has been married. In this document the terms 'child' and 'young person' both refer to children, so defined.

The civil authorities referred to in this document are Tulsa, the Child and Family Agency, and An Garda Síochána (national police).

All of those who work for or on behalf of World Meeting of Families 2018 are required to familiarise themselves with this document and to operate in accordance with its requirements. Information about this policy will be provided to all those who volunteer with WMOF2018 as part of their induction and training will be provided to those who will be working directly with children.

Information about this policy will be included in the information provided to those who will be attending WMOF2018, whether as contributors or attendees. The policy will be available on the WMOF2018 website: [www.worldmeeting2018.ie](http://www.worldmeeting2018.ie) and will be referenced in leaflets and promotional material. Safeguarding information will be displayed at events and activities for children.

WMOF2018 also has a Child Safeguarding Statement, as required under the Children First Act 2017. It is available here:

<https://www.worldmeeting2018.ie/WMOF/media/downloads/WMOF2018SafeguardingStatementFinal.pdf>

The statement summarises the contents of this policy document.



## **Section 1**

### **The Safeguarding Statement of the World Meeting of Families 2018**

The World Meeting of Families 2018 is committed to operating in accordance with *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.

All those working for or on behalf of WMOF2018 undertake to safeguard children from all forms of abuse (defined in Section 4) through promoting their welfare and complying with the requirements of this policy.

This policy has been written to comply with the requirements of Irish civil law, Church and national guidelines, in particular:

- The Irish Constitution;
- The Child Care Act, 1991;
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998;
- The Criminal Justice Act, 2006;
- The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012;
- The Children First Act, 2015;
- The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts, 2012 – 2016;
- Safeguarding Children: Policy and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017.



## **WMOF2018: Core Safeguarding Values and Practices**

WMOF2018 is committed to:

1. Valuing children and demonstrating respect for them by ensuring the environment is safe for them during WMOF2018,
2. Ensuring that where children participate in WMOF2018 activities separate from their parents/guardians they do so only with the informed consent of their parents/guardians,
3. Choosing carefully those who work with WMOF2018. Recruitment procedures are set out in a separate document. They include the requirement that those working with WMOF2018 have references checked and undergo vetting before taking up their position (Appendix 3).
4. Ensuring that those working for and on behalf of WMOF2018 understand what is expected of them in their dealings with children. A code of conduct for those working with WMOF2018 is included in Section 3 of this document.
5. Making proper arrangements for the care of the children attending WMOF2018 activities. These are set out in the Section 3 of this document.
6. Promptly reporting all concerns for the protection and welfare of children in accordance with this policy and with Church and national (state) guidelines. The reporting procedures are set out in Section 5 of this document.
7. Keeping accurate records. Guidance on recording is included in Section 3 of this document.



## Section 2

### The Safeguarding Structure of WMOF2018

Fr. Timothy Bartlett, Secretary General of WMOF2018, has overall responsibility for the safeguarding arrangements of WMOF2018. The Secretary General is informed of any child protection concern that comes to light in any part of the organisation. The Secretary General reports to the Board of WMOF2018 on child protection matters. The Secretary General maintains regular contact with the Chair of the Board, Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin, and alerts him to any issues of concern.

WMOF2018 has appointed Andrew Fagan, Director of the Child Safeguarding and Protection Service of the Archdiocese of Dublin, as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Aidan Gordon, Director of Safeguarding for the Archdiocese of Armagh as the deputy DLP for receipt of child protection concerns within the organisation and for reporting them to the civil authorities as required under *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011)* and the *Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012*. They are additionally responsible for reporting concerns relating to a cleric or religious to the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland in accordance with Standard 2 of *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2016)*. NBSCCCI is responsible for ensuring such concerns are reported to the relevant Church authority.

The deputy DLP has particular responsibility for meeting the requirements for reporting child protection concerns to the civil authorities in Northern Ireland, as outlined in *Cooperating to Safeguard Children (2003)*, should the occasion arise.

