

# *Child Protection Policy Statement*

## **Safeguarding Children – Policy Statement for Knockadoon Camp.**

The Friars of the Dominican Order in Ireland recognise and upholds the dignity and rights of all children and young people and is committed to their protection and support in a way that promotes their human dignity and integrity as children of God. The Order values and encourages the participation of children and young people in camp activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development.

In keeping with this we undertake to do all in our power to create a safe environment for children and young people so as to ensure their protection from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

The Friars of the Dominican Order in Ireland have committed themselves to putting procedures in place to ensure the welfare and protection of children and young people together with the welfare of those who work with them. We recognise that safeguarding children and the welfare of children is a skilled and delicate task, which requires knowledge, expertise and sensitivity. We are committed therefore to a coordinated and inter-agency approach to ensuring that the welfare of children and young people is paramount in all we do.

The following policy is the reviewed statement of Knockadoon Dominican Camp on safeguarding children and young people. This policy replaces and supersedes all and any policy issued by the Camp to date in relation to children and young people using Knockadoon Dominican Camp. This policy applies to all children and young people, and to the leaders and workers at the Camp, irrespective of which group or organisation uses the facilities of Knockadoon Camp.

Fr. Mauice Colgan OP

Camp Director

Dated May 2017

*We the trustees, management and staff of Knockadoon Dominican Camp are fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children and young people who come to this Camp on holiday or on courses. All staff and volunteers should, at all times show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of all children and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the morals and principles of the Christian way of life and the value expressed in the motto of the Dominican Order: Truth.*

These Policies and Procedures are drawn up in accordance with the Child Protection Act of 1991, the Department of Health and Children's Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children: 'Children First, and the Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland: 'Safeguarding Children'.

**NB:**For the purpose of this policy a "minor / child" is (as in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Ireland, the rulings of the European Court and the Conventions of the United Nations) a person under 18 years.

## **KNOCKADOON CAMP**

**Child Protection Policy Statement of the Dominican Province of Ireland**  
The preaching of the gospel is at the heart of our charism. The integrity of our preaching requires the protection of the ‘little ones’ (Mk 9.36-37). The Dominican Province of Ireland recognises and upholds the dignity and rights of all children and young people and is committed to their protection and support in a way that promotes their human dignity and integrity as children of God. The Province values and encourages the participation of children and young people in liturgies and in activities that enhance their appropriate spiritual, physical, emotional and social development.

In keeping with this we in the Province of Ireland undertake to do all in our power to create safe environments for children and young people where they will be protected from physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The Province is committed to implementing the document ‘Safeguarding Children’: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland.

**Phone numbers:**

**Knockadoon Dominican Camp 0852258773**

**Provincial Offices (01) 4048112**

**TUSLA Child and Family Agency**

**Cobh / Midleton / Macroom Local Garda Station**

**Phone Number: 021 – 4927000**

***Cloyne Diocesan Designated* Fr. Patrick Winkle**

**Phone Number: 086 0368999**

***Cloyne Diocesan Deputy Designated Officer: Mr Gerard Crowley***

***Phone Number: 0872215407***

**Gardaí: Youghal (024) 92200, Midleton (021) 4621557 (District HQ)**

**Designated Officer for Province: Fr Pat Lucey OP 01 4048118**

**Designated Officer for camp: Camp Manager Sinead Fallon  
0879540091**

**Signed.....**

**Fr. Maurice Colgan OP –Camp Director**

**May 2017**

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## DEFINITION OF POSITIONS AND ROLES ON CAMP...

In the normal day-to-day functioning of the Camp, many people have different roles and responsibility. The following is a general breakdown of the Camp personnel and structures.

*a) Prior Provincial & Provincial Council:*

The ultimate responsibility for Knockadoon Dominican Camp rests in the person of the Prior Provincial and the members of the Provincial Council of the Irish Dominican Friars.

