



# Knocklyon Parish Dublin 16



# Child Protection Document



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Knocklyon Parish, Dublin 16

**Produced by:**

Child Protection Team  
c/o Parish Office  
Carmelite Presbytery  
Idrone Avenue, Knocklyon, Dublin 16.  
Tel: 01 4941204  
Email: [cpt@knocklyonparish.com](mailto:cpt@knocklyonparish.com)  
Website: [www.knocklyonparish.com/cpt](http://www.knocklyonparish.com/cpt)



# Introduction

- Children form an intrinsic part of our Parish community in Knocklyon. Participation in Parish activities offers them the opportunity to bear witness to their baptismal vocation and to manifest their charisms as true People of God. It is the responsibility of all within our Parish community to uphold Gospel values by respecting the dignity and rights of all children and to work together to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- Our approach is based on the belief that all people and groups responsible for Parish activities that involve children have a moral obligation to provide them with the best possible levels of safety, protection, and care.
- This document details the principles to be observed in the Parish of Knocklyon to ensure the safety and protection of all our children who participate in these Parish activities. It is emphasised that the guidance provided in this document is not exhaustive, and rather it offers a practical guide to those within the Parish of Knocklyon who work with children by outlining a number of fundamental principles of good practice.
- The document draws from numerous sources, policy documents, and booklets which are listed in the appendix at the back of this document.
- For the purposes of this document a “Child” is defined as any person under the age of eighteen years.



## What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child causes the child harm. Because children can be abused in a number of ways, sometimes at the same time, it is not always easy to categorise it, but four broad definitions can be considered and may be briefly summarised as;

- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse

The HSE booklet, “**Children First**” listed in the appendix contains detailed definitions of these types of abuse.



# Child Protection Structures

## The Diocesan Director of Child Protection

This is the “Designated Person” appointed by the Dublin Diocese. The role and responsibilities of the Designated Person are to:

- Receive allegations and suspicions of child abuse.
- Provide information and advice.
- Consult with the Archbishop and advisory committee.
- Liaise with the Health Services Executive and An Gardá Síochána.
- Make a formal referral.
- Maintain confidential records.

Contact details for the Designated Person are to be displayed prominently in all Knocklyon Parish buildings including the Church, Iona Centre, and the Knocklyon Community Centre.

## Knocklyon Parish Child Protection Team

This team is appointed by the Parish. The role and responsibilities of the Knocklyon Parish Child Protection Team are to:

- Promote awareness of the Knocklyon Parish child protection policies, as outlined in this document.
- Ensure that all parishioners have ready access to contact details for the Dublin Diocesan Director of Child Protection, and the local contact details for the Health Services Executive and An Gardá Síochána.
- Facilitate anyone in Knocklyon Parish in bringing an allegation or suspicion of child abuse to the attention of the Director of Child Protection, should they wish to have such support.



## **The Role of Parents, Guardians, and all Parishioners in Knocklyon**

Knocklyon Parish is totally committed to ensuring, to the greatest possible extent, the protection and safety due to all of our children who participate in Parish activities. This can only be achieved by the collective partnership of parents, guardians, and all parishioners, together with an awareness of our individual responsibilities.

Everyone should be alert to the possibilities of child abuse, and of their obligations to convey any reasonable concerns or suspicions to the Diocesan Designated Person, the Health Services Executive, or An Garda Síochana.



# Policy Statement

Our Policy Statement explains why and how we aspire to protect all of our children who engage in Parish activities:

**K**nocklyon Parish recognises each of our children as a unique gift of God.

We regard each of them as having the right to a dignity of life and of bodily integrity which must be respected, nurtured, and protected.

We value, cherish, and actively encourage the participation of our children in our liturgies, and in all Parish activities that enhance their spiritual, emotional, physical, and social development.

In accordance with this, we will work to do all in our power to create safe environments for our children who engage in such activities in order to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the life of the Parish.



# Procedures

Knocklyon Parish undertakes to have the following procedures in place:

## Parental Consent

- Signed consent must be obtained from parents or guardians for the participation of children in groups, activities, and events.
- Establish from parents or guardians whether the child has any specific dietary requirements or medical or special needs.

## Supervision Ratios

- Appropriate supervision ratios of adults to children while maintaining the practice of ensuring that no child is left alone with an adult.

## Code of Practice for Workers

- A code of practise for workers and volunteers involved in all Knocklyon Parish related groups should be drawn up in regard to their work with children.
- This code should be read, understood and signed by every worker and volunteer on joining that group.
- The code should include a disciplinary procedure to be used in the event of a worker or volunteer breaching any of its requirements.



## Code of Behaviour and Discipline for Children

- A code of behaviour for children involved in all Knocklyon Parish related activities should be drawn up, in consultation with the children and their parents or guardians.
- This code should respect the dignity and rights of the child.
- The issue of the appropriate response to breaches of discipline and to disruptive behaviour should be covered in the code.
- Corporal punishment of children should not be permitted under any circumstances.
- Discipline problems should be handled in partnership with parents and guardians.
- A copy of the code should be given to all children participating in Knocklyon Parish related activities and to their parents or guardians.
- Group leaders should ensure that all staff and volunteers are fully conversant with the code and its application.

## Adequate Record Keeping Processes

### Forms

- Participant details (including medical information if appropriate).
- Volunteer details.
- Incident / Accident Report form.

### Attendance

- An accurate attendance record should be kept for each child participating in all Knocklyon Parish related activities.
- A written record of organisers and supervisors in attendance at each event should also be kept.
- All should ensure that an Accident/Incident Report Form is completed in the event of an accident or incident relating to a child.



## Recruitment of Workers and Volunteers

- Application forms will be used for all workers and volunteers. Application forms will include a Declaration Form and a Garda Vetting Form which applicants will be required to sign.
- Applicants should be required to provide the names of two referees who can attest to their suitability for working with children.
- All forms will be treated as being strictly private and confidential. They will be addressed to, and remain in the sole possession of the Parish Priest.
- It is recommended that all personnel working with children in Knocklyon Parish related activities should be aware of their child protection obligation and be familiar with the contents of this document.

## Health and Safety

- Ensure that buildings and/or facilities used for events and activities are suitable, safe and secure.
- Make sure that fire precautions are in place and that fire extinguishers are checked regularly.
- Make sure a first aid kit is readily available. This should be regularly checked and replenished as required. It is advisable that first aid training be provided for workers and volunteers.
- Access to a telephone at all times is essential in case of emergency.



## **Trips Away From Home**

Trips away from home include but are not limited to retreats, pilgrimages, day trips, overnight stays and holidays.

- All trips need careful advance planning including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities, and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place.
- Written parental consent specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance.
- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents or guardians.
- There must be appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements.
- There must be respect for the privacy of children in dormitories, changing rooms, showers, and toilets.



## Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

Where a child discloses abuse to a person working in any capacity in the Parish, it is important that the situation is handled sensitively and compassionately. It should be borne in mind that the child may feel that they have taken a huge risk in disclosing the abuse.

The following general principles should be followed:

### **DO:**

- Do keep calm.
- Do listen carefully, with sensitivity and openness.
- Do reassure the child of your support and that it is right to tell.
- Do reassure the child that they will be kept informed of developments.
- Do record, date and sign an account of the meeting with the child as soon as possible, including the date, time, and factual details of the conversation.
- Do ask questions but only for the purposes of clarification.
- Do report to the Diocesan Director of Child Protection.
- Do give a clear simple explanation of what will happen next.
- If you fear that the child is in immediate danger you should directly contact An Garda Síochána before contacting the Diocesan Director of Child Protection.
- Inform the parents or guardians unless to do so would place the child at further risk.



## **DON'T:**

- Do not panic.
- Do not delay.
- Do not ask leading questions or seek intimate details beyond those volunteered.
- Do not promise to keep the disclosure secret.
- Do not ask the child to repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Do not express any judgmental opinion on the alleged abuser.
- Do not make a judgement about the complaint or disclosure.
- Do not start an investigation.

In the case of an adult disclosing child abuse, it is equally important that the initial response is characterised by compassion and sensitivity. The general guidelines above should be followed.

The person who receives an allegation of child abuse should actively encourage the person who is making it to report the matter to the Health Service Executive and/or An Garda Síochána. Should the person making the allegation be under eighteen years of age, their parents or guardians can make a statement on their behalf.

It should be explained to the person making the allegation that the Knocklyon Parish Child Protection Procedures require that the allegation be referred to the Diocesan Director of Child Protection.

Anyone with a child protection concern should remember that the safety of the child is paramount, and that the alleged abuser is innocent until proven otherwise. They should treat the information confidentially and share only with those people that need to know. Information should be stored in a safe and secure location.



## Procedure for Responding to Suspicions of Child Abuse

Where suspicions of child abuse arise, and the suspected person is a member of a group affiliated to Knocklyon Parish, the person who encounters the suspicion must record the details in writing and refer the matter to the Diocesan Director of Child Protection immediately.

Even when a person has suspicions but is not sure if child abuse is involved, they should nevertheless record the details and refer the matter to the Diocesan Director of Child Protection without delay.

**Where abuse is suspected or disclosed  
the one thing you must not do is nothing.**



# Code of Practice

Children need respect and security in order to thrive. Fostering a nurturing and affirming environment is therefore an essential element of Parish activities. This should always be reflected in the practice of those who work with children.

## General Conduct

- Physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.
- Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children can never be acceptable. Great care should be taken if it is necessary to have a conversation regarding sexual matters with a child.
- Being alone with a child may not always be wise or appropriate practice. If a situation arises where it is necessary to be alone with a child, another responsible adult should be informed immediately, by telephone if necessary. A diary note that the meeting with the child took place, including the reasons for it, should be made.
- Best practice in relation to travel with children should be observed. Do not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child. If, in certain circumstances, only one adult is available, there should be a minimum of two children present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, a record of this should be made and the child's parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.
- Do not permit children to work or remain in the Church, or other parish property unless there are at least two adults present.
- Treat all children with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable.
- Do not engage in or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying or abusive.



- Do not spend a disproportionate amount of time with any particular child or group of children.
- Do not give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children under any circumstances.
- Do not use alcohol, tobacco or drugs when supervising or working with children.
- Use only age-appropriate language, material, and activities when working with children.
- Exercise caution in the use of media such as the internet, camera phones, and video. Exposure to sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.

## **Respect for physical integrity**

- Respect the physical integrity of children at all times.
- Do not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind – including rough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling). This should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child (for example, where a child is distressed).

## **Respect for privacy**

- Respect the right to privacy of children at all times.
- Take particular care regarding privacy when children are in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers and toilets.
- Never take photographs of children while they are in changing areas (for example, in a locker room or bathing facility).
- Do not undertake tasks of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) for children if they can undertake these tasks themselves.



## Meetings with children

- If the pastoral care of a child necessitates meeting alone with them, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment. The times and designated locations for meetings should allow for transparency and accountability (for example, be held in rooms with a clear glass panel or window, an open door and in buildings where other people are present).
- Limit both the length and number of meetings.
- Inform parents or guardians that the meeting(s) took place, except in circumstances where to do so might place the child in danger.
- Do not encourage visits to or conduct meetings in private homes or personal living quarters.
- When the need for a visit to the home of a child arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.

## Children with special needs or disability

- Children with special needs or disability may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, and so sensitivity and clear communication are particularly important.
- Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child with special needs, this should be done with the full understanding and consent of parents or guardians.
- In carrying out such personal care tasks, sensitivity must be shown to the child and the tasks should be undertaken with the utmost discretion.
- In an emergency situation where this type of help is required, parents should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible.



## Vulnerable children

- Since especially vulnerable children may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance.
- Be aware that vulnerable children may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.
- It is particularly important to listen carefully to vulnerable children in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty in expressing their concerns and in order that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.



# Appendices

## Appendix I: Sources

Handouts & Training Notes from Child Protection Training, All Hallows, November 2006.

*Our Children, Our Church*, The Irish Bishops Conference/The Conference of Religious in Ireland/The Irish Missionary Union, Dublin: Veritas, 2005.

*Children First*, National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Health and Children, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1999.

*Our Duty to Care*, The principles of good practice for the protection of children & young people, Department of Health and Children, Dublin: Stationery Office, 2001.

*Working with Children and Young People in The Catholic Church Community in Ireland*, Good Practice Guidelines, Working Group of the Committee on Child Protection of the Irish Catholic Bishops' conference, July 2003.

*Child Protection*, Guidelines and Procedures, Department of Education and Science, Dublin: Stationery Office, 2001.

*Code of Good Practice*, Scouting Ireland



## Appendix II: Contact List



### Mr Philip Garland

Diocesan Director of Child Protection  
Diocesan Offices, Archbishop's House  
Drumcondra  
Dublin 9



01 8360314



directorcps@dublindiocese.ie



www.cps.dublindiocese.ie



### Child Protection Team

c/o Parish Office  
Carmelite Presbytery  
Idrone Avenue  
Knocklyon, Dublin 16



01 4941204



cpt@knocklyonparish.com



www.knocklyonparish.com/cpt



### The Duty Social Worker

Dublin South West Local Health Office,  
Old County Road,  
Crumlin, Dublin 12



01 4154700



www.hse.ie



Rathfarnham  
Tallaght  
Terenure

01 6666500

01 6666000

01 6666400



### Appendix III: Parish Volunteer Application Form

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Forname: \_\_\_\_\_

Any other name previously known as: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously been involved in voluntary work?: Yes  No

If yes, give details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the names and addresses of two people whom the Parish Priest could contact for a reference (not relatives):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration required from all Volunteers working with children:**

Have you ever been convicted of a Criminal Offence or been subject of a Caution or a Bound Over Order? Yes  No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offences(s)

Nature of offence: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of offence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*I declare that the infomation I have provided on this from is accurate and correct and that I will inform the Parish Priest of any changes to these details should they occur in the future.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Knocklyon Parish, Dublin 16



## Appendix IV: Accident/Incident Report Form

### 1. Details of Child

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age/Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Male

Female

### 2(a). Mother's Details:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2(b). Father's Details

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Care and Custody arrangements regarding Child, if known:

\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Details of Person reporting incident / accident:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ *Nature and extent of contact with family*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child:

Social Worker: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_ Gardai: \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Details of Person completing this form:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Details fo Accident, Incident(s), Concern(s), Allegation(s):

Include dates, times, who was present, description of any observed in injuries, parents's view(s), child's view(s) if known.