

## Preventing Harm to Children



### Safe Recruitment

- The Diocese acknowledges that safe care starts with the appointment of suitably qualified, skilled and vetted personnel who have the desired competencies and skills to carry out their function in an effective, efficient and safe manner. Whoever is employed by the Church, either in a pastoral or voluntary role, must be recruited carefully and deemed suitable for the role that they are being asked to undertake. Safe recruitment means that the Diocese will ensure that:
- All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the Church eliminates applicants who might pose a risk to children/young people.
- Those engaged in the recruitment process are suitably trained and experienced to undertake this task.
- The Church's recruitment procedures are transparent, adhere to best practice and comply with the rules of natural justice, appropriate record-keeping and human resource management.
- The Church is committed to the policy of inclusion and equality.

### Recruitment procedures (volunteers)

All necessary steps should be taken to ensure that all volunteers who work with children/young people in the Church are assessed as 'safe'. This includes conducting the following procedures for all volunteers:

- Vetting through the Garda Vetting Bureau (see below).
- Requiring the volunteer to sign a declaration form stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children/young people (see Appendix A - SG02 Declaration Form).
- Ensuring the volunteer is inducted in the Church's child safeguarding policy (See Standard 5 - Training and Support) and that they agree to follow the policy and the procedures of the Diocese by signing an safeguarding agreement form (see Appendix A - SG03 Safeguarding Agreement Form).
- Ensuring the volunteer agrees to work within the Church body's code of behaviour.
- Ensuring the volunteer agrees to report all safeguarding concerns to the Designated Liaison Person

(DLP) of the Church body (see Appendix C).

- Considering whether to ask the volunteer to complete an application form (see Appendix A – SG01 Application Form) in particular if they have regular and necessary contact with children/young people through their ministry.

### Recruitment Procedure (Paid)

- Use the recruitment and selection checklist to ensure that effective practices are followed (see Appendix A – Recruitment and Selection Checklist).
- Develop clear job/role descriptions.
- Openly advertise all vacancies.
- Use the application form (see Appendix A – SG01 Application Form).
- Interview suitable applicants by an interview panel of at least two people with appropriate competence and authority.
- The successful applicant will be offered a position subject to:
  - Suitable reference.
  - Signing a declaration form (See Appendix A – SG02 Declaration Form).
  - Proof of qualifications, where applicable.
  - Vetting through the Garda Vetting Bureau (see below).
  - Positive proof of identification.
- Verbal contact must be made with referees.
- Once appointed, the following elements are critical:
  - Ensure probationary periods are served, where appropriate.
  - Ensure that the member of Church personnel is inducted in the Church's child safeguarding policy (see Standard 5) and that they agree to follow the policy and the procedures of their Church body by signing an agreement form (see Appendix A – SG03 Safeguarding Agreement Form).
  - Ensure professional support, supervision and appraisals are offered to Church personnel, where appropriate (see Standard 5).
  - Provide ongoing training to Church personnel, in particular child safeguarding training detailed under Standard 5.
- Up-to-date files should be kept in respect of all personnel in line with NBSCCCI Recording and Storage of Information (see Section 1.16 Record Keeping and Storage).

### Vetting Through the Garda Vetting Bureau

This should be read in addition to and not separate from the Vetting Guidance produced by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI).

It should be noted that any lay person who is coming to work or volunteer in Ireland, who worked or volunteered in another country for more than one year, **must provide a certificate of police clearance** from the country or countries in which they have lived for a year or more prior to coming to Ireland. Advice and support in obtaining a police clearance certificate can be found at [www.fingerscan.ca](http://www.fingerscan.ca) and also at [www.coru.ie/en/registration/police\\_clearance](http://www.coru.ie/en/registration/police_clearance).

### The National Vetting Bureau Act 2012

The 2012 National Vetting Bureau Act 2012 sets out the circumstances that require vetting as:

Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, **a necessary and regular** part of which consists mainly of the person having **access to**, or **contact with, children** and/or **vulnerable adults**.

The Act also requires:

Vetting in respect of any work or activity as a **minister** or **priest** or **any other person engaged in the advancement of religious beliefs**, to **children** and **vulnerable adults**, unless such work or activity is merely incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs to persons who are not children/young people or vulnerable adults.

A person is also required to be vetted if their ministry, work or activity is deemed relevant to children/young people or vulnerable adults. Relevant work includes the provision of training, education, treatment, supervision, therapy, counselling, transporting or conveying, giving advice or guidance, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities.

### **Interpreting the Act for the Church Context**

From the above extracted clauses, persons requiring vetting fall into three main categories. However it should be noted that anyone who is 18 or over and has any contact with children/young people or vulnerable adults which is more than incidental as part of their ministry must be vetted (see also Note 1 below).

