



Safeguarding Sunday 4 October 2026

Safeguarding Sunday is an opportunity for parishes to raise awareness of safeguarding and to highlight the good work that is being done by so many to safeguard children and vulnerable people in the community. It is the day where we promote and remind everyone involved in the Church that safeguarding is a standard practice for us all in which we focus on how best our parishes can encourage children and young people to have active ministries in our parish and to ensure they are both safe and welcome.

Parishes taking part in Safeguarding Sunday see:

- Positive awareness and understanding of safeguarding among volunteers
- People coming forward to volunteer and to help with running activities
- More people taking part in safeguarding training.
- A safe and welcoming environment for children to be involved in parish life
- Greater support for the Parish Safeguarding Representatives
- People feeling able to talk about what's happened to them for the first time.

Sample newsletter notice Safeguarding Sunday

Today we would like to acknowledge the children and young people who take part in our parish activities and hope they will continue to be part of our parish life. Thanks also to our parish volunteers and to the parents who support our young people. Your enthusiasm, care and welcome plays a huge part in ensuring that children and young people have a positive experience in our parish.

Thanks to our Parish Safeguarding Representatives (list their names). We thank them for their oversight, support, and encouragement. Further information is available at www.meathsafeguarding.ie

Prayer

for Safeguarding Sunday

Lord, we thank you for the gift of our children; they are our light and our joy.
Give us wisdom to guide them,
patience to teach them,
and a desire to encourage them always.
As we strive to love them sincerely,
may we never betray their trust,
dampen their hope, or discourage their spirit.
May we help them achieve their potential and fulfil your dreams for them.
May your grace and love fall gently upon them giving them the inner strength, peace and patience they will need for the journey ahead.
And as we strive to create safe environments where we can freely minister to them, may we be open to you ministering to us in and through them. Amen

Further resources for Safeguarding Sunday, including homily notes and Prayers of the Faithful, are available at www.dioceseofmeath.ie.

Garda vetting

A total of 2106 Garda vetting applications were processed by the Diocesan Office last year. The applications can be classified follows:

- **Parishes 291** (including parish sacristans, staff, volunteers)
- **Diocese 85** (including diocesan priests and summer supply priests and seminarians – diocesan priests are vetted every 3 years)
- **Accord Counsellors 2**
- **Lourdes Pilgrimage 59** (including doctors, nurses, brancardiers, handmaids and youth volunteers)
- **Primary Schools 1669** (including special needs assistants, bus escorts, caretakers, secretaries, nurses, parent volunteers etc)

Safeguarding in Practice - Meath Youth Group and Lourdes

We are giving this example of good practice to show that safeguarding is not a barrier to involving children and young people in Church-related activities. On the contrary, safeguarding helps to empower children and young people with confidence taking part in parish activities. Safeguarding reassures the parents and volunteers that the activities are important and valued in the community.

Since 2017, the Meath Youth Group has played an important role in supporting pilgrims, staff and volunteers on the Meath Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. The group brings together students from Eureka Secondary School, Kells, St. Patrick's Classical School, Navan, and CBS Mullingar. Alongside the opportunity to serve others and contribute to the pilgrimage experience, students are made acutely aware from the beginning of the application process that safeguarding and child protection are central to their role.

Safeguarding guidance is explored through practical examples so that students can recognise potential risks and respond appropriately. They are encouraged to remain aware of their surroundings and to seek support whenever they are uncertain about a situation. Students are also given clear boundaries around their interactions with pilgrims and staff. As part of their own safeguarding guidelines, they are instructed never to place themselves in a situation where they are alone



with assisted pilgrims or staff member. They are reminded that maintaining professional boundaries is an important part of their role. Confidentiality is another important consideration. Crucially, students are made aware of who the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is and how they can seek help or raise a concern.

The experience of the Meath Youth Group demonstrates that safeguarding is not simply a set

of rules or procedures. Through training, clear boundaries, teamwork and ongoing awareness, young people can be empowered to participate safely and positively in volunteering. The Lourdes pilgrimage provides an opportunity for students to develop a strong understanding of safeguarding in practice – protecting themselves, supporting others and contributing to a safe environment for everyone.

Testimonies from students who went to Lourdes

- **Cian:** Volunteering in Lourdes was an experience that I'll never forget and is one of the highlights of my school life. I felt honoured to be selected and to get the opportunity to assist people who I would've never met before. I believe that the pilgrimage helped strengthen my faith and practice compassion as often as I can. The spirit of community and shared purpose among volunteers made the experience even more memorable. I would recommend any student to go in the future.
- **Orán:** There was something about Lourdes and the community that would make you want to revisit every year and I certainly would love to return on the pilgrimage again.
- **Gráinne:** I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in various Mass services, especially singing as part of the choir at the Holy Hour. I met some truly amazing people over the few days all thanks to the opportunities afforded to me on the pilgrimage.
- **TJ:** I was happy to have the privilege to help people in need and get to talk to them. Overall the trip was an amazing experience and I would definitely go again.

Safe Recruitment Procedures

The Diocese of Meath acknowledges that safe care starts with the appointment of suitably qualified, skilled and vetted personnel who have the desired competencies and skills to carry out their function in an effective, efficient and safe manner. Whoever is employed by the Church, either in a pastoral or voluntary role, must be recruited safely and deemed suitable for the role that they are being asked to undertake.

