



Diocese of Raphoe
Deoise Ráth Bhoth

GUIDANCE OF VISITING CLERGY MINISTERING WITHIN THE DIOCESE

- Procedures for visiting clergy within Ireland
- Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister on a short-term basis
- Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister at a one-off event
- Procedures for visiting persons in any form of consecrated life within and outside Ireland
- Procedures for seminarians and pastoral students undertaking pastoral placements as part of their formation
- Procedures for visiting clerics or visiting persons in any form of consecrated life ministering at shrines, national shrines and international shrines
- Procedures for lay ecclesial ministers
- Procedures for retired clerics who seek to minister and who have no Church Authority in Ireland

(Various Templates are attached)

Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding Guidance for S6

S6.G Guidance on Visiting Clergy, Religious, Lay Ecclesial Ministers, Seminarians and Visits to Shrines

All steps must be taken to ensure a safe and nurturing environment within the Church for children. For that reason, it is important that all those who engage in public ministry require confirmation that they are fit for that sacred task. The safeguarding of children within the Irish Catholic Church is of critical importance.

Whilst lay faithful (including lay ministers) are subject to safe recruitment practice (Guidance S1.A), all clergy (secular or religious, bishop, priest or deacon) who seek to minister in the Catholic Church in Ireland must be incardinated. This means that he must belong to a diocese (or its equivalent in Canon law), a personal prelature (such as Opus Dei), an institute of religious life (such as the Franciscans) or a society that has this faculty (such as the Society of African Missions).

Incardination has three main purposes:

- It is pastoral; a cleric is ordained for the service of a particular Church to which he belongs;
- It is an effective structure for maintaining discipline, creating a bond between the cleric and his competent superior;
- It provides the individual cleric with a guarantee that his rights are protected.

Further to this, the cleric must be in good standing and enjoy the faculties necessary to minister. In law, a faculty is the authority, privilege or permission to perform an act or function, for example, regarding the Sacraments of Penance and Marriage. A cleric receives his faculties from the ordinary of the place where he has domicile; however, each local ordinary is responsible for ensuring that clergy who minister within their territory are in good standing.

The Church authority has a responsibility to take measures to ensure the safety and welfare of children. It is therefore important that certain checks are carried out to ensure that all clergy are in good standing prior to faculties being received.

To assist with understanding the requirements this guidance is separated into the following subheadings:

- Procedures for visiting clergy within Ireland
- Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister on a short-term basis
- Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister at a one-off event
- Procedures for visiting persons in any form of consecrated life within and outside Ireland
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Procedures for visiting clergy within Ireland

All clergy incardinated into the diocese or religious order will have been Garda/AccessNI vetted as part of safe recruitment (Guidance S1.A).

Visiting clergy should follow best practice and contact the local parish priest/superior of a religious house before undertaking ministry in that ecclesiastical jurisdiction. If this ministry is considered to be regulated activity, then the guidance regarding the vetting process must be undertaken and a letter of good standing received (1.1C Template 2) from the ordinary of the cleric.

However, should the cleric be present for one event in a parish or diocese, such as a funeral, baptism or wedding, he should sign the register in the sacristy to declare his presence on a particular time and date. Furthermore, should the cleric not be incardinated in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that he visits, he must provide his celebret for inspection by the parish priest or duly delegated person, and this should be noted beside the visitor's signature in the register.

Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister on a short-term basis

When clergy from outside Ireland visit with the intention of being involved in short-term ministry, evidence should be provided that confirms they are priests in good standing and that they are fit for ministry.

Clergy who come from parts of the world where police vetting arrangements are not in existence may seek to minister in Ireland. As a consequence, the statutory route is not always available as a means of confirming that there is no adverse information known about them that would prevent them from carrying out ministry in Ireland.

