



## Message from Mgr. Kevin Gillespie Diocesan Administrator



The Diocese of Raphoe, in common with the whole Church in Ireland, continues to be committed to creating an environment in which our families, their children and young people can have confidence in taking part in our activities. Our parishes and related activities should be places where everyone, young and old, can grow in faith within the Community of Faith, namely the Church in all its local expressions.

In my current role, I find myself more grateful than ever to all who are involved in these efforts. Since the last Newsletter issued, we have had to reflect over the outcome of the scoping inquiry into abuse at boarding schools run by religious orders. It made for difficult reading and prompted many to share their experiences in public. It is another chapter that makes us confront the negative aspects of endeavours that were founded for the good. While times and culture has changed greatly for the better in these areas, still many of our people carry wounds and traumas. With God's help, everything that leads to speaking the truth will lead also to healing, challenging as it is for victims and for all who must respond to the issues raised.

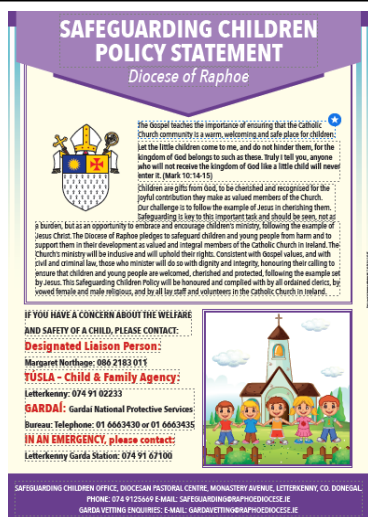
I welcome anyone who has been affected by abuse to come forward to meet with me or our Designated Liaison Person, Margaret Northage, mobile: 086 2183011. Alternatively, you can go directly to the Gardaí or Tusla.

**Garda National Protective Services Bureau** – 01 6663430/6663435, E-mail: gnpsb\_scmu@garda.ie  
**Tusla** (Child & Family Agency) – 074 91 02233.



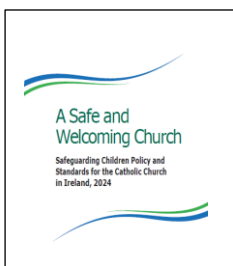
**Towards Healing** offer free counselling and other support services, appropriate to your needs, in a timely manner which are safe, respectful, and of the highest quality. The service is extended to family members impacted by clerical abuse.

**Freephone:** 1800 303416 **Email:** [info@towardshealing.ie](mailto:info@towardshealing.ie)



New A3 Policy Posters are available for collection from: Bishop's House or Diocesan Pastoral Centre and can be downloaded in various languages from the diocesan website: [www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding-children/](http://www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding-children/).

## NEW POLICY & PROCEDURES – A Safe and Welcoming Church



Over the past 12 months the National Board for Safeguarding has been reviewing the Policy and Standards of 2016. This extensive process involved listening and consultation across all Dioceses and Religious Orders. The revised policy, launched in June 2024 is entitled: 'A Safe and Welcoming Church – Child Safeguarding Policy and Standards for the catholic Church in Ireland 2024' and can be accessed on the Diocesan website – [www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding](http://www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding)  
All the core elements of the previous policy are captured under 3 revised Standards:

1. Leadership, Governance and Accountability
2. Nurturing a Culture of Safeguarding
3. Responding Pastorally and Reporting according to Civil and Canon Law.

**Child Safeguarding Statement CSS (Children First 2015) is available at:**  
[www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding-children/forms-policies](http://www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding-children/forms-policies)

A Child Safeguarding Statement must include the service details, principles to safeguard children, risk assessment, safeguarding procedures, implementation details and relevant person contact details. In line with the above changes to our Policy & Procedures, the CSS has been updated and validated by Tusla's Compliance Unit.

## Changes to our Safeguarding Committee



**Barry Ramsay** former Principal Social Worker has been a Safeguarding Trainer & Committee Member since 2013 and has probably visited every Parish in the Diocese, more than once! Barry has now chosen to retire, and we send with him our sincere thanks for the dedicated service he offered and every good wish for his future exploits.

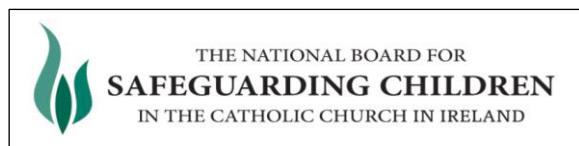
Earlier this year, we also said farewell to **Fr. Gerard Cunningham**, PP, Glenties who served on our Committee since 2012 and stepped down due to parish commitments. Fr. Gerard's insights at parish level made a valuable contribution to Safeguarding. The Committee have recently welcomed **Fr. Ciaran Harkin, PP**, Irish Martyrs on board and look forward to working with him in the future.



The death occurred recently of **John Kennedy**, Coolcholly, Ballyshannon. John along with Sr. Mary O'Donovan were pioneers of Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Raphoe. John's many years as a member of an Garda Síochána enriched his role as a Safeguarding Trainer along with his sense of humour. Our sincere condolences to Peggy and the Kennedy family. May John rest in peace.

## Parish Self-Audit Reminders

Thank you to all those parishes who have already returned their audits. If you have not already returned the parish audit, please do so as soon as possible. It is important to ensure accountability of safeguarding at parish level.



**Aidan Gordon**, the former Director of Safeguarding for the Archdiocese of Armagh, has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church. **Dr. Niall Moore** has taken up a new position with the Church of Ireland and has been succeeded as Director of Training and Support by **Ms. Lyn McDermott**. We wish them both well in their new roles and look forward to working with them both in the future.



## Sharing of Designated Liaison Persons

The Dioceses of Derry and Raphoe have agreed to support each other by appointing Margaret Northage as Deputy Liaison Officer for Derry and Marie Gormley as Deputy for Raphoe.



**Safeguarding Training** is available to any parish, group or community who require updating or have recently engaged in youth ministry, altar servers, children's liturgy or choir.

Tel: 074 91 25669 E-mail: [safeguarding@raphoediocese.ie](mailto:safeguarding@raphoediocese.ie)



**REVISED GARDA VETTING FORMS** are available at:

[www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding-children/forms-policies](http://www.raphoediocese.ie/safeguarding-children/forms-policies)

The newly established Compliance Unit within the National Vetting Bureau requires all items of ID to be validated by a nominated person within the school or parish. Please ensure all sections of the application form are fully completed to avoid delays in processing your application. The turnaround time for a vetting application is 10 working days.