The DLP/ deputy DLP:

- acts as liaison with outside agencies and as a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns,
- is responsible for ensuring that the reporting procedure (described in Section 5) is followed,
- is knowledgeable about child protection and has experience of safeguarding in a Church context,
- assists those who are designated as mandated persons under the Children First Act, 2015 to discharge their responsibilities under the Act<sup>1</sup>. The role of the mandated person is discussed in further detail in Section 5.

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<sup>1</sup> Certain classes of persons, including priests and pastoral care workers, are mandated under the Children First Act 2015 to report child protection concerns where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected or are likely to be seriously affected. The mandated person's responsibility to report such concerns cannot be discharged on his or her behalf by the DLP but reports can, in certain circumstances, be made jointly by the mandated person and the DLP.



Every other person who works for or on behalf of WMOF2018 has a responsibility for the protection and welfare of children. In particular they are required to:

- acquaint themselves with this policy,
- behave in accordance with the code of conduct for staff and volunteers,
- attend safeguarding training,
- report any concerns that they have for the protection and welfare of children attending WMOF2018.

Each WMOF2018 event will have a designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) on duty at the event. The duty CPO will be a person with experience of safeguarding in a Church context. In the first instance, staff or volunteers should report any concerns to their immediate line manager who will contact the duty CPO. However, any person who considers it appropriate to do so may go directly to the duty CPO, the DLP/ deputy DLP or to the civil authorities. The duty CPOs will maintain regular contact with the DLP/ deputy DLP and keep him informed of any issues or concerns.

The DLP/ deputy DLP is available to anyone working for or on behalf of WMOF2018 to offer advice and support in relation to any safeguarding matter.

## Section 3

### The Creation and Maintenance of Safe Environments for Children

This section of the document sets out the practices to be followed to ensure that children who participate in WMOF2018 are cared for safely and well. It starts with a code of practice. This code applies to all those working for or on behalf of WMOF2018 in their dealings with **all** of those they meet in the course of their work, while taking particular account of the needs of children and vulnerable persons.

#### 3.1 Code of Practice

It is neither possible nor desirable to prescribe how WMOF2018 staff and volunteers should behave in every given situation. They are expected at all times to operate in accordance with the values and principles set out in Section 1 of this document. This code of practice provides more specific guidance. Nonetheless, not every situation can be anticipated and people will be required to use their judgment in interpreting and applying these values and guidelines.

WMOF2018 staff and volunteers should always be mindful of the requirement to be accountable and transparent in their dealings with others. Accountability, in this context, means simply being willing to give an account and explanation of their actions, including their reasons for choosing to do things in a particular way rather than in any of the available alternative ways. Transparency is about operating in safe environments, ones where there is openness and visibility. A culture of safeguarding obtains when accountability and transparency operate horizontally and as well as vertically. In other words, members of teams are accountable to each other, not just to the person in charge.

This code will be displayed, along with the name of the person in charge of the event or activity, in those venues where activities and events are being provided for children and young people.

Those working for or on behalf of WMOF2018 commit to:

- treating all people with justice, courtesy and respect;
- encouraging every person to contribute to WMOF2018 in accordance with their wishes and abilities;
- listening to and demonstrating respect for the views of all people, taking account of their particular background and experiences;
- respecting each person's personal boundaries;
- encouraging people to speak openly about anything that may be worrying them;
- operating in accordance with this policy and Church and national guidelines;
- challenging and reporting abusive or potentially abusive behaviour;
- maintaining confidentiality with respect to sensitive information;
- working cooperatively with colleagues.

Those working for or on behalf of WMOF2018 will not:

- engage in any form of bullying or harassment<sup>2</sup>;
- engage in the financial abuse of a vulnerable person;
- have any sexual contact with a child or vulnerable person;
- physically chastise a child or vulnerable person;
- develop a relationship with a particular child or vulnerable person that is exclusive of others;
- place a child or vulnerable person at risk;
- do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable person that he or she can do for him/herself;
- ask a child or vulnerable person to keep a secret;
- condone or fail to challenge unacceptable behaviour;
- discriminate against any individual or group;
- present for duty under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.