- Prior to visiting Ireland, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all visiting priests must write seeking permission of the Church authority, giving details about the duration of the visit, the type of ministry and the location of ministry being considered. The contact details of the Church authority of the visiting priest must be provided in advance;
- Upon receipt of a request from visiting clergy to carry out ministry, the Church authority must acknowledge the same, and then make a request in writing to the visitor (S6.G Template 1) for a celebret or confirmation of good standing (S6.G Template 3), signed by their Church authority;
- The visiting priest must be asked to complete a declaration of good standing form (S6.G Template 2);
- A vetting check must be carried out through the Garda National Vetting Bureau/AccessNI (Guidance S1.B);
- If the Church authority is satisfied that there are no concerns about the visiting religious, permission should be given in writing to the visitor, outlining the specified ministry, including its duration and location (S6.G Template 4);
- A copy of this permission (S6.G Template 4) should be forwarded to the parish priest or local superior of the visitor, and also to the parish priest or local superior of the location of the ministry outlined in the letter;
- A copy of the permission (S6.G Template 4) should be stored in the offices of the Church authority, in line with confidentiality and storage of information (Appendix B).

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Procedures to be followed by visiting clergy from outside Ireland wishing to minister at a one-off event

Visiting clergy should follow best practice and contact the local parish priest/superior of a religious house before undertaking ministry in that ecclesiastical jurisdiction. If this ministry is considered to be regulated activity (as defined in Guidance S1.B), then the guidance regarding the vetting process should be undertaken and a letter of good standing received from the ordinary of the cleric.

However, should the cleric be present for one event in a parish or diocese, such as a funeral, baptism or wedding, he should sign the register in the sacristy to declare his presence on a particular time and date. Furthermore, should the priest not be incardinated in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that he visits, he must provide his celebret for inspection by the parish priest or duly delegated person, and this should be noted beside the visitor's signature in the register.

Procedures for visiting persons in any form of consecrated life within and outside Ireland

- Prior to their visit, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all visiting religious must write seeking permission of the Church authority, giving details about the duration of the visit, the type of ministry and the location of ministry being considered. Contact details of the Church authority of the visiting religious must be provided in advance;
- Upon receipt of request from the visiting religious to carry out ministry, the Church authority must acknowledge the same, and then make a request in writing to the visitor (S6.G Template 1) for a confirmation of good standing (S6.G Template 5), signed by their Church authority;
- A vetting check must be processed through the Garda National Vetting Bureau/AccessNI (Guidance S1.B);
- If the Church authority is satisfied that there are no concerns about the visiting religious, permission should be given in writing to the visitor, outlining the specified ministry, including its duration and location (S6.G Template 4);
- A copy of this permission (S6.G Template 4) should be forwarded to the parish priest or local superior of the visitor, and also to the parish priest or local superior of the location of the ministry outlined in the letter;
- A copy of the permission (S6.G Template 4) should be stored in the offices of the Church authority, in line with confidentiality and storage of information ([Appendix B](#)).

Procedures for seminarians and pastoral students undertaking pastoral placements as part of their formation

- Prior to the placement visit, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all seminarians and students must commit to following the child safeguarding policy and standards of the Catholic Church in Ireland (Guidance S6.E).
- The placement organiser must be satisfied that all placements are governed by a child safeguarding policy.
- If the placement is outside the Church, all child safeguarding requirements of the organisation within which the placement takes place must be followed. See guidance on cross-referencing safeguarding policies (Guidance S6.E).
- Where the ministry involves regular and necessary contact with children (and /or vulnerable adults) the student/seminarian must be vetted by the placement provider through the Garda National Vetting Bureau/Access NI (Guidance S1.B).
- Any concerns relating to the student/seminarian of a child safeguarding nature whilst on placement must be shared with the Rector/President and processed in line with the Church's reporting procedures (Guidance R1.A).

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- Records must be retained which demonstrate that the required checks have taken place and the student/seminarian has agreed to follow the child safeguarding procedures of the Church and the placement provider. A copy of this record should be stored in the offices of the Seminary in line with confidentiality and storage of information ([Appendix B](#)).

Procedures for visiting clerics or visiting persons in any form of consecrated life ministering at shrines, national shrines and international shrines

A Shrine is a Catholic church or other sacred place which with the approval of the local ordinary is by reason of special devotion frequented by the faithful as pilgrims (Canon 1230).

To be considered a National Shrine the approval of the National Episcopal Conference is necessary. For it to be described as International, the approval of the Holy See is necessary (Canon 1231).

