

## **Child Safeguarding Statement of the Brigidine Community, Ireland**

The Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, and *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017) and is derived from “A Safe and Welcoming Church” Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards of the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024 (NBSCCCI).

### **Introduction**

As a Congregation of Brigidine Sisters we value the right of every person to dignity and respect. We are committed to establishing right relationships and just structures within our communities and in our ministries. We protect the well-being of all people and ensure that appropriate measures are in place for the safety of children and adults at risk.

Inspired by our founder, Bishop Delany, the Brigidine Sisters of the IR-UK Community seek to enhance the lives of people through education and spiritual development. We are committed to compassion and justice in all our activities.

The full NBSCCCI Statement is available on the Brigidine Website

<https://brigidine.org.au>.

### **Statement**

As a constituent member of the Catholic Church in Ireland we promote the teaching of the Catholic Church. The Brigidine Community recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children, and are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being, and will work in partnership with others to do this. We follow the policy and guidance of NBSCCCI -*A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024* which is in line with current legislation and TUSLA guidelines.

### **Nature of Service and Principles to safeguard children from harm**

The Brigidine Community ***does not directly provide services or have direct ministry with children.*** However, members of the Community do come into contact with children when engaged voluntarily in:

- ✓ Parish Ministry
- ✓ Sacramental Preparation
- ✓ Visitation

In these situations, Brigidine Sisters follow the safeguarding policies of the organisations in which they work, having received clearance (Garda vetting) for such ministry from the relevant civil authority. In the absence of appropriate policies in these workplaces, sisters follow the procedures as outlined in *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024*. The Brigidine Community ensures that the Trustees and members continue to participate in ongoing information and training.

**The Brigidine Sisters are committed to maintaining the highest safeguarding standards through:**

**Leadership, Governance and Accountability.**

Through words, actions, and personal commitment Brigidine Sisters will fulfil the safeguarding mission of the Church.

**Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding.** The Brigidine Community ensures that we maintain a culture of care, safety and welcome. We uphold children's rights and create conditions where children will flourish in faith and love.

**Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law.**

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

Sisters and employees have a responsibility to report suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of child abuse that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) assists with this process and reports will be made irrespective of the status of the person who is suspected of having been abusive to a child. If the allegation being reported 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 being reported relates to a cleric or religious, in addition to notifying the statutory authorities, the allegation must also be reported to the Church authority and the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

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

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

**Risk Assessment**

The table below sets out the identified risks to the safety of children and young people involved in Church activities in Brigidine Community and the steps taken to minimise the risks of abuse, (as defined in the Children First Act 2015)

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage risk identified</b>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a child by Church personnel or visitors to a Brigidine premises.	Procedures for safe recruitment and creating and maintaining a safe environment as outlined within the criteria of ‘Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding’ ( <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i> ) which can be viewed at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a> .
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) of a child through bullying by peers.	Anti-bullying procedures as outlined within the criteria of ‘Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding’ ( <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i> ). Codes of behaviour for children involved in any Church-related activities and codes of conduct for adults that promote best practice and integrity in ministry are in place and can be viewed at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a>
The environment in which work with children is facilitated fails to protect them from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015).	Procedures to create and maintain safe environments including localised hazard assessments as outlined within the standard and associated criteria of ‘Leadership, Governance and Accountability’ ( <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i> ). The Church authority has in place a system of governance that identifies clear procedures, accountability structures and quality assurance, in which roles and responsibilities are explicit. These are specified in the Strategic Safeguarding Plan of the Brigidine Community and can be viewed at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to children involved with external groups who use Brigidine property.	As outlined within standard ‘Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding’ ( <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i> ) procedures are in place and available for managing external

	<p><i>and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i>) are in place and available at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a></p>
<p>Brigidine/Church personnel fail to understand their responsibilities to safeguard children.</p>	<p>Procedures for child safeguarding training and support which meet the criteria associated with the standard 'Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding' (<i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i>) are in place and can be viewed at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a></p>
<p>The procedures for safeguarding children from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) fail to be implemented.</p>	<p>Procedures to ensure compliance with the child safeguarding standards outlined within the criteria of 'Leadership, Governance and Accountability' (<i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i>) are in place. The Church authority has in place a system of governance that identifies clear procedures, accountability structures and quality assurance, in which roles and responsibilities are explicit and is available at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a></p>
<p>The Brigidine/ Church authority fails to ensure the appointment of a relevant person and maintain a list of mandated persons.</p>	<p>Procedures to include the appointment of a relevant person and DLP are in place for the Brigidine Community. A list of mandated persons is maintained.</p> <p>The Church authority has in place a system of governance that identifies clear procedures, accountability structures and quality assurance, in which roles and responsibilities are explicit and is available at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a></p>

### **Risk Assessment**

Alongside the risks listed in the table above, the Brigidine Community risk assesses any activities involving children and puts in place procedures to manage these risks.