### 3.2 Dealing with complaints

Even when people are doing their best, things can and do go wrong and it is important to have simple and effective ways of putting them right.

A complaint is as an expression of dissatisfaction. People complain when they are unhappy about something. Most people respond positively when their complaints are heard, taken seriously and they are given an undertaking that steps will be taken to ensure that the thing that caused them unhappiness does not recur. A simple apology can go a long way to address a person's complaint and to establish or restore a positive relationship with the complainant.

A person may never use the term 'complaint' when expressing unhappiness about something that has happened. Indeed, many people find it difficult to make or to be seen to make a complaint and children and vulnerable persons may lack the understanding to express themselves in these terms. There is a responsibility on those working with WMOF2018 to be alert to expressions of unhappiness (which may be non-verbal) and to respond appropriately. Such a response could be as simple as asking the person if everything is okay with them.

Complaints are best addressed as close as possible to the source of the problem. For example, if a volunteer inadvertently does something to upset someone attending a WMOF2018 event an immediate and sincere verbal apology is often the most appropriate response.

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<sup>2</sup> Harassment is defined as encompassing a "broad range of behaviours, including but not limited to physical, verbal, written or psychological abuse, bullying, racial and religious insults, derogatory ethnic slurs, sexual jokes and comments, requests for sexual favours, display of pornographic materials. Harassment can occur as a result of a single incident or pattern of behaviour where the purpose or effect is to create a hostile, offensive, humiliating or intimidating environment" (*Standards and Guidelines for Priestly Life and Ministry*, Archdiocese of Dublin, 2015).



Where a matter cannot be resolved in this simple and direct manner, another volunteer or staff member may be able to assist in bringing about resolution through negotiation and mediation. Such an intervention can be effective where a misunderstanding has arisen between the parties involved.

Where it has not proved possible to resolve a complaint by these means the matter should be reported to the person in charge of the activity. A note should be made of what has occurred, the people involved (including their contact details) and the outstanding issues. Given that WMOF2018 takes place within a defined and short space of time, there is limited scope for invoking formal complaints procedures. Nonetheless, unresolved complaints should be reported to the Secretary General who will determine what action is appropriate. There may be situations where, for example, a formal letter of apology is sent to a complainant after WMOF2018 has ended.

A complaint may relate to alleged abuse or unacceptable conduct by a staff member or volunteer. In such situations disciplinary or child protection procedures may apply. Where such procedures are invoked they are additional to and not a substitute for attempts to resolve the unhappiness or dissatisfaction of the complainant.

### 3.3 Whistleblowing policy

The purpose of this policy is to encourage those who have concerns for the welfare or safety of people participating in WMOF2018 events and activities to express their concerns without the fear that they will be victimised or harassed for so doing. The policy applies to all staff and volunteers.

It may be difficult to raise concerns about the practice of colleagues. There can be a reluctance due to:

- fear of getting it wrong and damaging the reputation of a colleague;
- fear of disrupting working relationships;
- fear of not being believed;
- fear that the information will be used inappropriately, precipitating a chain of events that spirals out of control.

These considerations have to be considered in the light of the following:

- the responsibility of everyone working for or on behalf of WMOF2018 for the protection and welfare of all, especially children and vulnerable persons;
- that raising a concern in a timely manner can prevent a bad situation from spiralling out of control;
- that raising a concern about one situation can reduce the risk of a similar situation arising in another part of the organisation;
- that raising a concern about poor or inappropriate practice will prevent the person raising the concern from becoming implicated in such practice.



WMOF2018 is committed to ensuring that any person who raises a concern for the protection or welfare of any person arising from their involvement with the organisation will not be victimised, harassed or in any way disadvantaged provided that the person is acting reasonably and in good faith.