*b) Knockadoon Committee:*

*The Knockadoon Committee is an advisory body to the Camp Director, confirmed by the Prior Provincial, which is made up of people with substantial experience of the nature, purpose and function of Knockadoon Camp.*

*c) Camp Director*

The Camp Director is the person designated by the Prior Provincial with the responsibility for the normal running of the Camp. It is his duty to ensure the upkeep of the fabric of the Camp, the smooth running of the Camp, the organisation of the Camp Staff, to co-ordinate with groups using the Camp and to ensure that the rules and policies of the Camp are upheld by everyone using or visiting the Camp. The Camp Director is responsible for the safety and welfare of all children entrusted into his care and all persons on Camp, and as such, all persons on Camp are directly answerable to the Camp Director.

*d) Camp Manager*

The role of the camp manager, under the direction of the Camp Director, includes the upkeep of the fabric of the Camp, the smooth running of the Camp, the organisation of the Camp Staff, provision of meals, and carrying out the daily functions required for the running of the Camp.

*e) Senior Leader/ Course Director*

The term 'Senior Leader'/ Course Director applies to the person who is responsible for the group using the Camp at any time. It is the role of the Senior Leader to organise and supervise the activity of the leaders in his/her charge. In conjunction with the Camp Director, it is the responsibility of the Senior Leader/Course Director to ensure that the rules and policies of the Camp are upheld in so far as they fall within his/her duties. The Senior Leader/ course director is responsible for the safety and welfare of the campers entrusted into his/her care and the day-to-day organisation of the group's activities.

*f) Camp Staff*

The role of the camp staff, under the direction of the Camp manager, includes the provision of meals, the upkeep of the Camp, and carrying out the daily functions required for the running of the Camp.

*g) Leaders*

The role of the Leader, under the direction of the Senior Leader, includes the supervision of the campers in a manner compliant with the rules and policies of the Camp, they carry out the daily functions required for the well-being and safety of the campers and the goals of the group of which they are part.

***h) Campers***

The term camper applies to a child or young person who comes to the Camp for the purpose of a particular group, e.g. holiday, education, etc. The camper is entrusted into the care of the Camp Director and the Senior Leader by their parent/guardian for the particular time on Camp. Though normally under the age of 18 years, they may be older, but anyone who does not fall into the categories of Staff, Leader or Visitor is regarded as a camper.

***i) Visitors***

A visitor to the Camp is someone who is not normally part of the daily functioning of the Camp or of the group using the Camp. Irrespective of their length of stay, it would not be normal for them to assume the role of Staff or Leader unless the Camp Director and Senior Leader deems the person to be suitable for these duties and they are made aware of the Camp's rules and policies. ALL VISITORS MUST REPORT TO CAMP AND COURSE DIRECTOR ON ARRIVAL TO CAMP

***j) Designated Officer***

The role of the Designated Officer is:

- A) To receive and report to the civil authorities, complaints of child sexual abuse which are made against any of the brethren or any person who may work with the province in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- B) To hear any concerns relating to safeguarding, including any disclosures or allegations of abuse, and managing the response.
- C) To inform the brother or person against whom the complaint is made (respondent)

**DESIGNATED PERSON/S FOR KNOCKADOON CAMP.**

Any concerns that abuse of a child is taking place (whether during the stay of the Camp or as may be disclosed by a child as having taken place elsewhere) must be reported immediately to the designated persons on Camp. This applies to all groups, whether held under the auspices of the Camp or organised and/or run by an independent group/organisation. Each group or organisation using the camp must designate such a person in his or her group.

*(See Section 8 below for the steps to be used in that situation).*

For the purposes of Knockadoon Camp, in accordance with the Child Protection Act, 1991, the designated person is:

**The Camp Manager: Sinead Fallon**

or if the Camp Manager is absent and for some reason the absence of the Camp manager is considered to be an unreasonable time to delay then,

## **THE CAMP DIRECTOR – Fr Maurice Colgan OP**

All persons are obliged to comply with this protocol and to make it known to all leaders in their charge.

### **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF AND LEADERS.**

In order to assure a high level of safety for campers, the persons responsible for each group and their helpers *{known from here on as Leaders}* are to be obeyed at all times and all participants must be supervised at all times.

All persons responsible for each group and their helpers must be responsible adults and at least 18 years of age and have Garda clearance for working with children and young people be it on a voluntary or a paid basis.

