

# **The Legion of Mary**

## **Child Safeguarding Policy**

The Legion of Mary Child Safeguarding Policy aims to do everything possible to provide a safe environment for children and young people where they are cherished and encouraged to become involved in the life of our Church.

**November 2008**

# 1.

## **The Legion of Mary Child Safeguarding Statement**

The Legion of Mary values the participation of young people in the activities of the Legion and is committed to upholding good practice in the Church's ministry with children and young people. We believe this will enhance their spiritual, physical and emotional growth and wellbeing. We commit ourselves to doing everything in our power to create a safe and welcoming environment for the young. We wish to promote and uphold at all times the dignity and rights of all children and young people committed to our pastoral care.

## 2.

### Procedures

#### **The Legion of Mary undertakes to have the following in place:**

- Junior member application form, including signed parental consent and contact information for parents and guardians.
- Appropriate supervision ratios of adults to young people while maintaining the practice of ensuring that no young person is left alone with an adult.
- A code of conduct for all adult leaders and young people.
- Adequate record keeping processes including:
  - Participant forms.
  - Incident/Accident Report forms.
  - Programme /attendance records.
- Recruitment and selection procedures for workers and volunteers, including:
  - Application form.
  - Declaration form.
  - Garda Vetting (Republic of Ireland).
  - Access NI (Northern Ireland) In Northern Ireland personnel who have substantial access to children, regardless of whether they are paid or not, must be checked by Access NI prior to taking up work with children or young people.
  - References.
  - Training and supervision.
- A clearly communicated Accident/Emergency plan.
- For away trips see guidelines from *Our Children Our Church* (3.2.9).

## 3.

### Code of Practice Safeguarding Children – Our Guidelines

#### 3.1 Good Practice with Junior Members

- All new members must have signed parental consent to become a member before their names may be placed on the *Praesidium Roll*.
- A roll call will be taken at every meeting of juniors and signed and dated by the praesidium President.
- The junior members will be regularly reminded that no member has permission to leave the room after the meeting until all are ready to **depart together**. This will help to ensure that a single child and adult are not alone in the meeting room at any given time.
- At least one other senior member will be present at the meeting and gender appropriate balance will be adhered to.
- If the members need to be encouraged in any way, there should be another adult present.

“...it should be regarded as a necessary part of the system of each senior praesidium to conduct a junior praesidium: Two of the senior legionaries should be assigned to the junior praesidium as officers. As the training of juniors requires special qualities, not every senior legionary is fitted for the office. Therefore they should be carefully selected.” (Legion Handbook: Chapter 14, no. 22.)

### **“3.2.3 Parental consent**

- Church organisations should ensure that signed consent from parents or guardians is obtained prior to the participation of children and young people in events, activities and groups.
- Parents or guardians should be asked to indicate if their children have any specific dietary requirements, medical needs or special needs.

### **3.2.4 Record keeping**

- An accurate record should be kept for each child and young person participating in activities, including, but not limited to, attendance, programme details and medical information. This record should include a copy of the consent form or letter signed by the parent or guardian. It should also contain details of emergency contact numbers.
- A written record of organisers, supervisors, employees and volunteers in attendance at events, such as meetings, choir rehearsals and sports activities, should be kept.
- An Incident Report Form should be completed in the event of an accident or incident relating to a child.”

(Taken from *Our Children Our Church*, Chapter 3.2.3. and 3.2.4.)

## **3.2 Good Practice for the Officers of Junior Praesidia**

- All senior officers of junior Praesidia are to be given a copy of this policy and be made aware of their responsibilities.
- There should be at least two senior members present 10-15 minutes in advance of each meeting to make sure the children are safe in the meeting room and at least two senior members should remain behind with the children in the Meeting Room until they have been collected by their parents/guardians afterwards. The person who opens the meeting room should not allow any child in until at least a second adult/child has arrived.
- Assisting adults are expected to be extra vigilant regarding safety where young children are waiting to be collected by parents.
- They should try to ensure that they do not find themselves alone in a room with a child.
- Children are not to be left alone at any activity; there must be at least two adults in the room with the children at all times.
- At all times Children should be properly supervised.
- In the case of any accident or injury an incident report will be completed recording all relevant details.