For visiting clerics or those in any form of consecrated life, ministering in Shrines and National Shrines in Ireland

- Prior to the visit, where there is an intention to engage in public ministry, all visiting clerics and those in any form of consecrated life must follow this guidance (S6.G). In particular:
- If the visiting cleric is ministering at a one-off event which is not considered a regulated activity (as defined in Guidance S1.B) the cleric must provide his celebret for inspection by the parish priest or duly delegated person and this should be noted beside the visitor's signature in the register.
- If the ministry is for a short term basis, the visiting cleric must follow the requirements set out in heading above.
- If the ministry is being carried out by a non-ordained religious then the guidance outlined in the heading above must be followed.

Visiting clerics celebrating or concelebrating Mass at Shrines outside Ireland

- If the Shrine is outside of Ireland all child safeguarding requirements of the organisation within which the ministry takes place must be followed.
- The main celebrant must allocate responsibility for each cleric wishing to concelebrate to have their celebret cards checked to ensure they are in good standing.
- A cleric who is out of ministry due to child safeguarding concerns must not attempt to celebrate any sacrament in public while abroad.

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Procedures for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Lay Ecclesial Ministry is the term adopted to identify the relatively new category of pastoral ministers in the Catholic Church who are not ordained. Lay ecclesial ministers are co-workers with the Church authority alongside priests, non-ordained religious and deacons. In other contexts, these may be known as number of different terms including 'lay pastoral workers' or 'pastoral assistants'.

All lay ecclesial lay ministers are authorised by a Church authority to serve publicly. Some lay ministers are appointed by a Church authority and undergo a period of training for their role, others belong to other Church bodies/ external organisations and minister in a particular area, such as youth ministry

Lay Ministers can perform a variety of roles including chaplaincy work; parish catechesis and other pastoral work as identified by a Church authority.

Formation is determined the Church authority or leader of the organisation. As yet lay ministers do not hold letters of good standing.

When a lay minister either as a sole worker or as part of an organisation moves between Church Bodies, appropriate checks should be conducted to ensure that they do not present a risk to children.

Where there is contact with children the following requirements must be honoured:

Requirements when the lay minister is an individual

The lay minister in this context is considered a member of Church personnel and therefore must be recruited following the safe recruitment guidance including vetting (S1.A and Guidance S1.B).

Requirements when the lay minister is part of another Church body/external organisation

Prior to their ministry the lay minister must seek permission or be invited by the Church authority of the Church body in which they are seeking to minister

The Church authority should require the manager/Church authority of the organisation the lay minister belongs to, to complete S6.G Template 6.

Upon receipt of S6.G Template 6, the Church authority should grant or deny the lay minister's request in writing, also notifying their manager/Church authority.

A copy of this permission and S6.G E Template 6 should be stored in the offices of the receiving Church authority in line with confidentiality and storage of information ([Appendix B](#)).

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S6.G Template 1: Acknowledgement Letter for Request for Ministry

Dear _____ (name),

I write in response to your letter dated _____ (date), regarding your wish to minister within this diocese/congregation.

Thank you for your enquiry and your willingness to be of service. Prior to considering any temporary appointment, our procedures require that you contact your local ordinary/superior to inform them of your request.

Please complete the attached forms and forward them to your local ordinary/superior for completion, if they wish to recommend you for ministry in this diocese/congregation.

With every blessing,

(signature of Church authority)



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S6.G Template 2: Declaration Form of Good Standing

Name:			
Date of birth:	Phone number:	Email:	
Church body to which you are incardinated:			
Name of Church authority:			
Address of Church authority:			
Appointment last held:		Commencement date on which you are seeking to minister in another Church body:	
Has your request to minister in another Church body been approved by your Church authority? Yes ☐ No ☐			
Current appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 1:			
Previous appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 2:			
Previous appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 3:			
Previous appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 4:			
Previous appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 5:			
Additional appointments should be detailed on a separate sheet and attached to this form.			
I hereby declare as follows:	Yes	No	Comment
1. I have never been suspended or otherwise Canonically disciplined.	☐	☐	_____
2. I have no criminal record or have not had criminal charges brought against me.	☐	☐	_____
3. I have no behavioural problems, either past or present, which would indicate that I might deal with children in an inappropriate manner.	☐	☐	_____
4. I have never been involved in an incident or exhibited behaviour that called into question my fitness or suitability for priestly ministry due to alcohol misuse, substance misuse, sexual misconduct, financial error or any other lapse of judgement.	☐	☐	_____
5. I have no mental or physical needs that would adversely affect performance of my sacred ministry.	☐	☐	_____
I authorise the verification of the information provided on this form as to my previous ministries and personal information.			
Signature _____ Date _____			