In order that the whereabouts of campers will always be known no one should change their designated room / bunkhouse without permission of the course director

Leaders should be sensitive to the risks involved in contact sports or other activities and should be conscious of the age and size of those involved in the activity.

While physical contact is a valid way of comforting, reassuring and showing concern for children, it should only take place when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.

Leaders should never physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child, nor should they tell jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of a child.

Leaders are to be aware of the possibility of developing favouritism, or becoming over involved or spending a great deal of their time with one child.

Children should be encouraged to report cases of bullying to a leader of their choice. This leader must then in turn report the matter to the Course director of the group.

Leaders are not to be in a situation where they are on their own with a child.

No Leader is to be left on their own to supervise the bunkhouses AT ANY STAGE during the night.

No child should sleep anywhere but in their designated room, and should never be in the room on their own.

No child should for any reason sleep overnight in the leaders' room.

In a case of the child being sick or soiling themselves two leaders must be present with them at all times.

Photography is prohibited in the bunkhouses. Photographs taken on the Camp, or in connection with the work of the Camp, where children are involved cannot be used publicly without the express permission of the Camp management and the permission of the child's parent/guardian.

No leader is to shower /change in a bunkhouse where minors are sleeping. Adult leaders on overnight bunk duty should shower and change in an adult bunkhouse.

Leaders are always to have the permission of the course director before leaving the Camp with a group.

Everyone involved in the Camp should respect the personal space, safety and privacy of individuals.

Remember that as individual leaders everyone has a legal responsibility to protect and promote children's rights and safety by:

- *Treating them with dignity, sensitivity and respect*
- Making time to listen, to talk and to get to know the children
- Making sure that children know the camp rules
- Helping children to be safe, happy and to value their experience of the Camp
- Enabling children to regard their bodies as their own property
- Giving written information about the Camp to parents / guardians
- Respecting children's privacy in the bathroom and their own rooms
- Always responding to complaints or allegations
- Being sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs
- Knowing the principles and practices of child protection.

Furthermore, all Leaders are to be guided at all times by the Knockadoon Code of Conduct for Children and Young People. ( Appendix No. 1)

## RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE FOR LEADERS & STAFF.

All groups involving children and young people proposing to use Knockadoon Camp must insure the highest possible level of satisfaction with those who apply to work with the group and are required to ensure that they are made fully aware of these Policies and Procedures and willing to abide by them. The Camp is under the auspices of the Irish Province of the Friars of the Dominican Order.

All applicants will be required to make a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be unsuitable to work with children and declaring any past criminal convictions or pending case involving children and young people or illegal drugs. (Appendix No. 2)

All applicants may be expected to provide two written references.

All applicants may/are be expected to provide a letter of clearance from An Garda Siochana.

All applicants will be required to provide some form of identification, which gives full name, address and date of birth.

A clear definition of the roles of the personnel on Camp must be made known to all involved. The primary duty of the Leader is to care for the children and young people on Camp. They and they alone are to have direct involvement with the children and young people.

The role of the Camp staff is to provide the services for the smooth running of the Camp and as such enable the Leaders to carry out their duties. On NO occasion should a member of the Camp Staff carry out any duties properly designated as those of a Leader.

## TRAINING AND INDUCTION FOR LEADERS...

All leaders must be 18 years or older.

All Leaders both new and experienced should be given an induction session prior to the beginning of their time on the Camp as to the mission of the Camp and the goals of the group.

All Leaders will be supervised by the Senior Leader and given support throughout the time in which they are on the camp.

## VISITORS TO THE CAMP (RESIDENTIAL OR CASUAL).

**(Under the term Visitor are included persons doing maintenance work or servicing equipment etc. on behalf of the Director or management, a person giving a course or instruction, also parents/guardians).**

Any and All visitors must make themselves known to the Camp Director and the Course director immediately upon entering the Camp. All and all persons will be challenged as to why they are on the Camp premises while children are present on the Camp.

Any and All visitors must be escorted around the Camp as the need arises while children are on the premises.

Any and All visitors proposing to reside over night on the Camp must have the permission of the Camp Director and be made aware of the Camp Policy. Visitors' access to particular areas of the Camp, e.g. residential bunkhouses, should be limited and controlled.

**It is the prerogative of the Camp Director to decide on the appropriateness of a visitor.**

Visitors with any criminal convictions or pending case involving children or the sale and/or distribution of illegal drugs should not be permitted on the Camp at any time.

Suppliers, traders and repair/maintenance personnel must be accompanied **AT ALL TIMES, WHILE ON THE CAMP.**

## **CHILD ABUSE / CHILD PROTECTION - DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE.**

(The following definitions are taken from Safeguarding Children as a guide for staff and

leaders in Knockadoon Camp. The term 'personnel' in the document applies to Leaders, Staff and Director).

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. You do, however, have a responsibility and duty to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child. The following information should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

### **Physical abuse**

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury or when it appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g., on the cheeks or thighs. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

#### **The physical signs of abuse may include:**

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds.

#### **Changes in behaviour, which can also indicate physical abuse:**

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/ play with other children.

#### **The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:**

- A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances e.g. in hospital or away from their parents care

- Sudden speech disorders
- Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

**Changes in behavior, which can also indicate emotional abuse, include:**

- Neurotic behavior e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.

**Sexual abuse**

Adults, who use children to meet their own sexual needs, abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour, which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously. (c.f. Resources B)

**The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:**

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy.

**Changes in behaviour, which can also indicate sexual abuse, include:**

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

## **Neglect**

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

### **The physical signs of neglect may include:**

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate dress for the conditions.

### **Changes in behaviour, which can also indicate neglect, may include:**

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/ or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive but only to serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too, to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between their parents/carers etc.

Note: Consensual sexual activity between an adult and a child under 17 years.

(It should be noted that for the purpose of criminal law the age of consent for sexual activity is 17 years old. This means, for example, that sexual activity between a 16 year old and a person of 17 years or older is illegal. Sexual activity is defined as any physical contact for the purpose of arousal or gratification. Although it may not be regarded as constituting child sexual abuse the possibility of such a prosecution rests with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions).

### **Other Abusive Behaviour towards Children:**

Apart from the four general headings listed other abusive behaviour can occur in different serious forms, and Leaders should be aware of their existence. Some of these may arise simply from bad practice or through a lack of awareness. Leaders and Staff must be fully acquainted with the Knockadoon Code of Conduct. Appendix No 1

- Bullying of a child.
- Abusive language or gestures.
- Name-calling.
- Making reference to some physical characteristics, manner of dress, or family

background.

- Blatantly favoring some children to the exclusion of others.
- Rejecting a child because of some family circumstances.
- Constant criticism making the child feel bitter and resentful, giving rise to a poor self-image and consequent withdrawn or disruptive behaviour.

### **PROCEDURE FOR THE REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE / CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS.**

Any concerns that abuse of a child is taking place (whether during the stay of the Camp or as may be disclosed by a child having taken place elsewhere) must be reported immediately. The following are the steps to be used in that situation:

- Report the concern to the Director of the group.
- The Course Director will then report this to the Designated Officer.
- The Designated officer then contacts the authorities in the following order: HSE, An Garda Síochána and the Designated Officer of the Friars of the Irish Dominican Province and the Prior Provincial of the Friars of the Irish Dominican Province
- It is important that it is explained to the child that what they tell you is not a secret and that you must tell the Director. A Leader should never promise to 'keep a secret'.
- The Leader must make a clear and accurate written report of all that the child had to say.
- The child should not be interviewed or questioned in detail by anyone other than the Health Service Executive's Director of Community Care {or the duty Social Officer if the Director is not available}.
- Reporting the allegation to the parents is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive.
- All involved in the allegations must treat the situation with the utmost sensitivity and in the strictest confidentiality.

Where there is concern about a Leader on the team or an allegation made, or if any Leader is alleged to have abused or mistreated a child during their stay of the Camp, then in the interest of the child in question that Leader will be removed from ALL contact with the children, until the Course Director AND the Camp Director AND Prior Provincial of the Irish Dominican Province are sure that the concern or alleged incident has no basis.