### 3.3 Transporting Young People to and from Legion Meetings and Legion Activities

- When transporting a child there should, if possible, be two adults in the car. In the event of an emergency the parent/guardian of the child in question should be contacted.
- Safety regulations should be adhered to (e.g. speed limits, roadworthiness of vehicles, safety belts, no overcrowding).
- **The senior officers should ensure that they have contact numbers for all parents/guardians of children in their care.**
- Young people/minors should all be returned to a single safe collection point agreed by prior arrangement with parents/guardians. To drop children off one by one is not good practice.
- The child's home should only be visited when there are parents/guardians at home. In such instances professional and pastoral boundaries should be observed.

## 4.

### Junior Praesidium Policy

**Each junior praesidium shall have clear and unambiguous policies on the following:**

- General discipline and good order.
- Bullying.
- Child safeguarding.
- Transporting children to Legion activities (this should include guidelines on adult-junior ratios particularly in vehicles).
- **Mobile phones** (with particular reference to text bullying and inappropriate use of camera phones; with clear guidelines on: inappropriate contact with junior members via text messages or text pictures).
- **Cameras** (Senior members should be clear on Legion policy with regard to taking photographs/video recording of junior members during Legion activities. Parental permission should be sought before displaying or publishing any photographs).



## 5.

### Use of Computers

“Every Church organisation should have a clear policy in place regarding the use of email and the internet:

- Where a computer is used by more than one person, each person should be obliged to have a unique username and password, or where this is not possible, to maintain a signed record of the date, time and duration of their use of the computer.
- Where a computer in a Church organisation or institution can be accessed by children or young people, it should be accessible only through the use of a username and password unique to each child.
- Where this is not possible, the children or young people should be obliged to provide a signed record of the date, time and duration of their use of the computer.
- Computers which can be accessed by children or young people should always have appropriate filtering software.
- All computers in Church organisations and institutions should be monitored regularly to ensure that they are being used in accordance with the stated policy. Where there is any suspicion or doubt, a person with specialist knowledge of computer hardware and software should be asked to assess the purposes for which the computer has been used.”

(Taken from *Our Children our Church* 3.2.8)

## 6.

### **Trips Away from Home**

- All trips, including day trips, overnight stays and holidays, need careful advance planning, including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place.
- Written consent by a parent or guardian specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance.
- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents and guardians.
- There must be adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls.
- Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of trips away.
- Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.
- The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements should be ensured in advance of the trip.
- Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same sex as the group being supervised.
- At least two adults should be supervising in dormitories in which children or young people are sleeping.
- Under no circumstances should an adult share a bedroom with a young person.
- If, in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be in a children's dormitory or bedroom without another adult being present they should:
  - (a) Immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility and
  - (b) Make a diary note of the circumstances.

## **7.**

### **Pilgrimages and Retreats**

Pilgrimages and retreats are an important part of the Church's pastoral and spiritual engagement with children and young people. Those involved in the planning and delivery of pilgrimages and retreats should adhere to the same guidance as outlined for other activities with children and young people within the Church.

*(Taken from our Children, Our Church 3.2.10)*

## 8.

# Home Visitation and Works of Senior Legionaries

## Visitation in pairs a safeguard of legionary discipline

“Visitation should be carried out in pairs. In prescribing thus, the Legion has in view the following purposes: - First, the safeguarding of the legionaries. Ordinarily, it will be less the streets than the actual homes being visited, which will call for this precaution. Second, the visitation in pairs is a source of mutual encouragement. It is a help against the movements of human respect or common timidity when visiting difficult places or homes where one is exposed to a cold reception. Third, it puts the seal of discipline on the work. It secures punctuality and fidelity in the carrying out of the appointed visitation.” (Legion Handbook Chapter 39 No 7)

- An accurate record of all visitation should form part of the minutes of every praesidium meeting. Brief details re homes visited, people met, date of visitation and names of legionaries on the visitation must be recorded.
- Senior legionaries should not engage in conversation with children (unaccompanied by parent/guardian) met with on home visitation or in the course of other legionary work.
- Each praesidium should have at least one copy of *Our Children Our Church*, which should be studied by the members and be available for reference as required.

**“Harmony the expression of unity.** Harmony, being the outward manifestation of the spirit of love in the meeting, must reign supreme; and efficiency, in the Legion sense of the word, never excludes the idea of harmony. Good accomplished at the expense of harmony is a doubtful gain; while those failings which are in their essence opposed to it must be shunned in the Legion like a veritable plague. This refers to things like self-assertiveness, fault-finding, ill-temper, cynicism, and airs of superiority, at whose entry to the meeting harmony forthwith departs.”  
(Legion Handbook Chapter 19 No 18)

## 9.

### **Code of Behaviour for Senior Members of the Legion of Mary**

- You should never find yourself alone with a minor during any Legion activity. Should this inadvertently or unavoidably happen, bring the young person to a public/well-populated place where you are visible. Inform another adult by phone if necessary. Make a written record in your diary of this happening and the details of the place and reasons for it.
- Do not undertake any car/minibus journey alone with a child/minor. If only one adult is available, it is advisable that a minimum of two young people be in the vehicle for the entire journey. If this is not possible, parent/guardian should be contacted and a record kept.
- Children should not be permitted to enter or remain in meeting rooms etc. unless there are at least two adults present.
- Favouritism is unacceptable; do not show signs of favouritism. Do not spend a disproportionate amount of time with any particular child or group of children.
- Always be aware of the imbalance of power in an adult/child relationship. Do not engage in or tolerate any kind of behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, which could be construed as bullying.
- Under no circumstances should you use, provide or permit the use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs when supervising or working with young people. Nor should you be under the influence of same in the company of young people.
- Only use age appropriate language, media products, and activities. Where physical games/sports are concerned, be particularly conscious of age and safety. Sexually explicit/pornographic materials are never appropriate.
- Respect the physical integrity of a child; do not engage in inappropriate contact such as horseplay, tickling, wrestling, etc. Never use any kind of physical reprimand. This should not preclude appropriate contact to comfort a distressed child.

- Respect children's privacy; especially in swimming pools, changing areas, showers and toilets. Do not use or allow the children to use cameras/camera phones in such areas.
- Never do things of a personal nature such as toileting, washing, changing children who are capable of doing so unaided.
- Never encourage young people to visit your private home. Should you visit the home of a child while on a parish visit, do not enter if there are no adults home and observe professional boundaries at all times. (Working Group of the Committee on Child Protection of the Irish Bishops' Conference, *Working with Children and Young People in the Catholic Church Community in Ireland: Good Practice Guidelines*, (July 2003). The above guidelines are exclusively based on Part 2: "Suggested Code of Behaviour for Workers and Volunteers".)

## 10.

### Code of Behaviour for Junior Members of the Legion of Mary

#### All junior members of the Legion of Mary should:

- Listen to and respect each other.
- Respect the opinion of the other members.
- Be tolerant, understanding and fair to all the members.
- Ensure that their actions do not put the safety or well-being of any member at risk.
- Be aware that:
  - The use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco is not permitted during Legion activities,
  - Bullying of any kind is never permitted.
- Be mindful of Christ's words :  
*"Now I give you a new Commandment: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35)

"Within its own ranks there should be an unaffected simplicity and sincere mutual charity among the members, all distinctions being non-existent. If love is due to those whom the legionary serves, it is no less due to one's fellow-members. The spirit of distinction is evidence of the absence of the first qualification for membership, which is the spirit of love. The whole idea and spirit of the Legion is one of intense charity and sympathy, which before radiating its warmth outside must first of all burn brightly and strongly on the domestic hearth of the Legion itself. "By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn 13:35) Charity practised in its ranks will soon be practised at large. Divisions removed by membership are on the way to being removed from people outside."

(Legion Handbook Chapter 41 No 2)

# 11.

## Definition of Abuse

The following extract is taken from chapter 7 of *Our Children Our Church* to assist Legionaries to understand more fully why we need to safeguard our children and how best to do so. Please note that numbers and references quoted in the remainder of this chapter are those from *Our Children Our Church* .

### **"7.1 Introduction**

In considering child protection issues, it is necessary to understand the nature of child abuse, its different forms, how to recognise it and what steps to take when it is encountered. The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the definitions of child abuse outlined in the civil guidelines so as to enable Church personnel to be alert to the indicators of possible abuse.

### **7.2 What is Child Abuse?**

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child or young person abuses that power and causes harm to that child or young person. The common denominator of all child abuse is that it makes children and young people feel diminished or threatened, and that it causes them harm. All forms of child abuse constitute a betrayal of trust and an abuse of power by an adult over a child or young person.

Child abuse is generally categorised into four broad groups: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. Consistent with civil guidelines in both jurisdictions, all forms of child abuse are covered in this document.

Each form of child abuse must be treated seriously; there can be no suggestion that some forms are of less significance than others. Accounts from survivors and child care experts have pointed to the devastating and long-lasting effects that any form of child abuse can have on children and young people and how these effects can continue long into adulthood.



It is accepted, however, that there is a distinction between sexual abuse and other ways in which children can be harmed in that the motivation and circumstances for the sexual abuse of children can be very different from those which are involved when people physically or emotionally abuse children, or cause them to be neglected.

### **7.3 Forms of Child Abuse**

Children may be abused in a range of settings, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.<sup>29</sup> As already noted, there are four principal categories of child abuse – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse – and a child may be subject to more than one form at any time during his or her childhood. (See list of indicators of the various forms of child abuse, Appendix Eleven.)

#### **7.3.1 Neglect**

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and medical care.<sup>30</sup> Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point.<sup>31</sup> It is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs that is likely to result in significant harm.<sup>32</sup>

Examples of neglect include:

- Where a child suffers a series of minor injuries as a result of not being properly supervised or protected.
- The consistent failure of a child to gain weight or height may indicate that they are being deprived of adequate nutrition.
- Where a child consistently misses school, this may be due to bullying or deprivation of intellectual stimulation and support.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Co-operating to Safeguard Children*, p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> *Children First*, p. 31, ss 3.2.1.

<sup>31</sup> *Children First*, p. 31, ss 3.2.3.

<sup>32</sup> *Co-operating to Safeguard Children*, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> *Children First*, p. 31, ss 3.2.3.

### **7.3.2 Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.<sup>34</sup> Emotional abuse is normally found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security is not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in physical signs or symptoms.<sup>35</sup>

### **7.3.3 Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury, or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical injury include the following:

- shaking a child;
- using excessive force in handling;
- deliberate poisoning;
- suffocation;
- allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.<sup>36</sup>

### **7.3.4 Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.<sup>37</sup> Any form of sexual behaviour engaged in by an adult with a child or young person is sexual abuse, and is both immoral and criminal.<sup>38</sup>

There may also be 'indirect abuse' of children, for instance, where children have been photographed, videotaped or filmed for pornographic purposes.<sup>39</sup> Indirect abuse also includes the subjecting of children to gross and obscene language or indecent images.

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<sup>34</sup> *Co-operating to Safeguard Children*, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> *Children First*, p. 31, ss 3.3.1.

<sup>36</sup> *Children First*, p. 32, s 3.4.

<sup>37</sup> *Children First*, p. 33, ss 3.5.1. See also Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 2000, s. 3, [hms0.gov.uk/acts/acts2000](http://hms0.gov.uk/acts/acts2000)

<sup>38</sup> See *Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse against Personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia*, December 2000.

The use or possession of child pornography in any form is illegal and there is an obligation to report information concerning anyone possessing such material to the police authorities.

#### **7.4 Children with Special Vulnerabilities**

The civil guidelines pay particular attention to children with special vulnerabilities. These are children who, for one reason or another, may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. They could include children with disabilities; children who are separated from their parents or other family members and are reliant on others for their care and protection, either in foster care or residential settings; and homeless children. The same categories of abuse as described above are applicable but may take a slightly different form. For example, abuse may take the form of deprivation of basic rights, harsh disciplinary regimes or the inappropriate use of medications or physical restraints.<sup>40</sup>

#### **7.5 Peer Abuse**

In some instances of child abuse, the alleged abuser may be another child or young person. In such situations, there are important child protection issues in relation to both children and the needs of each should be considered separately.<sup>41</sup> The civil authorities should be notified of such cases.”

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<sup>39</sup> *Children First*, p.86, ss 9.4.4.

<sup>40</sup> *Children First*, p. 33, ss 3.6.1.

<sup>41</sup> For more detailed information on peer sexual abuse, see *Co-operating to Safeguard Children*, pp. 68-72.

## 12.

### Complaints and Safety Concerns

Any concerns about child safety, supervision and protection will be taken very seriously by the Legion and dealt with immediately.

**If you have any Concerns regarding a Child, it is your duty to contact:**

- The Local Garda Síochána,
- The Local Duty Officer of the HSE.

Or

In Northern Ireland

- The Local PSNI,
- The Local Health Service.

Or

- In the case of the Dublin Diocese advice may be sought from the Diocesan designated person:

**Mr. Philip Garland,**

Telephone: (01) 884 2590

# **Appendix 1.**

## **Forms of the Legion of Mary**



# Legion of Mary Junior Membership Application Form

Praesidium: .....