	groups, those ministering in external organisations; and groups using Brigidine property. The Church body that is leasing the property should follow the procedure at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a>
Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) through the use of digital media (photography, video and social media).	Procedures for the safe use of digital media as outlined within the criteria of ‘Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding’ ( <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i> ) are in place and can be viewed at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a>
Brigidine/ Church personnel fail to report an allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge appropriately.	The Church authority has in place a system of governance that identifies clear procedures, accountability structures and quality assurance, in which roles and responsibilities are explicit and is available at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a> As outlined within the standard ‘Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding’ ( <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i> ) procedures are in place to create and maintain written records which reflect that all safeguarding action is taken in line with appropriate data protection and information-sharing protocols and which can be viewed at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a>
Brigidine/Church personnel fail to take action during and following any investigation into allegations of abuse against clerics and religious to ensure children are protected from harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015).	Procedures for managing allegations after the civil investigation has concluded and which meet the criteria associated with the standard ‘Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law’ ( <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i> ) are in place and available at <a href="https://www.safeguarding.ie">https://www.safeguarding.ie</a>
Brigidine/Church personnel fail to support those who are victims of abuse.	Procedures to support complainants which meet the criteria associated with the standard ‘Responding Pastorally and Reporting According to Civil and Canon Law’ ( <i>A Safe</i>



<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage risk identified</b>
Local activity with children is risk assessed in each location in which the activity takes place as part of national policy <i>A Safe and Welcoming Church Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2024</i>	For full details of localised risks and the procedures in place to manage these please refer to <i>Brigidine Community Office Tullow</i> <i>Co. Carlow. R93 WF98</i> <i>Email: <a href="mailto:brigsec@brigidine.ie">brigsec@brigidine.ie</a></i>

### **Procedures**

All procedures outlined in the risk assessment above are available at <https://www.safeguarding.ie>

The Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, and *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017).

The procedures listed above include the following:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against staff/volunteers towards a child availing of our service. Available at <https://www.safeguarding.ie>
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers to work with children. Available at <https://www.safeguarding.ie>
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including on the identification of the occurrence of harm. Available at <https://www.safeguarding.ie>
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla and An Garda Síochána. Available at <https://www.safeguarding.ie>
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons. Available at <https://www.safeguarding.ie>
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person. Available at <https://www.safeguarding.ie>

## **Implementation**

The Brigidine Community is committed to safeguarding children through the implementation of: *A Safe and Welcoming Church, Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2024.*

This Child Safeguarding Statement and our practice supports our desire to keep children safe from harm. As part of our annual audit against the relevant criteria of the child safeguarding standards, we will review the effectiveness of our practice as outlined in this statement and will revise it as appropriate based on those findings.

In addition, we will revise this statement at least every 24 months or as appropriate due to changes in ministries or legislation/guidance.

For any queries relating to this statement please contact  
**Safeguarding Manager-Ms Cleo Yates**

Contact Details:

DLP: Cleo Yates

Phone: 087 355 3024 Email: [rustinesafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:rustinesafeguarding@gmail.com)

## **Contact Details if you are concerned about the Welfare and Safety of Children**

DLP: Ms Cleo Yates	Tel: 00 353 087 355 3024 Email: <a href="mailto:rustinessafeguarding@gmail.com">rustinessafeguarding@gmail.com</a>
POLICE: Ireland An Garda Siochana (Dedicated 24hr. Freephone Line)	Tel: 1800 555 2222
CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE: Tusla -Child and Family Agency  The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter St John's Road West, Dublin 8. D08 X01F Email: <a href="mailto:info@tusla.ie">info@tusla.ie</a>	Tel: 01 771 8500

This Policy was approved on 15 May 2024. Policy Review Date: May 2026.

Signed: Theresa Kilmurray Date: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024

On behalf of the Leadership Team  
(Theresa Kilmurray, Carmel McEvoy, Phil O' Shea & Mary Slattery)

## **Child Safeguarding – Brigidine Community UK**

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### **Introduction:**

As a Congregation of Brigidine sisters we value the right of every person to dignity and respect. We are committed to establishing right relationships and just structures within our communities and in our ministries. We value and protect the well-being of all people, particularly those in situations of vulnerability, and ensure that appropriate measures are in place for the safety of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

Inspired by our founder, Bishop Delany, the Brigidine sisters seek to enhance the lives of people through education and spiritual development. They are committed to compassion and justice in all their activities.

The Brigidine sisters do not provide direct services to children in the UK. However, members of the Community do come into contact with children and therefore the Congregation of Brigidine Sisters does ensure that the Trustees and members continue to participate in ongoing information and training.

Where Brigidine sisters work in ministries, other than Brigidine sponsored ministries, they follow the safeguarding policies of the organisation with which they work. They also ensure that they have received clearance for such ministries from the relevant civil and church authorities. In the absence of appropriate policies in these workplaces, sisters follow the Brigidine Community policy and procedures.