If it is felt that there is reason for concern or evidence of the allegation then the above steps will be taken and the Leader in question will be removed from the camp.

Should the Designated Officer of Irish Dominican Province feel that there is reason for

concern or evidence of the allegation, he shall, in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Ireland, report the matter to the relevant authorities.

In such situations, the Dominican Order's responsibility to protect the safety and welfare of the children in their care is paramount; however the good name and rights of the Leader must also be protected until a conclusion is reached.

In such circumstances where there is indisputable evidence that a case of abuse has occurred on the Camp, the Camp Director will immediately contact An Gardaí Siochana so that they can begin their investigation {Child Protection Act 1991.3.}.

From the Children's Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (*Children First*), the following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from a child that he/she was abused
- A statement from a person who witnessed the abuse
- An illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse
- Symptoms, which may not be in its self totally consistent with abuse, but which is supported by corroborative evidence of deliberate harm or neglect.
- Consistent signs of neglect over a period of time.

A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective signs of abuse, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion.

'Safeguarding Children' offers guidance in this matter. (Resource B & C)

### **RECORDING A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE**

As soon as possible after the disclosure the following should be written down:

- Where and when the disclosure took place and the background to how the disclosure came about.
- Relationship of the reporter to the child making the disclosure.
- What the child said using their words as much as possible.
- How the child behaved while talking about the events.
- The feelings expressed by the child.
- Any signs of physical injury should be described.
- Relevant dates and times, etc. given by the child.

The record should be as factual as possible and personal opinions or interpretations of what has happened should be avoided. In order to be as accurate as possible no one other than the person who heard the allegation should be involved in writing the report.

The record should be signed and dated by the reporter and witnessed by the Designated Officer and the Director.

## **THOSE INVOLVED IN THE REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE ...**

Child Abuse is a difficult subject and it is understandable that people may at times be reluctant to acknowledge its existence. However, it must always be remembered that early reporting of a suspected case of child abuse will reduce the possibility of further serious harm occurring in the future.

The *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998* provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated persons\*\* or any member of An Garda Síochána. Should any civil case be taken against a person for reporting an alleged case of child abuse, the plaintiff who took the action will have to prove that the reporter had not acted 'reasonably and in good faith' but out of malice or some other motive other than the welfare and safety of the child.

\*\* In accordance with the powers granted to the Minister of Health and Children under Section 2 subsection (2) of the Act, the Minister has appointed as designated officers the following persons falling within the categories of the Health Services Executive:

- *Social Workers,*
- *Child Care Workers,*
- *Public Health Nurses,*
- *Hospital Consultants,*
- *Psychiatrists,*
- *Hospital Doctors,*
- *Community Welfare Officers,*
- *Psychologists,*
- *Health Education Officers,*

- *Substance Abuse Counsellors*
- *Care Assistants.*

## ADDITIONS, ALTERATIONS OR AMENDMENTS

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made to or in the provisions of this Policy for the time being in force unless the same shall have been previously approved by the Prior Provincial and his Council.

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made without prior consultation with the members of the Committee, Camp Director and the group's organisations using the Camp.

Addition, alteration or amendment shall be made to or in the provisions of this document namely: Policies and Procedures on Child Protection, in such cases and at such time as a Law is enacted by the Oireachtas which requires such change. It shall be the duty of the Committee to ensure that this document remains in conformity with the Laws of the Republic of Ireland at all times.

## CONCLUSION.

This is the Child Protection Policy of Knockadoon Camp, which is run under the auspices of the Friars of the Irish Dominican Order, and which applies to all persons, groups or organisations (religious or otherwise) staying on the Camp and/or using its facilities.

The fundamental purpose or mission for the existence of Knockadoon Camp is first and foremost a place for people to learn and to grow in their faith and human development, this being done in the setting of a holiday atmosphere where they will feel secure and safe. Whereas it is the hope of all involved in the management and running of the Camp that everyone staying in Knockadoon Camp experiences the Camp as such a place, the main beneficiaries must always be the campers, i.e. children and young people.

Your compliance with this policy and in assisting us in the fulfillment of the mission of Knockadoon Dominican Camp is greatly appreciated.

## DECLARATION.

Having been approved as the Child Protection Policy of Knockadoon Camp by the Prior Provincial and the Provincial Council of the Friars of the Irish Dominican Province, we require that all parties using the facilities of Knockadoon will adhere to its terms.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Fr. Gregory Carroll OP – Provincial Irish Dominican Province

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Fr. Maurice Colgan OP., Camp Director

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Resource A - General Principles Guiding Best Practice**

*'Best Practice' may be defined as the doing what is best in the circumstances for safeguarding children and young people.*

The Dominican Camp in Knockadoon

- Values and encourages the active participation of children and young people in ways that enhance their physical, emotional, and spiritual growth within a safe, secure and welcoming environment. Therefore each person should feel valued, encouraged and affirmed while participating in the Camp.
- Recognises and upholds the fundamental rights of the individual children and young people to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected. These rights are embedded both in our Gospel values and civil legislation.
- Acknowledges and reaffirms its commitment to the care and protection of children and young people as 'Children of God', with intrinsic dignity and irreducible worth.
- Believes that safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility, but accepts that all those working with children and young people have a special duty of care towards them.
- Is committed to 'best practice' in the area of safeguarding children and young people including:
  - The development of effective structures for safeguarding children and young people.
  - Responding to suspicions or allegations of child abuse, which includes cooperating with the relevant civil authorities
  - Providing pastoral support for personnel associated with Knockadoon Camp.

## **Resource B (from Safeguarding Children)**

### **Guidance on how to respond to people making an allegation**

It is often very difficult for people to talk about abuse so it is important to make sure that you

are patient, listen carefully and actively, and create a safe environment in which they feel able to tell you as much as they can remember. This will help those people whose responsibility it is to investigate the incident(s) do so as thoroughly as possible.

People may tell you about:

- Abuse that's happened to them now – current
- Abuse that happened to them some time ago – historical
- Something they've been told by someone else and that they strongly believe is true
- Seeing signs of abuse, such as physical injuries on a child
- Something that they have witnessed, such as the behaviour of an adult to a child that made them feel uncomfortable.

Where information is given in person, consider the following.

- Listen carefully to that person, but do not ask intrusive or leading questions.
- Stay calm, take what the person raising the concern says seriously, and reassure them.
- Allow the person to continue at his/her own pace.
- Check with the person to make sure that you have understood what they actually said.

Do not suggest words, but use theirs.

- Make no promises that cannot be kept, particularly in relation to secrecy, but listen carefully to what is being sought.
- Explain these procedures and the referral procedures<sup>4</sup> to the person.
- Offer to accompany the person to the Support Person.
- Do not make any comments about the respondent, make assumptions or speculate.
- Be aware that a person's ability to recount his or her concern or allegation will depend on

age, culture, nationality and upon any disability which may affect use of language and range

of vocabulary.

- Adopt a listening style, which is compassionate, calm and reassuring. If the information given to you shocks, disgusts or distresses you, do not allow these feelings to show. If you do, you may inadvertently dissuade the person from giving any further information.
- Avoid statements about your belief or otherwise, of the information given.
- Do not question beyond checking what has been said. It is the job of the Health and Social

Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI to investigate. There must be no probing for detail beyond that which has been freely given.

Listening does not mean telling a person to stop when they are freely recalling events; because some facts are only ever told once, the information given must be fully and accurately recorded.

However, it is better that such detail is given directly to a professional from one of the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI, to allow proper procedures to be observed and to avoid the distress of having to repeat the account more than once.

### **Listening to a child**

A child might tell you directly about abuse happening to them. For additional or specific guidance about listening to a child, please refer to *Resource C*.

### **Listening to a person who admits abusing a child**

It is necessary to tell a person who admits an offence against a child or young person that such information cannot be kept confidential. If such an admission is made to you, even where the admission relates to something which happened a long time ago, you must refer the matter to the Designated Officer as soon as possible, who will follow the procedures for referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI.