Name and Address of applicant .....

I wish to apply for membership of ..... Praesidium

Telephone Contact number/s: .....

Date of Birth: .....

*I understand that becoming a member of the ..... Praesidium is very important and I accept that I must follow the rules as have been explained to me.*

Signed: ..... Date: .....

## **General Membership - Parental Consent \***

Name: .....

Address: .....

The parent / guardian of: .....

*I understand that the granting of membership is on condition that all the requirements of participating in the ..... Praesidium have been outlined to me and will be adhered to by her/him.*

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Medical note: If the young person in your care requires medical care, suffers specific allergies or requires certain dietary requirements please state so here:

Activities conducted outside of normal Praesidium will require separate consent forms.







# Legion of Mary Application Form for Workers/Volunteers\*

Surname: .....

Forename: .....

Address: .....

.....

Date of Birth:..... Tel: .....

Are you *(Please tick)*

Employed ..... Unemployed..... Student.....

Homemaker ..... Retired ..... Other .....

## Previous work experience:

.....

.....

.....

Have you previously been involved in voluntary work? Yes ..... No .....

If yes, give details:

.....

.....

.....

How much time can you commit to voluntary work?

.....

.....

.....

Do you have any spare time hobbies, interests or activities?

.....

.....

.....

*Continued overleaf:*



Any other relevant information?

.....  
.....  
.....

Please provide the names and addresses of two people whom we could contact for a reference (not relatives)

Name .....	Name .....
Address .....	Address .....
.....	.....
.....	.....
Tel. ....	Tel. ....
Signed: .....	Date: .....

\*From: Department of Health and Children, *Our Duty to Care: the Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People*, Dublin: Stationery Office, 2001, pp 41–2.

# Confidential Declaration Form

## Declaration from all staff and volunteers working with children and young people

Surname: .....

Forename: .....

Address: .....

.....

Tel: .....

Date of Birth: ..... Tel: .....

Any other name previously known as .....

Do you have any prosecutions pending or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution or of a bind over order?

Yes ..... No .....

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s), the court responsible for dealing with the matter, the approximate date of the court hearing.

Nature of offence ..... Date of offence .....

.....

.....

.....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

\* Adapted from: *Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People*, Information Pack, Belfast: Volunteer Development Agency, 2000.





# Legion of Mary

## Parental/Guardian Consent – Special Activity\*

Activity: .....

Praesidium: .....

Council: .....

Coordinators: .....

Name of Junior Member: .....

Age: .....

Name of Parent/Guardian: .....

Address: .....

.....

Daytime phone no: ..... Home phone no. ....

Mobile phone no: ..... Email. ....

*Other relevant information (e.g. medical conditions, special needs, dietary requirements).*

*I have read and I understand, the activity outline accompanying this parental permission slip.*

*I am satisfied that I have been sufficiently informed of the activity and I agree to allow the young person named above to take part in the outlined activity.*

Signature of Parent/Guardian: .....

Date: .....

Relationship to young person: .....

- This form is to be used for activities outside the routine meetings/gatherings of members. Parent or guardian must complete this form in order for their child to participate in the specified activity.



# Legion of Mary Accident/Incident Report Form

Date of accident/incident: [please circle] .....

Reported by: .....

Title: .....

Names of parties involved: .....

Location of activity: .....

Type of activity: .....

(I.e. meeting, legion work, outdoor activity, trip away, retreats...)

Time: .....

Details of incident: .....

.....

.....

.....

Parents/Guardians informed: Yes/No [please circle].

Form completed and signed by: .....

## FOR OFFICE USE ONLY REPONSE

Date: .....

Action taken: .....

.....

.....

Signed: .....

Comments: .....

.....

.....







# Appendix 2.

## Access Northern Ireland

Access NI was established by a joint programme between the Northern Ireland Office, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Department of Education and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Access NI enables organisations in Northern Ireland to make more informed recruitment decisions by providing criminal history information about anyone seeking paid or unpaid work in certain defined areas, such as working with children or vulnerable adults.

Access NI is part of central government and operates under the provisions of Part V of the Police Act 1997.

Further information about the service is contained in the website [www.accessni.gov.uk](http://www.accessni.gov.uk)

Website: [www.legion-of-mary.ie](http://www.legion-of-mary.ie)  
email address: [concilium@legion-of-mary.ie](mailto:concilium@legion-of-mary.ie)

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