**Category 1:** A person must be vetted if they are a minister, priest or other who engages in the advancement of religious beliefs to children/young people and vulnerable adults.

**Category 2:** A person must be vetted if he/she has necessary and regular contact with children/young people or vulnerable adults through his/her ministry, work or activity in the diocese/parish/school/diocesan agency/etc.

**Category 3:** Vetting is also required for those whose ministry, work or activity includes the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children/young people or vulnerable adults. This applies regardless of whether this ministry, work or activity is occasional or regular and necessary.

**Note 1:** Those who are aged 16 and 17 may be vetted, but this can only be carried out with the written consent of their parent/guardian and the young person themselves.

**Note 2:** Vetting is not required for a person if his/her ministry, work or activity with children/young people is merely incidental to his/her ministry, work or activity with others who are not children/young people or vulnerable adults. In other words, vetting is not required for Church personnel who may come into contact with, but do not minister or work directly with, children/young people or vulnerable adults, excluding those who fall into Category 1-3 above.

### **Examples of Roles that typically WILL Require Vetting (This list is not exhaustive):**

- Clergy (bishops, priests, deacons, visiting clergy who provide short to long term cover).
- Sacristans.
- Youth group leaders such as those responsible for youth choirs, parish run youth clubs, Pope John Paul II Award leaders, youth liturgy groups, etc.
- Supervisors of altar servers.
- Ancillary staff in schools e.g. SNAs, caretakers, etc.
- Communion programme "Do This In Memory Programme" leaders who have contact with children outside of the public Sunday Liturgy.
- Confirmation programme "You Shall Be My Witnesses" leaders.
- Eucharistic ministers who have been commissioned to bring the Eucharist to homes, hospitals, care homes and other institutions where there may children/young people and/or vulnerable adults present.

- Other roles that bring a person into direct contact with children/young people or vulnerable adults through his/her ministry, work or activity.

### **Examples of Roles that Typically WILL NOT Require Vetting:**

- Parish secretaries.
- Collectors.
- Car park attendants.
- Those present in the Sacristy who don't have an official role with children or vulnerable adults (however, these adults should never be left unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults).
- Readers of the Word unless they have a dual role which directly involves contact with children/young people or vulnerable adults.
- Eucharistic ministers who only distribute the Eucharist within the main body of the church during public Mass or other liturgical celebrations.
- Other roles whose contact with children/young people or vulnerable adults is merely incidental while they are carrying out their ministry, work or activities with those who are not children/young people or vulnerable adults.

### **Implications for Dioceses**

Each diocese as a constituent part of the Catholic Church in Ireland is deemed to be a Relevant Organisation with regards to the Act and therefore it shall not permit any person to undertake relevant ministry, work or activities on its behalf unless an application for vetting has been processed by the National Vetting Bureau in respect of that person.

Equally those who, under the Act, do not require vetting should not be requested to apply for vetting as to do so would be an undermining of their civil rights.

### **Vetting Process**

Applications for vetting are now submitted electronically in a process known as e-vetting. The National Vetting Bureau (NVB) is no longer accepting paper applications.

Please find below the list of relevant forms and an outline of how the e-vetting process works.

- E-Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1) & Guidelines for Completion (See Appendix A).
- Parent/Guardian Vetting Consent Form (NVB 3) – required for applicants under 18 years of age where vetting is applicable (see Appendix A).
- Proof of Identity Check-List (see Appendix A).

### **How it works**

- A copy of the E-Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1) and guidelines for completion should be given to the applicant and he/she should be asked to complete sections 1 and 2. Please ensure that the form is completed fully and clearly.
- Section 3 is to be completed by the organisation's contact person for the applicant, i.e. bishop/priest/chairperson of board of management/agency manager on behalf of the diocese/parish/school/diocesan agency.
- At this point the applicant's identity must be validated as per guidelines (see Proof of Identity Check-List).

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- The completed E-Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1) should then be posted to the Western Province Vetting Office as per address on top of the form.
- The applicant will then receive an email directly from the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) which will give him/her access to their on-line Vetting Application Form (NVB 2).
- If they do not complete this form within 30 days the form will become inactive and they will have to reapply.
- Once the Vetting Application is processed by the NVB the contact person named on the E-Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1) will receive a hard copy of the Vetting Disclosure along with a cover letter from the Western Province Vetting Service. The applicant is entitled to a copy of this if they request it.