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S6.G Template 3: Confirmation of Good Standing

Name:			
Date of birth:		Phone number:	Email:
Church body to which the applicant is incardinated:			
Name of Church authority:			
Address of Church authority:			
Appointment last held:		Commencement date on which the applicant is seeking to minister in another Church body:	
Current appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 1:			
Previous appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 2:			
Previous appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 3:			
Previous appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 4:			
Previous appointment:	Date from:	Date to:	
Address 5:			
Additional appointments should be detailed on a separate sheet and attached to this form.			
I hereby declare as follows:	Yes	No	Comment
1. The applicant has never been suspended or otherwise Canonically disciplined.	☐	☐	_____
2. The applicant has no criminal record or has not had criminal charges brought against them.	☐	☐	_____
3. The applicant has no behavioural problems, either past or present, which would indicate that they might deal with children in an inappropriate manner.	☐	☐	_____
4. The applicant has never been involved in an incident or exhibited behaviour that called into question their fitness or suitability for priestly ministry due to alcohol misuse, substance misuse, sexual misconduct, financial error or any other lapse of judgement.	☐	☐	_____
5. The applicant has no mental or physical needs that would adversely affect performance of their sacred ministry.	☐	☐	_____
I authorise, to the best of my knowledge, the verification of the information provided on this form as to the previous ministries and personal information of the applicant involved.			
Signature _____ Date _____			

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S6.G Template 4: Approval for Ministry

Dear _____ (name of applicant),

I wish to confirm that you are authorised to minister in _____ (name of Church body) as follows:

In _____ (location)

Duration _____ (start and end date)

Type of ministry _____ (specified ministry)

I will retain a copy of this letter, and a copy has been forwarded to your own local superior/parish priest and to the local superior/parish priest of the location in which you will be ministering.

With every blessing,

(signature of Church authority)

(date of Church authority signature)

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S6.G Template 5: Confirmation of Good Standing for Non-Ordained Religious

Questionnaire to be completed by the Church authority when a Sister or Brother or other person from the province or region is applying for ministry, including working with children (long term or for a shorter period) in another province or region of the congregation.

Name of person applying for transfer _____

Name of his/her province/region _____

1. Why does this person want to minister in the province/region of the congregation?

2. Does he/she seek the transfer with a view to permanence? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Is he/she coming temporarily? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. If your answer is **yes** above, how long does he/she intend to stay?

5. Have you any specific concerns about the performance of his/her ministry? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please state your reasons below.

6. Is there any reason why the above-named person should not be given a position that involves working with children and young people? Yes ☐ No ☐

If you answered **yes** above, please give an outline of your concerns below.

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7. Please write any additional comments below.

I testify that _____ (name of applicant) who is applying for
ministry in the _____ province/region is a person in good
standing in the _____ province/region.

Name (please print) _____

Leadership position in province/region _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Return this form as soon as possible to the province/regional leader of the province/region to which the person has applied for a transfer.

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**S6.G Template 6: Form to be completed by the
Leader/ Church authority of a visiting lay minister**

**Section 1: To be completed by Manager/Church authority of External
Organisation/ Church body**

(NAME OF MEMBER OF CHURCH PERSONNEL) is a member of (NAME OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATION/CHURCH BODY) as a lay minister.

On behalf of (NAME OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATION/CHURCH BODY) I am happy to state that we have recruited (NAME OF CHURCH PERSONNEL) safely and in line with the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of our organisation, they have been vetted and are safe to work with children.

SIGNED : _____

POSITION IN EXTERNAL ORGANISATION/CHURCH BODY:

DATE: _____

Section 2: To be completed by the lay minister

I, (NAME OF MEMBER OF CHURCH PERSONNEL) verify that I am aware of the safeguarding policy and procedures of (NAME OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATION/CHURCH BODY).

But when acting as a lay minister I will abide by the Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of (NAME OF RECEIVING CHURCH BODY).

SIGNED: _____

DATE: