



Safeguarding Newsletter

Spring 2026



Dear Parishioners,

The care and protection of children are an essential part of the Church's mission in building up the Kingdom of God. Using a metaphor from the world of technology penned by Fr Hans Zollner SJ, we can underline the fact that safeguarding minors 'is not an App that one can switch on or off according to one's current needs: it needs to be built into all activities of the Church - spiritual, pastoral, educational, charitable etc. - as a vital component.

Accordingly, each of us - people, religious and clergy are called to play our part in building up a culture of safeguarding in our parish communities and wider society. I hope that, as you read this annual Newsletter, you will be encouraged by the commitment that the Diocese of Raphoe demonstrates in embedding best practice throughout our parishes. As I now begin my ministry as bishop here, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who are at the heart of this safeguarding culture. They include the diocesan director of safeguarding, the diocesan safeguarding committee, the designated liaison person, the vetting coordinator, the diocesan safeguarding trainers, the parish safeguarding representatives, the parish clergy, the parish secretaries, the diocesan office, and the many parents and volunteers who work attentively in our thirty-three parishes. May the Lord bless this work.

+ Niall Coll

+ Niall Coll, Bishop of Raphoe

If you have a concern about the welfare and safety of a child, please contact:

Designated Liaison Person: Margaret Northage on 086 2183 011 or you can go directly to:

Tusla – Child & Family Agency: 074 91 02233

Gardai – National Protective Services Bureau – 01 6663430

In an emergency, please contact Letterkenny Garda Station: 074 91 67100

Support is also available from:

Towards Healing offer free counselling and other support services, appropriate to your needs, in a timely manner which are safe, respectful, and of the highest quality. The service is extended to family members impacted by clerical abuse.

Freephone: 1800 303416 **Email:** info@towardshealing.ie



eLearning Training on validating identification documents for Garda Vetting.

With the introduction of EU Directive 2011/93 which came into effect on July 7, 2025, Garda Vetting now includes enhanced police checks for sexual offences. Applicants who have lived in other EU countries or the UK for 6+ months will face delays of 10–20 additional working days. The Vetting Invitation Form (NVB1 Form) has been updated to include an **Identity Document Validation Form** and is available at: www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding-children/forms. Regular audits are conducted by the National Vetting Bureau's Compliance Unit and only the newly revised NBV1 Form (hard copy) will be accepted.

In order to comply with the requirements of this new legislation the National Board in conjunction with Acorn Hub have rolled out an eLearning module. Our sincere thanks to all those schools and parishes who have completed the training and submitted their certificates to the Safeguarding Office. For those you have not yet completed this training, please do so asap by accessing:

[NBSCCCI Learn hub provided by Acorn Learn Hub](#)



The Safety of all Children Matters to us. How do we safeguard children in the Diocese of Raphoe?

- We have robust Policy and Procedures in place developed by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland – NBSCCCI.
(please see: www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding),
- A Child Safeguarding Statement is in place which is compliant with the requirement of Children First legislation and has been verified by Tusla's Compliance Unit, (please ask for a copy),
- All clergy, staff and volunteers working with children must attend Safeguarding Training,
- All clergy, staff and volunteers must undergo garda vetting,
- Safe Recruitment procedures are in place,
- Parental Consent must be obtained,
- There is a Code of Behaviour for Adults working with Children,
- Supervision ratios must be adhered to by Leaders,
- Child friendly posters are on display,
- Information is made available to parents/guardian should they have a concern,
- Each parish has at least 2 Safeguarding Parish Representatives who work with their Parish Priest to ensure best practice in safeguarding,
- All child protection concerns are reported to the statutory authorities without delay and we will fully cooperate with any garda investigations.

Guidance on the Use of Photography



The Church only has responsibility for safeguarding and the use of photography if it plans to use the photographs for Church purposes. Never supply the full name of a child along with the image. Photographs taken at events organised by family and schools such as Communion, weddings or Confirmations (including when the photographer is employed by the school or family for these occasions) do not fall under the responsibility of the Church, unless they are being taken for Church purposes. Further information is available at: www.safeguarding.ie/our-services/policy-and-guidance - S7.D Guidance on the Use of Photography.

Parish Self-Audit Reminders

Thank you to all those parishes who have already returned their audits. If you have not already returned the parish audit, please do so as soon as possible. It is important to ensure accountability of safeguarding at parish level.



New Policy Posters

With the recent installation of Bishop Niall as Bishop of Raphoe, the Policy Posters have been updated and are available in both English & Irish from:
The Safeguarding Office, Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Letterkenny, Bishop's Office, or to download at :
www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding-children