As described in Section 2 of this document, where the concern relates to a child it should be first reported to the person's line manager. However, the person may decide to take the concern directly to the DLP/ deputy DLP or to the civil authorities. Whatever decision the person takes, the concern will be taken seriously, investigated and the appropriate action taken. At another point, there may need to be a discussion as to why the person was unable to take their concern to their line manager or to the DLP/ deputy DLP (if he or she has gone directly to the civil authorities) but this will be after the concern itself has been addressed. If the person concerned believes that their concern has not been heard or taken seriously or that they have suffered negative consequences for raising the concern, they should bring the matter to the attention of the Secretary General.

If the concern relates to a vulnerable person, the matter should also be reported to the line manager, the DLP/ Deputy DLP or the civil authorities.

### 3.4 Making proper arrangements for children

Children will be involved in WMOF2018 activities with their parents or guardians and in these situations the parents or guardians are responsible for them. Where separate activities are provided for children or young people away from their parents or guardians, the following considerations apply:

- children can only participate in activities unaccompanied where they are old enough and have the language skills to understand what is happening and to follow the directions of the leaders,
- signed parental/ guardian must be obtained for the participation of the child or young person in the event or activity. The nature of the event or activity should be explained to the parent or guardian (so that their consent is informed),
- the consent of the child or young person should be sought, in accordance with his/ her age and stage of development,
- contact details for the parent or guardian should be obtained and the parent or guardian given contact details for a person involved in running the event or activity,
- the parent or guardian should be asked whether there is something about the child or young person that those running the event or activity should know, such as, a medical condition or disability,
- where photographs or video or audio recordings are likely to be made this must be explained to the parent or guardian and their consent sought for the inclusion of their child in the photograph or recording,

- the physical environment in which the event or activity is to take place should be checked in advance for suitability, safety and ease of access to facilities such as toilets, adequate adult supervision should be provided. The numbers of supervisors will depend on the number of children and young people attending and the nature of the event or activity. There should always be sufficient adult supervision to ensure that no adult is alone with a child, taking account of the chance that if a child or young person has an accident or is taken ill, there may be a need for an adult to take the child to another place. In addition, it will normally be necessary to have both male and female adult supervisors. The requirements of safety are paramount and it is preferable to turn children away, however undesirable this is, than to run an event with inadequate adult supervision,
- staff and volunteers are not trained and equipped to deal with certain types of situations, such as children who require assistance with toileting, children with communication difficulties or children with challenging behaviour. Such children can be facilitated to participate where parents or guardians and/or carers nominated by the parents or guardians are present with them,
- a record should be made of the event, including:
  - the nature of the event,
  - the children or young people who participated,
  - the staff and volunteers involved,
  - incident report forms in the event of an incident or accident involving a child or young person,
  - parental/ guardian and child or young person consent forms, and
  - the record should be dated and signed by the person in charge.

### 3.5 Children who go missing

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing from an event or activity, the following steps should be taken immediately:

- those running the event or activity should try to locate the child in question while ensuring that the other children are not left unattended,
- those running the event or activity should seek the assistance of other WMOF2018 staff or volunteers to locate the child,
- the duty Child Protection Officer should be informed,
- the duty Child Protection Officer should inform the DLP/ deputy DLP and determine with him what actions need to be taken,
- the advice and/or assistance of the members of the An Garda Síochána on duty at the event should be sought,
- the parents or guardians of the child should be informed and contact maintained with them until the child is safely returned to their care,

A report of the incident should be completed and retained.



### 3.6 Communicating with children and young people

Those who work for and on behalf of WMOF2018 must observe appropriate professional boundaries with the children and young people they encounter through their work and this requirement applies to their use of information technology, mobile phones and social media. Staff and volunteers should not use any of these media to initiate or maintain personal relationships with the children and young people. In particular, they should not:

- gather or retain a child or young person's mobile phone number except where this is done for a specific purpose related to their work with WMOF2018 and the parent or guardian has given consent;
- provide a child or young person with their own personal mobile phone number or email address;
- befriend a child or young person on a social media website such as Facebook;
- take photographs of children or young people without obtaining their permission, that of their parents or guardians and of WMOF2018;
- communicate with a child or young person by email except where this is done with parental/ guardian consent, WMOF2018 approval and from a WMOF2018 email address and the message is also sent to the parent or guardian.