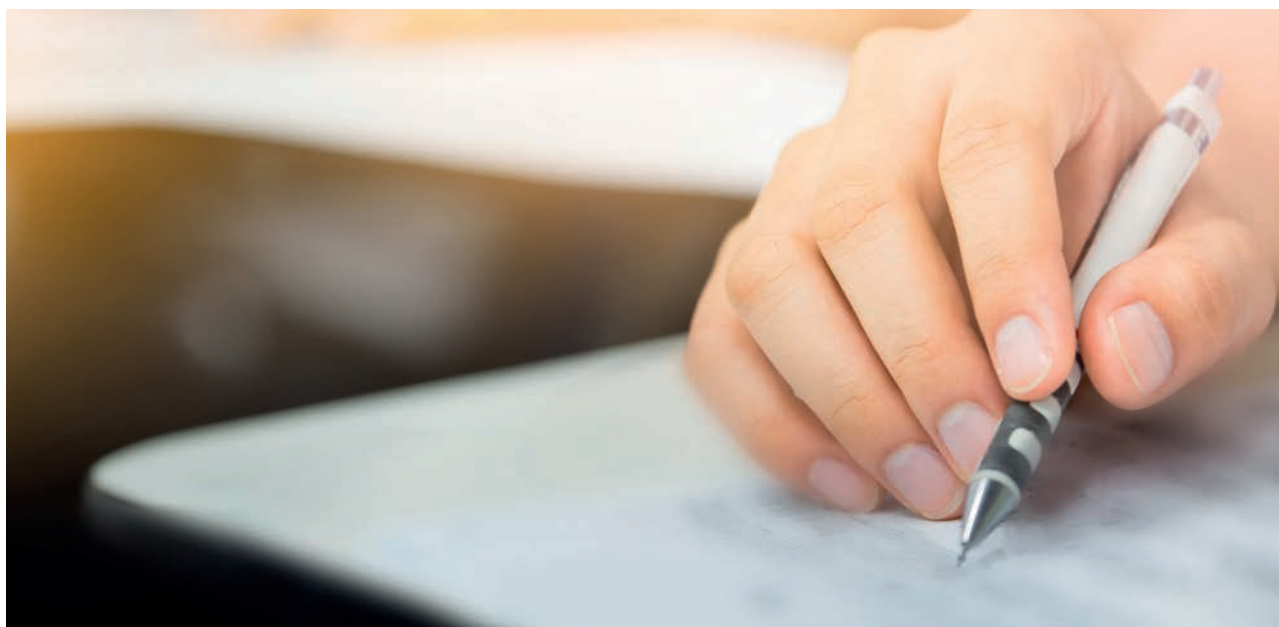
**Please note the on-line Vetting Application Form (NVB 2) is only issued to the applicant. The organisation (diocese/parish/school/diocesan agency) does not have access to this form.**

### ***Email***

The applicant must provide a valid email address. If the applicant does not have their own email address they can provide any email that they are happy for their form to be sent to. This can be the email of a friend or family member or one can be provided for them by the organisation requesting the vetting. If the applicant does not have access to an electronic device one should be provided for them for the purpose of completing their application.

**Staff in citizen information centres and public libraries have also been briefed on the e-vetting process and can provide assistance and access to computers for applicants.**

### ***Proof of Identity***



At least two forms of identification must be produced to validate the identity of the applicant when completing the E-Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1). One of these should be photographic. There is a points system for the verification of identity where 100 points must be reached. Different forms of identification are weighted with a sliding scale of points, please see Proof of Identity Check List in Appendix A for more details. Where an individual cannot reach 100 points an affidavit witnessed by a Commissioner for Oaths will suffice. The identity is verified locally (that is, by the diocese, parish, school or diocesan agency).

Following the conclusion of the vetting process, there is no requirement to retain a copy of the identity check, other than to confirm that one was carried out and to state the source of the identity check, e.g. passport or driving licence.

### **Relevant Work**

It is now against the law to commence 'relevant work', that is, work that involves necessary and regular contact with children/young people or vulnerable persons without first being vetted. Please provide a full description of the role being applied for on the E-Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1). It is not sufficient to state 'volunteer'. The role must be specified, such as 'Eucharistic Minister' or 'Leader of Children's Choir'. If the applicant carries out multiple roles he/she should state the one that involves most contact with children/young people or vulnerable adults.

### **Minors**

The legislation is directed at applicants aged 18 years or over at date of signing the form. Applications can be made for those aged 16 and 17 years of age. The decision to vet 16 and 17 year olds is a policy decision for the organisation in question and this is not a legal requirement.

Where an application is being made for a 16/17 year old the consent of the parent/guardian must also be obtained. This is done by asking them to fill out the form Parent/Guardian Consent Form (NVB 3). In addition the email address and telephone number provided on the e-vetting invitation form is the email address and telephone number of the parent/guardian (not the young person). Proof of identity must also be obtained for the parent/guardian and the young person.

### **Re-Vetting**

It is recommended that applicants be re-vetted at least every three years.