



Safeguarding Development Newsletter

(May 2018 – Issue 5)



St. Augustine's Drogheda (14 March 2018) - Family Mass Team members (from left to right): Maureen Morgan, Edel Victory, Áine Duffy and Local Safeguarding Representatives, Lorraine Collins & Joan Donovan, along with Fr. John Hennebry, Prior Provincial & Tony Murphy (Safeguarding Officer). The fourth FMT member, Sonja Conlon unfortunately could not be present on the night.

The Augustinian Province is most grateful to the FMT Children who helped create our colourful Safeguarding leaflet and poster.

Volunteers Gather Locally

To-date the Provincial and the Safeguarding Officer have attended 7 such events between 1 Feb. and 8 May. The purpose was and is to thank volunteers for their commitment and hard work, as well as supporting the members of the Local Safeguarding Group. It has also provided an opportunity to launch the 'Child-friendly Leaflet' and the 'Adult Code of Behaviour for those involved in OSA Ministries'. In some cases, the gatherings have rounded off with hospitality and chat.



These colourful resources will help to spread the Safeguarding message. Children, parents and volunteers are the various audiences we are hoping to reach.

Having presented to volunteers and friars it is up to the Local Safeguarding Group to then choose the best way to distribute the leaflet. Perhaps, speaking about it at weekend Masses and then allowing children or Altar Servers, where involved, to hand out copies afterwards is one approach. A full-size pop-up banner has been produced and made available for use in each church location.

Distributing the 'Code of Behaviour' to all volunteers, not just those who were present for the launch, will require a more targeted approach. The information gleaned from the 'Safeguarding Commitment' slip will help



to update an existing 'Volunteer Database' that is secure and confidential. If a 'Volunteer Database' does not already exist then this is an opportunity to develop one, similar to the 'Spreadsheet' illustrated at the Safeguarding Network (14 April). A detailed record will need to be kept and updated until all have been completed by a particular date. Long-fingering the task is unwise.



St. Augustine's Galway (23 Mar.) with LSG members (left to right): John Lynam, Rosemarie Ryan & Fr. Des Foley, Prior & P.P.

We ultimately want to be able to say with confidence, sooner rather than later: *"All OSA Volunteers have whole-heartedly committed to the values of the Code."* The values we speak of are that children will be:

- ✓ *Nurtured by a culture of honesty and safety;*
- ✓ *Treated with respect and dignity;*
- ✓ *Supported to develop a clear understanding of their rights;*
- ✓ *Facilitated to take on roles in developing their own capabilities;*
- ✓ *Cared for in open view with sufficient adults present;*
- ✓ *Encouraged to talk to a trusted adult about any concerns or worries.*

As followers of Jesus who act in his name we will not:

- Use inappropriate language;
- Place children in harm;
- Ask children for their personal contact details;
- Take photographs of children without their permission;
- Expose children to drugs;
- Invite children to our home.

To communicate such a message will be very re-assuring for parents and guardians to hear. Similarly, all friars and volunteers are entitled to be reassured in this way. In protecting others, we are protecting ourselves.

Three further church events will round-off the local launches namely, Fethard (14 June), Finglas South (8 Sept.) and Ballyboden (Sept./Oct. with date tbc).

Volunteers & Personal Information

Data Protection Regulations now obliges us to have each volunteer's written permission to store personal information about them. Therefore, each Prior/P.P. must ensure that all individuals who wish to be communicated with about church business must give their written consent for the secure storage of their personal information, solely for this specific purpose. Such a 'Consent Form' can be had from the Safeguarding Office.

Such data should not be shared with any other agency or group (e.g. SVP or Diocese). In the context of Vetting, personal details can be shared where a Diocese is co-ordinating NVB applications on behalf of an Augustinian Church Community.

Mandated Persons



Who is a Mandated Person?

With the introduction of further elements of Children First Act 2015 the status of Mandated Persons needs to be clear. Who then is a Mandated Person? People who have contact with children and/or their families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. There is a long list including teachers, nurses, youth workers, social workers and counsellors, among others.

How does this apply to Augustinians & Volunteers?

In a church context all clerics and religious who have any level of ministry are considered Mandated Persons, as well as Pastoral Care Workers who are employed for that purpose. Volunteers involved in ministry, even if it involves contact with children, are not regarded as a Mandated Person. Where a concern may arise, a volunteer should pass the information to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who is a Mandated Person and who, in turn, will contact Tusla – The Child & Family Agency.

What legal obligations apply?

Under Children First Act 2015 two legal obligations are outlined:

1. To report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed and

covers single and multiple instances (i.e. assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development, or welfare).

2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report. This is known as 'Mandated Assisting' and will most likely apply where the person has



on-going contact with a

child. Such assistance could be in the form of verbal or written information and/or attendance at assessment meetings.

How should I deal with a disclosure of harm?

Sensitivity must be at the heart of your response. Remain calm, listen carefully to the person taking what is said seriously. They need to be reassured, particularly a child, that s/he has taken the right action in talking to you. Only ask questions of



clarification, do not promise to keep any secrets and do not comment on the alleged abuser. Check

back using the person's own words that what you have heard is correct and clearly understood. Ensure that the person understands the reporting procedures that now need to be followed, while keeping a note of the conversation.

(Above photo courtesy of Coley Christine on unsplash.com)

What happens after reporting to Tusla?

Once a report is received by Tusla the first consideration is the immediate safety of the child. Emergency action may be taken or other services such as health, education and social supports will be activated. Every report will be acknowledged and will be assessed to determine the level of risk and decide on the appropriate response required.

Where will I find Tusla's contact details?

Relevant contact details for Tusla and An Garda Síochána are displayed on the *OSA Safeguarding Summary Statement* in each Augustinian Church. A new Tusla emergency out of hours social work service is now available on 0818 776 315 between 6pm – 6am every night and between 9am – 5pm every Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays.

The above is a summary overview while further information can be sourced at: <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/mandated-persons/>

The National Board for Safeguarding Children has developed a training module on the role of a 'Mandated Person'. This will be available in early June and will subsequently be included in future training inputs provided by the Province and/or respective dioceses.



Feedback or Queries Welcome

Contact Tony Murphy
(087 2211235) &

osasafeguarding@gmail.com or the

Provincial directly.

Many thanks.