It is permitted, in certain circumstances, to send text messages to 16 and 17 year olds. The circumstances are:

- the messages are to inform the young people of arrangements for a particular event, or of changes to arrangements previously made;
- parental or guardian consent has been obtained to communicate with each young person in this manner;
- the message that is sent to the young people is also sent to the parents and guardians (so they know what arrangements are being made for their children);
- the message is sent from a WMOF2018 phone;
- the young people's contact details are not retained after WMOF2018 ends.

## Section 4

### Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child or young person abuses that power and causes harm to the child or young person. The common denominator of all child abuse is that it makes children and young people feel diminished or threatened, and that it causes them harm. All forms of child abuse perpetrated by an adult on a child or young person constitute a betrayal of trust and an abuse of power by the adult.

The abuse of children is generally categorised under four headings:

- physical abuse,
- emotional abuse,
- sexual abuse and
- neglect.

It is important to remember that children may suffer different forms of abuse. The sexual abuse of children, for example, is also a form of emotional abuse when it takes place in the context of a relationship of trust.

The following definitions are taken from *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017.

#### Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. There may be single or repeated incidents.

#### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a care giver and a child. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent/ guardian or care giver.

#### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others.

#### Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally.

### Children with additional vulnerabilities

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. They include children who are homeless, children with disabilities, children who, for whatever reason, are separated from their parents or guardians and families and are dependent on others for their care and protection. Particular attention needs to be paid to the protection and welfare of such children.

### Peer Abuse

Children can also be abused by peers. A particularly pernicious form of peer abuse is bullying, including cyberbullying. In such situations there are important child protection issues in relation to both children (victim and perpetrator) and the civil authorities need to be notified in relation to each of the children or young persons involved.

## Section 5

### Dealing with Child Protection Concerns

All concerns for the protection and welfare of a child attending WMOF2018 must be reported to the DLP/ deputy DLP who:

- conducts such preliminary enquiries as are required under *Children First* to determine whether the concern reaches the threshold for reporting to the civil authorities,
- where the threshold for reporting has been reached, reports the concern without delay to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and, in certain circumstances, to An Garda Síochána,
- informs the parent/s or guardians of the child/ren concerned (or ensures that they are informed) that a report has been made unless to do so places the child/ren at risk,
- draws up a safety plan to minimise risk to the child/ren in question,
- considers whether there are implications for the safety of other children attending WMOF2018 and, if so, takes appropriate protective measures,
- liaises with Tusla and, as appropriate, An Garda Síochána, and assists with any assessment or investigation,
- liaises with the appropriate civil authorities in the country of ordinary residence of the child about whom the concern has arisen, where appropriate,
- informs the Secretary General of WMOF2018,
- informs the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland where the concern relates to a cleric or religious.

#### Reasonable grounds for concern

*Children First* states that:

- Tusla, the Child and Family Agency should be informed when a person has “reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected” (Chapter 2),
- Reports should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect using the required form (available from <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms#SRP> ),
- A concern about a *potential risk* to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable should also be reported.

The DLP/ deputy DLP determines whether reasonable grounds exist for reporting to Tusla. If there is any doubt as to whether the threshold for reporting under *Children First* has been reached, the advice of Tusla will be sought and followed.



It should be noted that concerns for the protection and welfare of children attending WMOF2018 may arise in different ways. They may arise within the context of WMOF2018 activities, as in a situation where the behaviour of a volunteer towards a child appears to be inappropriate. They may also arise in the context of a disclosure of abuse by a child or adult. More likely to occur are situations where children present with unusual injuries or appear distressed and the possibility of abuse arises. Alternatively concerns may be reported to staff or volunteers by third parties, for example, participants who witness inappropriate behaviour towards children. All of these situations must be reported to the DLP/ deputy DLP who will determine what action to take.

Information that a person has committed a serious offence (a physical or a sexual assault) against a child must be reported to the police (An Garda Síochána) as well as to Tusla.

The Gardai should also be contacted in an emergency, that is, when immediate intervention by the civil authorities is required, and Tusla cannot be contacted.

