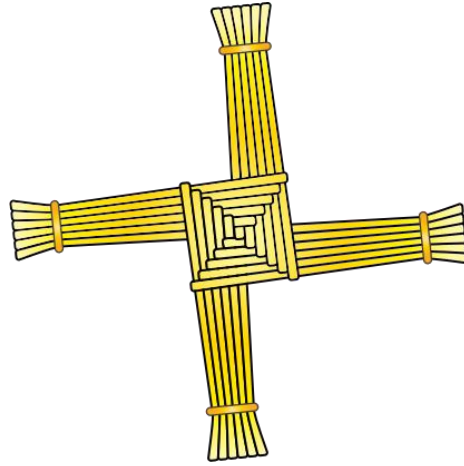


St Brigid's Parish



Safeguarding Committee

Reviewed November 2019



Progressing Best Practice in Protecting our Children, Young People, Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection

Children / Young People refer to anyone under the age of 18, as defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995.

An **'Adult at Risk of Harm'** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal characteristics and/or life circumstances (e.g. age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions).

An **'Adult in Need of Protection'** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their: (A) personal characteristics and/or (B) life circumstances AND (C) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; AND (D) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed. In order to meet the definition of an 'Adult in Need of Protection' either (A) or (B) must be present, in addition to both elements (C) and (D).

We all very much appreciate the work of those who play an active role in St Brigid's Parish in serving our children, young people, Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection, by volunteering for roles and giving of their free time, experience and expertise. When doing so, they will be engaged in 'Regulated Activity'.¹

Diocesan **Policies and Procedures, Codes of Conduct and Training** reflect the statutory Safeguarding requirements to enable them to fulfil their duties. These can be viewed on <http://www.downandconnor.org/safeguarding/documents/policies/>

The Parish Safeguarding Committee works to ensure that the statutory and Diocesan Safeguarding requirements are met.

Parish Groups

The relevant St Brigid's Parish groups are:

Children's Liturgy; G.I.F.T.; the Sacramental Preparation (Ashleigh) Group; the Altar Servers; the Youth Faith Group; Youth Alpha, and Ministers of Holy Communion for the Sick and Housebound.

The Committee has **direct responsibility** in relation to Parish Groups. It:-

- Receives **application** forms from the volunteers;
- Takes up **references**;
- Facilitates statutory '**vetting**' of volunteers through AccessNI;
- Issues (on behalf of the Parish Priest) '**Appointment Letters**'
- Receives volunteers' '**Agreement Forms**';
- Directs volunteers to the Diocesan and Parish Safeguarding **policies, codes and procedures**;
- Facilitates Diocesan Safeguarding **Training** of volunteers
- Keeps data-protected **records** of all Parish volunteers.

¹ *Regulated Activity involves regular, direct, unsupervised contact with children, Adults at Risk of Harm or Adults in Need of Protection. For full definitions, in relation to children and adults respectively, see: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/regulated-activity-children.pdf> <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/regulated-activity-adults.pdf>*

Independent External Catholic Church Groups

In St Brigid's these groups are: SPRED and St Vincent de Paul.

Through an Annual Audit, the committee requires:

- A list of the leaders and all staff/volunteers;
- A statement that all staff/volunteers have been appointed through safe 'recruitment' procedures;
- A statement that all staff/volunteers have been vetted and trained by the umbrella organisation;
- A statement that the groups have their own Safeguarding Policies and Codes of Conduct.

External Independent and/or Commercial Groups who use Parish Facilities

Examples of such groups are: sports coaching; Irish dancing; academic tuition; music/drama/art classes; play groups etc.

The Committee checks in the Safeguarding section of the Diocesan Licence Form², that the these groups

- Have listed the details of the leader(s);
- State that all staff/volunteers have been appointed through 'safe recruitment procedures';
- State that all staff/volunteers have been vetted and trained;
- State that the group has Safeguarding Policies and Codes of Conduct.

THE BIG DIFFERENCE IS THAT the Committee has direct evidence of Safeguarding compliance only in Parish Groups. We cannot ask for any evidence from the independent, external or commercial groups, other than statements of compliance with safe recruiting, vetting and training under their own Safeguarding policies.

However we urge you, as parents/guardians/carers of those who use the groups to, where appropriate, ask for evidence of safe recruitment, vetting and training under proper Safeguarding policies.

Members of St Brigid's Parish Safeguarding Committee

Father Eddie O'Donnell
Pauline Forker (Secretary)
Áine McKeating
Geraldine O'Hare

Sheila McGivern (Chair)
J P Irvine
Mary Murphy

The Committee members responsibility is to ensure best practice in Safeguarding in Saint Brigid's Parish. They do not conduct any investigations.

If you have any Questions in Regard to Safeguarding, you can contact any member of the Parish Safeguarding Committee through the **Parish Office: Tel. 02890 665409** (9am to 1pm). The **Parish Code of Conduct** can be viewed on <http://stbrigidsparishbelfast.org/parish-info/safeguarding>

Safeguarding is EVERYONE'S business.

If you have any Concerns, Suspicions or Knowledge of abuse, you should **REPORT** them to:

Organisation	Telephone	Ask for
Social Services	028 9050 7000 Out of hours: 028 9504 9999	The Duty Social Worker
The PSNI	101 Emergency: 999	The Public Protection Unit
The Diocesan Safeguarding Office	Office hours only 028 9049 2798 07534 992 124 028 9049 2783	A Diocesan Liaison Person

St Brigid's Office, 40 Derryvolgie Avenue, Belfast BT9 6FP Tel: 028 9066 5409
E-mail: stbrigidsparishoffice@gmail.com **Website:** www.stbrigidsparishbelfast.org

² The Diocesan Licence Form: this form must be completed by any 'External Independent and/or Commercial Groups' applying to use Parish facilities.