

OSA Chid Safeguarding Risk Assessment.

Introduction

Under *Children First 2015* it is a requirement that each church body working with children undertakes an annual risk assessment. This is a preventative exercise to identify any potential risk inherent to the activity and the location where the ministry takes place. A '*Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment*' requires that the Local Safeguarding Group ensure that proper safeguarding guidelines and practices are being followed and/or are put in place to ensure that children and those who work with them are safely protected when participating in ministry activities.

This is not a Health and Safety Audit. Separately, the Prior or Parish Priest is responsibility for ensuring that any identified risks regarding the venue or physical location are rectified in keeping with Province policy.

A core commitment of *Safeguarding Children 2016* is to ensure that children will be kept safe within Augustinian sacred spaces. Introducing, adopting and reviewing safeguarding practices are a key part of that response.

Some examples of a proactive approach to safeguarding children and adult volunteers will include, among other steps:

- ✓ Having thorough recruitment procedures with all volunteers trained, vetted (where appropriate) and signed-up to an agreed Code of Behaviour.
- ✓ Maintaining an 'Attendance Record' and ensuring that Parental Consent Forms are completed and accessible.
- ✓ Developing a 'Code of Conduct' with and for children that they and their parents' co-sign.
- ✓ Having in place appropriate supervision ratios and duty of care arrangements for drop-off, collection and use of toilets.

For instance, look at the *Child Safeguarding Checklist* (p.3) overleaf. If you answer 'No' to any of the questions then the current expected standards of practice are less than what they should be and therefore, will require your attention.

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A completed 'Sample Assessment' is provided for illustrative purposes (p.4). Details of all risks should be noted down and the actions needed to address each risk described. When identifying potential or actual risk look for any dangers in the nature of the activity (e.g. nativity play) and in the location (e.g. choir loft; practice room; open church). Identify who may be at risk. Decide who may be harmed and how. Identify what the likelihood of harm may be (i.e. low, moderate or high). Identify the potential consequences of injury or harm (e.g. minor to severe). Identify and plan for the necessary measures to be put in place to limit or eliminate the potential harm as you complete the *Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment* (p.5). Most accidents can be avoided. What we learn from such events or incidents happening should lead to improved practices.

Every risk assessment should be signed and dated by the Ministry/Activity Leader. When completed the assessment form should be reviewed by the Prior or Parish Priest, along with the LSG members and a note of the discussion and decisions reached record in the minutes of the relevant meeting. If further action is required before it is co-signed, then that should also be noted, as appropriate.

Where approved, the Prior or Parish Priest should co-sign the assessment and ensure that the originals are stored securely.

A copy of each completed and approved annual *Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment* should be held by the Ministry/Activity Leader and a copy sent to the Safeguarding Officer to facilitate an inspection by the Tusla Compliance Unit when such a request arises at Provincial level.

End.

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GUIDANCE FOR MINISTRY LEADERS

Child Safeguarding Checklist

1.	Has each Volunteer Leader.....	Yes ✓	No X	Proposed Action
A.	Completed an Application Form?			
B.	Supplied references which have been checked?			
C.	Completed full-day Child Safeguarding Training?			
D.	Received and presented approved NVB Clearance?			
E.	Signed-up to the Code of Behaviour for Adults?			
2.	Supervision	Yes ✓	No X	Proposed Action
A.	Is the Leader – Child supervision ratio adequate? ¹			
3.	For each Child/Participant.....	Yes ✓	No X	Proposed Action
A.	Has a Parental Consent Form been completed, co-signed and returned?			
B.	Are the Consent Forms securely stored and Contact Details accessible?			
C.	Where applicable, are medical needs known and care responses agreed? ²			
D.	Are Attendance Records maintained and securely stored?			
E.	Has a Code of Conduct for Children been developed & co-signed by each?			
F.	Are Incident/Accident Report Forms available & accessible?			
4.	Health & Safety Audit	Yes ✓	No X	Proposed Action
A.	Has the physical location / venue been audited & approved for use?			

¹ Having more than the minimum (i.e. 2 adults to 8 children) means that leaders will be better placed to cope with the expected and the unexpected.

² Depending upon the child's personal/medical needs and arising from consultation with the parents/guardians, it could be agreed that a dedicated leader with appropriate training will respond to a personal need or incident (e.g. toileting; seizure).

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SAMPLE ASSESSMENT

Identify Risks?		Who is at Risk?	Likelihood of Risk/Harm?	Consequences?	Measures Taken or Needed?
1.	Failure to follow volunteer recruitment procedures.	Children.	Low.	Potentially unsuitable adults being chosen as volunteer leaders.	Follow each step of recruitment procedure before accepting new volunteers.
2.	Siblings dropped-off too early for choir practice and not being accompanied by guardian into church for registration.	Choir members.	Low based on experience to-date.	Insufficient adult supervision.	Parents to sign-up to accompanying children to practice registration each evening. Leaders to arrive 15 mins. early with church entrance supervised.
3.	Lock on toilet door jams when child is inside.	Children.	Moderate	Child may become frightened.	Install twin unlocking bolt that can be opened from inside as normal & outside only in case of emergency.
4.	Child with asthma fails to bring inhaler to choir practice.	Child.	Moderate	Child may panic.	Have Parental Consent Forms with relevant contact details to hand for immediate call and response.

Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

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Church/Parish: _____ **Name of Group/Activity:** _____

Date of Assessment: _____ **Person(s) Completing Assessment:** _____

Name of Person in Authority to whom report will be submitted (Prior / Parish Priest): _____

Identify Risks?	Who is at Risk?	Likelihood of Risk/Harm?	Consequences?	Measures Taken or Needed?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Ministry/Activity Leader Signature: _____ **Dated:** _____

Co-Signed (Prior / Parish Priest) Name: _____ **Date:** _____

(Note: Photocopy as required).