### **Anonymous allegations or concerns**

Anonymous complaints are to be treated carefully. Anxiety and fear may persuade some people not to reveal their identity immediately. It is sometimes difficult to act on information under these procedures unless at some point the name of the person raising the concern/making an allegation becomes known. The person raising the concern should be informed that anonymity might restrict the ability of professionals to access information or to intervene to protect a child. As much openness as possible should be encouraged.

## Resource C (from Safeguarding Children)

### Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

Children will occasionally tell an adult they are being abused if they feel they can trust this person. This happens for many reasons but the important thing to remember is if they do tell you they are doing so in the hope that you will act to stop it happening, even if they ask you not to do anything with the information. If a child begins to tell you about abuse it is important that you

#### Do:

- Stay calm
- Listen carefully and take them seriously
- Ask questions for clarification only if you are unclear what the child is saying
- Allow the child to continue at his/ her own pace
- Reassure the child that, in disclosing the abuse, they have done the right thing
- Tell them they are not to blame for the abuse
- Let them know you will do what you can to help
- Report the child's disclosure to your manager or the designated person immediately (or in the absence of the designated, or if the disclosure in any way involves the designated person, then seek advice from the National Safeguarding Board Support Team).

As soon as possible, write down everything that you were told by the child, using their own words to describe the abuse. Sign and date this record and pass it onto the designated person.

#### Do not:

- Dismiss the concerns
- Panic
- Probe for more information/ ask other questions
- 'Promise not to tell anyone' or say 'you'll keep it a secret'
- Make negative comments about the accused person
- Make assumptions or speculate
- Disclose details of the allegation to anyone else – even if the allegations involve them in any way.

Find an opportunity to explain that it is likely that this information will need to be shared with others and at the end of the discussion tell them what you plan to do next and with whom this information will be shared.

Remember: It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is **not** responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional child protection agencies following a referral to them of the concerns about the child.

### Appendix No. 1

The Knockadoon 'Code of Conduct' for children and young people attending the camp. This code of conduct aims at setting boundaries appropriate to the behaviour of children and young people and that of others in relation to children and young people.

The following are the key elements of such a code.

- Children and young people will be aware of the Code of Conduct that leaders have to

adhere to.

- The code should reflect the dignity and rights of each child and young person and encourage respectful behaviour.
- Children and young people will respect the fact that leaders will not work alone with them
- children and young people will treat each other and their leaders with courtesy, respect and dignity.
- In keeping with civil law children and young people will not be permitted to consume alcohol or smoke while participating in activities related to Knockadoon.
- Inappropriate language or sexually suggestive comments will not be permitted.
- Physical contact will be of an appropriate nature at all times.
- Unruly behaviour will not be permitted at any time.

Children and young people are to be consulted about drawing up an all inclusive anti-bullying policy.

The following is a list of examples of bullying – but it is not an exhaustive list.

- Name calling
- Fighting/kicking/punching/hair pulling
- Making suggestive/sarcastic comments
- Intimidation
- Threatening
- Ignoring/excluding
- Damaging property
- Spreading rumours
- Sending abusive text messages
- Racial ethnic or cultural comments

Leaders and camp staff members will also discuss the nature of bullying as applied to Knockadoon Camp.

Fr. Maurice Colgan OP  
Director (2017)

## Appendix No 2

### Knockadoon 2017 – Declaration form for all persons working with children and young people.

#### Confidential

Legislation in both jurisdictions in Ireland, have at their core, the principle that the welfare of children and young people must be the paramount consideration. Church organisations therefore ask that everyone working or volunteering for Knockadoon 2012, who will come into contact with children or personal details of children, abide by good practice by completing and signing this declaration:

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 Bound Over Order (please tick)

Yes

No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

Date of offence:

Nature of offence:

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Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards a child? (Please tick)

Yes

No

If yes, please give details including date(s) below:

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Full name (print):

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Any surname previously known by:

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Address:

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Date and place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Declaration**

I understand that, if it is found that I have withheld information or included any false or misleading information above, I may be removed from my post, whether paid or voluntary, without notice. I understand that the information will be kept securely by the organisation, namely, Knockadoon 2017.

I hereby declare the information I have provided is accurate.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_