

## **Designated Liaison Person for Safeguarding (DLP)** **(Republic of Ireland)**

### **Purpose of the Role**

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is responsible for receiving, recording, and acting on child safeguarding concerns within the church, in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

The DLP ensures that concerns are managed promptly, appropriately, and in line with statutory and church safeguarding procedures, and that reports are made to Tusla where required.

They play an important role in the congregation's safeguarding and leadership through promoting safe recruitment, training and in liaising with and reporting to the Kirk Session.

Act as a link with the PCI safeguarding team where this is necessary.

### **Key Responsibilities**

#### *1. Receiving Safeguarding Concerns*

- Act as the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns, disclosures, or allegations relating to children.
- Receive concerns from church members, volunteers, staff, or children themselves.
- Listen carefully, provide reassurance where appropriate, and take all concerns seriously.
- Avoid questioning beyond what is necessary to clarify basic information.

#### *2. Recording Safeguarding Information*

- Record safeguarding concerns promptly, accurately, and factually using the church's safeguarding recording procedures.
- Ensure records distinguish clearly between fact, opinion, and hearsay.
- Store all safeguarding records securely and confidentially, in line with data protection requirements.

#### *3. Assessment and Reporting*

- Consider concerns in line with the definitions of harm and reasonable grounds for concern as set out in the Children First Act 2015.
- Determine whether a concern meets the threshold for reporting to Tusla.

- Make mandated or non-mandated reports to Tusla without delay, where required.
- Where unsure, seek advice from Tusla without disclosing identifying information.
- Inform the church leadership in line with internal safeguarding procedures, while maintaining confidentiality.

#### *4. Role of Mandated Persons and relevant person*

- Where the DLP is also a Mandated Person, ensure that mandated reports are made in accordance with statutory obligations.
- Where a Mandated Person raises a concern, support them in fulfilling their legal reporting responsibilities.
- Link in with the relevant person in the development of the Child Safeguarding Statement and risk assessment.

#### *5. Liaison and Communication*

- Act as the liaison between the Church and Tusla regarding safeguarding matters.
- Cooperate fully with Tusla and An Garda Síochána where appropriate.
- Ensure that safeguarding concerns are not handled internally in a way that delays or obstructs statutory reporting.

#### *6. Advice and Support*

- Provide advice to church leaders, volunteers, and staff on safeguarding procedures especially in relation to reporting and assurance to Kirk Session on safeguarding matters.
- Be part of the congregation's safeguarding team along with the Minister, Safeguarding Elder, Mandated Persons and other DLP's Promote safe practices and respond to safeguarding queries within the congregation.
- Take a lead in ensuring vetting and safeguarding training is up to date.
- Support those affected by safeguarding concerns, while maintaining professional boundaries.
- Seek advice from the PCI safeguarding team as necessary.

#### *7. Safeguarding Culture and Compliance*

- Promote a culture of vigilance and child-centred safeguarding within the church.
- Assist with the implementation and review of the church's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Support safeguarding risk assessments of church activities involving children.
- Take a lead in ensuring vetting requirements and safeguarding training is up to date.

## 8. Training and Knowledge

- Complete safeguarding training relevant to the DLP role and refresh this training as required.
- Maintain an up-to-date understanding of Children First guidance and relevant legislation.
- Keep informed of changes to statutory or church safeguarding requirements.

### **What the Designated Liaison Person Must NOT Do**

- Investigate safeguarding concerns.
- Promise confidentiality.
- Delay reporting concerns.
- Decide outcomes independently of statutory authorities.

### **Skills and Attributes**

- Integrity, discretion, and sound judgement.
- Ability to remain calm and objective in sensitive situations.
- Strong communication and record-keeping skills.
- Understanding of safeguarding thresholds and statutory duties.
- Willingness to follow policy and legal guidance strictly.

### **Accountability**

- Accountable to the Kirk session who is responsible for safeguarding governance.
- Works in cooperation with church leadership and statutory authorities.

### **Safeguarding Commitment**

The Designated Liaison Person must always act in the best interests of the child, ensuring that child safety and welfare are paramount in all safeguarding decisions.