#### Concerns not reported

Where a WMOF2018 staff member or volunteer reports a child protection concern to the DLP/ deputy DLP and the DLP/deputy DLP determines that the threshold for reporting to the civil authorities has not been reached, the DLP/ deputy DLP will inform the person of this and give reasons in writing. The person is then at liberty to take the concern directly to the civil authorities.

#### Mandatory Reporting

From 11 December 2017 people holding certain positions ('mandated persons') are required by law in the Republic of Ireland to report to Tusla where he or she: "knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being harmed, has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed". Mandated persons may also be required to assist Tusla in the assessment of such concerns.

Included in the definition of mandated persons are members of the clergy, Church pastoral workers and safeguarding or child protection officers employed by a religious body or organisation. Those working with WMOF2018 in such capacities are mandated persons. Doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers and other professionals are also mandated persons. However, the legal obligation to report under the *Children First Act 2015* applies only to information acquired in the course of the mandated person's professional work or employment. So, those doctors, nurses, teachers and other professionals who work with WMOF2018 are not mandated persons when so doing. If any such person came across a child protection concern in the course of their work with WMOF2018, they should report it following the guidance provided in this document. However, they are not under a legal obligation to make a mandated report to Tusla.

The threshold for mandated reports is different from other reporting under *Children First*. In addition, there are data protection considerations to be taken into account when dealing with child protection concerns that do not relate to WMOF2018, for example, in a situation where a child discloses abuse within a family context. In these situations the mandated person should report to the DLP or Deputy DLP, as described above, who will offer advice and assist the mandated person to discharge their legal responsibilities.

## Appendix 1

### Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

(Taken from *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017*)

**Neglect** should be suspected in cases of:

- children being left alone without adequate care or supervision,
- malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding,
- lack of adequate clothing,
- inattention to basic hygiene,
- lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age,
- persistent failure to attend school,
- non-organic failure to thrive, that is, a child not gaining weight, due not only to malnutrition but also due to emotional deprivation,
- failure to provide adequate care for a child's medical and developmental needs including intellectual stimulation,
- inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture,
- abandonment or desertion.

The following may be signs of **emotional abuse**, though no one indicator should be regarded as conclusive:

- rejection,
- continuous lack of praise and encouragement,
- lack of love and comfort,
- lack of attachment,
- lack of proper stimulation (for example, fun and play),
- lack of continuity of care (for example, frequent moves),
- serious over-protectiveness,
- inappropriate non-physical punishments (for example, locking in bedrooms),
- family conflicts and/ or violence,
- inappropriate expectations of a child's behaviour relative to his or her age and stage of development,
- every child who is neglected, physically or sexually abused is also emotionally abused.



**Physical abuse** should be suspected where any of the following occur with unusual frequency or where there are varying or unsatisfactory explanations for:

- bruises,
- fractures,
- swollen joints,
- burns or scalds,
- abrasions or lacerations,
- haemorrhages (retinal, subdural),
- damage to body organs,
- poisonings – repeated (prescribed drugs, alcohol),
- failure to thrive,
- coma or unconsciousness,
- death.

Skin, mouth and bone injuries are the most common forms of physical abuse.

The following physical and behavioural signs may indicate **sexual abuse**:

- bleeding from the vagina or anus,
- difficulty in passing urine or faeces,
- sexually transmitted infections,
- noticeable and uncharacteristic change of behaviour,
- hints about sexual activity,
- age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour,
- inappropriate seductive behaviour,
- sexually aggressive behaviour with others,
- uncharacteristic sexual play with peers or toys,
- unusual reluctance to join in normal activities that involve undressing (for example, games or swimming).

There are also some age related signs and symptoms of sexual abuse. Bedwetting, school refusal and separation anxiety in younger children can be associated with sexual abuse. Eating disorders, self-harm, substance abuse and running away may indicate sexual abuse of older children and adolescents.