Where the parish is either a Sponsor or agrees to take part in a Supported Employment scheme such as, for example a Community Employment scheme it remains the responsibility of the parish to ensure that safe recruitment procedures as outlined below are adhered to.

Safe recruitment means that we will ensure that:

- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the Church eliminates candidates who might pose a risk to children;
- Those engaged in the recruitment process are suitably trained and experienced to undertake this task;
- The Church's recruitment procedures are transparent, adhere to best practice and comply with the rules of natural justice, appropriate record-keeping and human resource management;
- The Church is committed to the policy of inclusion and equality.

Induction Agreement Form for all Church personnel

This template from the NBSCCCI can be used for all new staff and volunteers who will be engaging with children in parish activities

Declaration

As part of the recruitment process for the post of I confirm that:

- I have been provided with access to the child safeguarding statement and associated procedures.
- I have been given an opportunity to have any questions addressed by a representative of the parish.
- I have read and understood the child safeguarding policies and procedures.
- I will abide by the requirements of the child safeguarding statement and associated procedures.
- I will abide by the Code of Behaviour.
- I agree to report all safeguarding concerns to the DLP in the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.
- I will attend a safeguarding training session as appropriate to my role.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Artificial Intelligence in a Church Safeguarding Context

The NBSCCCI hosted a workshop on this topic last May, attended by representatives of the Diocese of Meath. Artificial Intelligence is rapidly shaping the world in which we minister, communicate and safeguard. This workshop addressed the real concerns surrounding AI, including data protection, digital manipulation, over-reliance on automated systems, and emerging risks to children and vulnerable persons, particularly in light of safeguarding responsibilities. Participants considered how AI may influence and reshape safeguarding procedures, governance structures and episcopal oversight, ensuring that new technologies always serve the dignity of the human person and the protection of the vulnerable.

GAP Paper 13: Child Safeguarding and Supervision

The NBSCCCI has published a study paper highlighting the critical role of supervision in strengthening safeguarding practice within the life and ministry of the Church. This paper emphasises that supervision is not simply an administrative requirement, but a vital pastoral and theological responsibility that supports accountability, reflective practice, transparency, and the wellbeing of those engaged in ministry and safeguarding roles. The paper is recommended reading and available at www.safeguarding.ie.



AUTUMN 2026 TRAINING DATES

DATE	TRAINING TYPE	TIME	VENUE
 Wed 16 Sept	Full Training	6.00 – 9.00 pm	Clonmellon Primary School
 Wed 23 Sept	Information Session	6.00 – 7.30 pm	Navan Parish Centre
 Tues 6 Oct	Refresher Training	6.00 – 7.30 pm	Mullingar Parish Centre
 Tues 13 Oct	Full Training	6.00 – 9.00 pm	Navan Parish Centre



DO I NEED TRAINING?

You should attend if any of the following apply:

- ✓ You are a priest or religious in active ministry.
- ✓ You hold a safeguarding role in the parish.
- ✓ You organise or lead activities involving children or young people.
- ✓ You work with, supervise or have responsibility for children in the parish.
- ✓ You are a sacristan, choir leader, children's liturgy leader, catechist, youth/pilgrimage leader, reader, Eucharistic Minister, altar server coordinator or parish volunteer.
- ✓ You are a parish employee or volunteer who has regular contact with children.
- ✓ You completed safeguarding training more than 3 years ago.
- ✓ Your role has changed and you now have greater responsibility for children.



Not sure?

Contact the Safeguarding Training Team and we will advise you.

WHICH TRAINING IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

TYPE OF TRAINING	WHO IS IT FOR?	HOW OFTEN?
 FULL TRAINING (3 hours)	For those in key safeguarding roles, clergy in ministry with children, and leaders of activities involving children.	Complete once. Refresher training every 3 years.
 REFRESHER TRAINING (1½ hours)	For anyone who has completed Full Training previously.	Every 3 years.
 INFORMATION SESSION (1½ hours)	For parish volunteers and parish workers who need safeguarding awareness but do not have a lead role.	Every 3 years.



These training requirements are in line with National Board guidance and the Diocese of Meath Safeguarding Policy.

Reminder note for sacristies

Clergy and sacristans are reminded of the following requirements:

- All adults and children are required to sign the sacristy register at all ceremonies; if children are not present, this should be noted in the sacristy register
- Visiting clergy are required to present their celebret card before celebrating a sacrament or concelebrating in all parish churches.

Parish audit drop-in service

It is hoped to provide a number of brief information sessions in several locations on how best to complete the annual parish audit. Please note that the parish audit forms will be sent to you by post shortly, together with an update on these information sessions.

Contacts

Safeguarding Trainers

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✉ sgtraining@dioceseofmeath.ie

🌐 www.meathsafeguarding.ie

Designated Liaison Persons

Marie O'Sullivan DLP or

Marie Willoughby DLP

☎ 083 317 5742 or

✉ dlp@dioceseofmeath.ie

Garda National Protective

Services Bureau

☎ 01 666 3430 or

☎ 01 666 3435

TUSLA

☎ 046 909 7870 (Meath)

☎ 044 938 4450 (Westmeath)

☎ 057 869 2567 (Offaly)