This policy fits within the framework of good safeguarding by conforming to the legislative guidance and policy of the UK Charity Commission; the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) as the regulatory body for safeguarding within the Catholic Church in England and Wales; and the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS), the service provider for Religious Congregations. To this effect, there is a designated Safeguarding Lead (SGL). Abuse in this policy refers to: physical; sexual; emotional; spiritual; neglect; self-neglect; organisational; material; psychological; financial; domestic or verbal. Additionally, behaviour which effectively results in modern day slavery or where there is evidence of discrimination or radicalisation, needs to be recognised and addressed as a safeguarding issue.

### **Procedures:**

Action must be taken if a concern is raised that a child or adult may be experiencing significant harm. This includes, but is not limited to:

- A person who is at serious risk of harm from self or others
- A person who poses a serious risk of harm to someone else
- A concern about a child or adult at risk of harm from a person
- Concerns over someone's mental capacity

The Safeguarding Lead (SGL) when notified about a concern will contact the RLSS Safeguarding Team. If the situation is not clear, the SGL will seek advice from the RLSS. Any further action will be taken by the SGL lead in consultation with the RLSS.



A person who becomes aware of a safeguarding issue should:

- Ensure those concerned are safe
- Listen to those concerned with empathy
- Make brief notes of what has been communicated
- Contact The Brigidine Safeguarding Lead, Patricia Mulhall, on 44 (77) 66 71 00 00,  
Email: [mpmulhall@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mpmulhall@yahoo.co.uk) or

The Religious Life Safeguarding Service directly on 0151 5562311 or via email:  
[safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org](mailto:safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org)

The SGL working with the RLSS will:

- Ensure the individual/s has been informed of the next steps and possible timescale
- Contact any relevant bodies
- Complete the safeguarding paperwork and ensure there is an appropriate record of all communications including phone calls, meetings and discussions in relation to the case
- Inform the Leadership Team of the new safeguarding referral unless the concern relates to either of these people.

If a Brigidine sister receives a complaint she should be supportive of the individual making the disclosure but should not seek more details than necessary.

Information should be passed on to the SGL and then on to RLSS. Information about safeguarding might need to be:

- shared with a statutory body, but with the right to anonymity at the initial disclosure stage.
- may need to be passed on to the police and any other appropriate body.

The RLSS will make recommendations about when to report to safeguarding bodies or external agencies based on risk, need, and the national policy guidance supplied by the CSSA. All actions must also be taken in line with the Church's mandatory reporting policy.

This means that action must be taken if there are reasonable grounds to suspect or believe that someone who holds any type of role within the Church is going to or has committed a crime; is going to or has caused harm; poses a risk or is otherwise unsuitable to work in a public role.

#### **Who else may need to be involved?**

- RLSS Out of Hours Team
- Local authority Safeguarding team – for adults and/or children
- Police 999 (in the case of emergency only)
- Police 101

- GP
- NHS Crisis Team
- Community Psychiatric Nurse
- UK Charity Commission
- CSSA
- Safe Spaces
- Local Safeguarding Commission
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- NSPCC
- DBS

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The trustee board has a duty to maintain appropriate governance and oversight of safeguarding in line with this policy and national guidelines.

The board has a Designated Liaison member with specific responsibility for safeguarding, Patricia Mulhall.

The Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring appropriate policy, procedures and best practices are in place for the effective delivery of safeguarding, including any related due diligence checks.

### **The Safeguarding Lead**

The safeguarding lead has direct oversight of case management and of the secure, legally compliant storage of safeguarding reports and related material. The SGL will work in close partnership with the Religious Life Safeguarding Service (RLSS). The safeguarding lead may delegate some of this responsibility to the RLSS by passing the case to it but will remain as key contact for the case duration unless another individual is identified to assume case responsibility.

Sisters have an obligation to ensure that they respond to safeguarding concerns by reporting the concern as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Lead or anyone acting in her/his absence.

### **Training**

Sisters undergo safeguarding training in relation to children and adults at risk as well as any other training relevant to their role.

### **Policy review**

This policy is approved by the Trustees and Leadership Team and will be subject to review in 2026 and then biennially or sooner where there is a significant change or need.

**Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed in May 2026

**Contact Details if you are concerned about the Welfare and Safety of Children**

SGL: Patricia Mulhall	Email <a href="mailto:mpmulhall@yahoo.co.uk">mpmulhall@yahoo.co.uk</a> Mobile: +44 (77) 66 71 00 00
RLSS UK: Religious Life Safeguarding Services	Tel: 01515562311 Email: <a href="mailto:safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org">safeguarding@religioussafeguarding.org</a>
POLICE: UK Helpline Immediate Danger	101 999

This Policy was approved on 15 May 2024

Signed: Theresa Kilmurray Date: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024

On behalf of Brigidine Trustees:  
(Theresa Kilmurray, Carmel McEvoy, Patricia Mulhall, Teresina Fingleton, Paula Conway)