## **Appendix 2**

### Responding to a disclosure of child abuse

These guidelines, originally developed by Barnardos in 2011 and here adapted, have been developed with children in mind. However, the same principles apply when dealing with an adult who discloses that he or she was abused as a child. Following disclosure, the reporting procedure, as set out in Section 5, must be followed.

If a child or adult asks to speak to you in confidence it is important to tell them, before you proceed, that certain kinds of information have to be shared.

- Be as calm and natural as possible. Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child.
- Remember, the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to. Do not pressurise the child. Allow him/her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Be careful when asking questions. Question should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only. Avoid leading question such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also, avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggesting could complicate the official investigation.
- Assure the child that you believe them. False disclosures are very rare in young children.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to him/her.
- It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgment on, or anger towards, the alleged perpetrator, while talking with the child.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him/her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what he/she has disclosed.

**Do not promise to keep secrets**

At the earliest opportunity tell the child that:

1. You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you.
2. You will be sharing this information only with people who understand this area and who can help. There are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further ongoing hurt.

By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything or indeed anything, there and then. However, it is better to do this than tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the child will return to you at another time.

**Think before you promise anything.  
Don't make promises which you cannot keep.**

At the earliest possible opportunity:

1. Record in writing, in a factual manner, what the child has said, including, as far as possible, the exact words used by the child;
2. Inform the DLP/ deputy DLP at the earliest opportunity;
3. Maintain appropriate confidentiality (see Appendix 4).

## Appendix 3

### Vetting

Those recruited to work with WMOF2018 whose role may involve working with children and vulnerable persons are required to be vetted.

Vetting is one element of safe recruitment practice. It is not the only element. The taking up of references, also a part of WMOF2018 recruitment practice, is just as important and, in most instances, will provide more information on the suitability of the candidate. However, vetting is a key part of WMOF2018 recruitment practice and is a requirement under legislation that came into effect on 29 April 2016.

The National Vetting Bureau Act 2012 requires that those who engage in 'relevant work or activities' with children or vulnerable persons must be vetted. Included in the definition of 'relevant work or activity' is 'any work or activity as a minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of religious beliefs to children and vulnerable adults, unless such work or activity is merely incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs to persons who are not children or vulnerable persons'. Children and vulnerable persons are members of their families and their presence at WMOF2018 could in no way be considered incidental to the presence of others. Therefore, those involved in ministry and in the advancement of religious belief at WMOF2018 clearly require to be vetted.

There will be a large number of volunteers recruited to work at WMOF2018. Some of these volunteers will be involved in programmes for children and young people. There is a clear requirement on these volunteers to be vetted. Some volunteers may be involved in activities where their contact with children and vulnerable persons could be regarded as incidental. However, the duties of volunteers will be assigned to them just before the commencement of WMOF2018. It would not be feasible to wait until all the duties have been assigned to volunteers to commence the vetting process. It has, therefore, been agreed with the National Vetting Bureau, that all staff and volunteers recruited to work with WMOF2018 will be vetted with the exception of those whose duties are confined to directing people to their allocated area of the Phoenix Park for the final Mass with Pope Francis.

Those who wish to attend WMOF2018 and participate in the programme do not require to be vetted. This applies to lay people, clerics and religious. Such people are permitted to participate in accordance with their status. So, for example, a priest who has registered with WMOF2018 may enter the enclosure set aside for priests to allow him concelebrate at Mass, provided he is not one of the public celebrants conducting the ceremony on behalf of WMOF2018.



Priests coming from outside of Ireland should be aware that registration with WMOF2018 does not carry with it an entitlement to minister in public either at WMOF2018 or in the local parish or diocese. If a priest wishes to minister in the local parish he must comply with the diocesan requirements, one of which is that he is vetted by the diocese.

### Vetting Applications

Applications for vetting are submitted electronically in a process known as E-Vetting.

The applicant is required to fill up Section 1 and 2 of the 'Vetting Invitation Form' (NVB1). This is a simple form that asks for the applicant's name, address, date of birth, contact number and email address.

Section 3 of the Vetting Invitation Form is to be completed by WMOF2018. The identity of the applicant is validated by WMOF2018. At least two forms of identification must be produced to validate the identity of the applicant. One of these should include a photograph of the applicant.

