

International Parish — Anglophone Community

Interim Safeguarding Guidelines

Who we are

We are the English-speaking Catholic parish in Luxembourg, originating in the Paroisse Européenne. We are based at St Alphonse in Luxembourg, and have our own full-time parish priest; as such, the parish priest is technically appointed by and under the authority of the archbishop; as a Redemptorist and member of the Redemptorist community, he is answerable to the Superior of the Community, and ultimately the Father Provincial of his own Province.

Juridically as a parish we are the responsibility of the archdiocese of Luxembourg; the church and premises where we meet for spiritual, administrative and social occasions are the property of, and under the authority of, the ASBL of St Alphonse, an essentially Redemptorist body.

The parish is made up of people from many different countries and cultures, mostly with the English language in common; there are significant numbers of people who are essentially non-English speaking who attend our Masses and other celebrations.

Our Safeguarding Commitment

As a parish we are committed to ensuring the safety of all our members when they are engaged in church-sponsored activities; particularly we seek to have procedures in place to safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults (here ‘vulnerable’ means ‘with special needs’ due to age, physical or mental condition, or some other socially excluding factor).

Steps towards a Safeguarding policy

Given the particular nature of our community, gathered from all parts of the Grand Duchy and beyond, it has not proved easy to define and implement the levels of safeguarding that are required by the Church in many countries (including Ireland, the UK and the US). However, we are committed to producing, publishing and implementing a full safeguarding policy for our parish. These guidelines are a first step towards that and represent the essential minimum which will be implemented as a matter of urgency. In the interests of effectiveness and transparency, this policy will be publicly advertised and available.

Who in our community can work with children and vulnerable adults?

By ‘work with’ we mean act in the name of the parish as catechist, supervisor of altar servers, be involved officially in social activities — in general, have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults in the name of the parish. Each person is required to have clearance by the archdiocese, school or other safeguarding aware body, stating that they have no criminal record regarding offences (violent, sexual or other) concerning children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Environment

Every effort will be made to ensure that the environment (building, facilities etc) will be suitable for hosting activities with those who may be vulnerable; parents and carers, however, are required to take responsibility for children when no other responsible adult has been officially delegated to do so (for example, after Mass in church, during coffee).

Parents/carers will have free access to rooms/areas where their children are being supervised by another adult: this includes the sacristy and sanctuary of the church. A register will be kept for all meetings noting which adults and children/young people are present, where, and at what time. A First Aid box is kept in the sacristy in a marked cupboard and is available to all who might need it.

Appropriate behaviour

Behaviour around children/young people/vulnerable adults will always be appropriate: non-violent, non-threatening, and non-physical. Any incidents of a disciplinary nature, or incidents which may possibly be construed as inappropriate must be reported immediately to parents and to Safeguarding Representative (see below). Children/Young people will always be supervised by more than one adult, for the safeguarding of all parties. In situations where this is not actually possible, for example when the priest is hearing the Confession of children/young adults, this will be either done semi-publicly (ie. in sightline of parents/other adults) or in close proximity to parents/other adults.

Safeguarding Representative

The Parish Council, in consultation with the Parish Priest, will appoint a Safeguarding Representative whose contact details will be published, and to whom all Safeguarding issues or questions should be addressed. Adults, children or young people with safeguarding concerns are, of course, free to contact the archdiocesan authorities or civil authorities as deemed appropriate. Incidents which are potentially illegal will be reported to the police as a matter of course. Suggestions for improving Safeguarding procedures and policy will always be welcome, and should be made in first instance to the Safeguarding Representative, or if this is not possible, to a member of the Parish Council.

Safeguarding policy will automatically feature on the agenda of each meeting of the Parish Council to ensure that it is up-to-date and responsive to any issues raised.

Both interim guidelines and official policy when adopted will be submitted to the archdiocesan authorities for approval.

Miscellaneous

Photographs of individual children or groups of children taken at parish events will only be published with parents' written consent, and without specific names of children.

Safeguarding Guidelines & policy will be supplied to all members of the parish included in a parish handbook, and published on the parish website.