The form is submitted to the vetting office of WMOF2018 where the applicant's details are entered on the database of the National Vetting Bureau (NVB). The applicant will then receive an email from NVB with their online application form (NVB 2). The applicant must complete this form within 30 days after which the application lapses and the process has to be started again from the beginning.

WMOF2018 staff will talk applicants through the application process and assist them with it when they are signing up to work with WMOF2018. It is also possible for overseas applicants to apply before they come to Ireland and, indeed, it is strongly advised that they should do so. Information, advice and assistance is available from the WMOF2018 volunteer office.



## Appendix 4

### Confidentiality, Data Protection and Record Keeping

WMOF2018 recognises the importance of ensuring every person's right to confidentiality and is committed to keeping confidential all personal information in so far as this is possible and lawful. When a child protection concern arises the information is shared on a "need to know" basis, that is, it is shared with those who need to know it in order to ensure that children are protected from harm. The information is shared in accordance with the requirements of Church and national child protection guidelines, this policy and as required by law. Sharing information about child protection concerns, following the procedure outlined in this policy, with the appropriate authorities is not a breach of confidentiality. Those who work for or on behalf of WMOF2018 cannot give an undertaking to any person not to disclose information about child protection concerns on the grounds of confidentiality.

The **Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012** creates an offence of failing to disclose to the Gardai, without reasonable excuse, information relating to certain specified serious offences against a child or a vulnerable person, where it is known or believed that the information will be of material assistance in securing the apprehension, prosecution or conviction of another person known or believed by the first person to have committed an offence. The specified offences include most sexual offences and others such as assault causing harm, abduction, manslaughter and murder.

The **Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998** provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse to the relevant authorities "reasonably and in good faith". Even if the reported concern proves unfounded, the person taking action against a reporter would have to prove that he or she had not acted "reasonably and in good faith". As well as providing protection from civil liability, the Act protects reporters from being penalised by their employers for reporting child abuse. However, it is an offence to report child abuse in the knowledge that the information reported is false.

Data protection legislation attempts to ensure that an individual's right to privacy and dignity are respected, particularly regarding the use and sharing of personal data (information), whether the personal data is held electronically or in manual form. Up until now WMOF2018 has complied with the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003. From May 2018 WMOF2018 will be compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) whose principles include;

- a) **Lawful, Fair and Transparent processing**
- b) **Specified and Lawful Purpose**
- c) **Data Minimisation**
- d) **Accuracy**

- e) **Storage Limitation**
- f) **Security, Integrity and Confidentiality**
- g) **Liability and Accountability**

The records of WMOF2018 that contain personal information are stored in secure, locked fireproof cabinets and can only be accessed by members of staff. Computer records are password protected and encrypted. Those staff members accessing computer records are required to log on to diocesan computers using their own personalised password.

Records relating to child protection concerns are retained for 100 years. Other records are removed once they are no longer required for the purpose for which they were created. The company set up to run WMOF2018 will be wound up once it has completed its business. Any records that require to be retained beyond that time will be held by the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Those on whom the WMOF2018 holds personal data are entitled to it subject to limited exceptions. Applications to obtain such personal data should be made to the Secretary General in writing accompanied by proof of identity. There is no charge for this.



## **Appendix 5**

### WMOF2018 contact details

For general queries:

World Meeting of Families 2018  
Holy Cross Diocesan Centre,  
Clonliffe Road  
Dublin 3  
Phone: +353 1 567 6800  
Email: [info@worldmeeting2018.ie](mailto:info@worldmeeting2018.ie)  
Website: [www.worldmeeting2018.ie](http://www.worldmeeting2018.ie)

For child safeguarding and protection matters:

Andrew Fagan, Designated Liaison Person  
Phone: + 353 1 8360314

Aidan Gordon, Deputy Designated Liaison Person  
Phone: + 44 37325592

Email: [safeguarding@worldmeeting2018.ie](mailto:safeguarding@worldmeeting2018.ie)