



**Glenstal Abbey**  
BENEDICTINE COMMUNITY

# Safeguarding Children

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**Policies & Procedures 2013**



## Foreword



Ministry to children is a central part of our pastoral mission in this monastery. I welcome this new version of *Glenstal Abbey Safeguarding Children: Policy and Procedures 2013*, which values and encourages the participation of children in our activities. It brings together in a user-friendly and accessible format the different elements of our policy and the guiding principles which underlie our Safeguarding practices. It enlarges upon our earlier policies and resources, includes new information, and updates both policies and procedures. The contents of this publication apply to all Glenstal Abbey personnel: monks, staff and volunteers. It is available in electronic format as well as in hard copy, and it includes templates of the forms required, so that these can be made more readily available to our personnel as needed.

This document should be used in conjunction with statutory policies and the *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland* of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCC). The monitoring and implementation of this policy remains a high priority for all of us here in Glenstal Abbey.

Let us make it our fervent prayer that the Lord will bring this good work which we have begun to its fulfilment.

*Patrick Hederman OSB*  
**Patrick Hederman OSB**  
**Abbot of Glenstal**

*January 2013*



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## Standard 1

### A written policy on keeping children safe

***Each child should be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.***

#### 1.0 Introduction

**1.1** The monks of Glenstal Abbey are vowed to a celibate way of life and mutual respect among persons. The monastic community views all forms of abuse or exploitation by its members, employees or associated personnel to be morally reprehensible. Sexual abuse is also a crime in civil and church law.

**1.2** When considering sexual abuse or sexual exploitation, the Abbey maintains a primary concern for the complainant's safety and well-being. Recognizing that sexual abuse or sexual exploitation has tragic consequences for those who have been abused, Glenstal Abbey adopts the following policy which is binding on all personnel and will be reviewed by the Abbot's Seniorate annually. This policy is augmented by *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, wherever necessary:

**1.3** Links to this policy are available on the Abbey website [www.glenstal.org](http://www.glenstal.org) and the School website [www.glenstal.com](http://www.glenstal.com)

## Standard 2

### How to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions

**Children have a right to be listened to and heard:  
Church organisations must respond effectively and ensure any  
allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported both within the  
Church and to civil authorities.**

## 2.1 Child Protection Allegations and Suspicions

### 2.1.1 An Allegation

- a) All allegations or suspicions / concerns which suggest that a child may have been harmed should be notified to the Abbot and the Designated Officer. Where there are reasonable grounds for concern, the Designated Officer will report immediately to the Health Service Executive and the Gardaí, as required by *Safeguarding Children*<sup>1</sup> and the relevant statutory guidelines.<sup>2</sup> If the concern relates to a child in the school, the Board of Management will also be informed.
- b) The Abbot / Designated Officer will conduct preliminary inquiries which may include:
  - an interview with the person making the allegation (*See Appendix 2*).
  - an interview with the person against whom the allegation is being made.
  - an interview with other knowledgeable persons.
- c) The Abbot seeks appropriate advice.
- d) All allegations of abuse of a minor will be responded to promptly. Based upon the initial inquiries the Abbot takes appropriate action:
  - The person against whom the allegation has been made will be required to take immediate leave from any assignments which involve contact with minors.
  - All the requirements of civil law will be complied with.
  - The complainant and the complainant's family will be attended to with compassion and assisted in obtaining counselling and support.

### 2.1.2 Pastoral Response to the Complainant

- a) Anyone who may have been abused or exploited is encouraged to contact either the Abbot or those designated by Glenstal Abbey as Designated Officers.
- b) When an allegation from an alleged victim is received the complainant is invited to tell his/her story, not only to ascertain the facts, but also to establish and evaluate the complainant's needs.

<sup>1</sup> *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, 2011.  
*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*, 2011.

- c) When one of the Abbey's employees receives an allegation from an alleged victim, the employee immediately communicates the information received to the Designated Officer.
- d) After appropriate consultation, the Abbot normally encourages the complainant to seek counselling with the *Towards Healing* counselling and support service. In exceptional circumstances other supports may be provided.

### 2.1.3 Intervention with the Respondent

- a) The Abbot, with the Designated Officer, informs the respondent of the allegation, requesting that he/she choose someone as his/her Support Person and inform the Abbot who this person is. The respondent is advised that he/she may not make contact with the person bringing the allegation or with any person connected to him or her.
- b) The Abbot may consult with the NBSCCC's Case Management Committee at any stage during the inquiry. Based upon the credibility of the allegation, the Abbot, in consultation with others, will decide whether or not to suspend the respondent from his/her present duties.
- c) Following the civil investigation a church process will take place, which may involve a credibility assessment and a risk assessment. All relevant information will be shared with the professionals conducting the assessments.
- d) If the respondent is to receive professional treatment, the Abbot may take the following steps, if the respondent is a monk:
  - Have him live at the monastery under a supervised regime.
  - Find some appropriate work or vocational retraining for him.
  - When treatment has been completed, the Abbot, in consultation with treatment professionals and others, establishes an aftercare programme.
- e) On completion of the recommended treatment and the aftercare programme, and on receipt of a positive evaluation, the Abbot, after appropriate consultation, will consider giving this monk a permanent assignment with appropriate safeguards, which will be communicated to supervisors and colleagues.
- f) If at any time the Abbot determines that the monk cannot continue in monastic life, he will seek to have the monk leave the monastery voluntarily. If the monk does not leave voluntarily, the Abbot may initiate a canonical process for dismissal.

### 2.1.4 Public Statement

If it is judged to be in the interests of safeguarding children, it may be appropriate for the Abbot to issue a short statement.

## 2.2 Contacts

### 2.2.1 Designated Officers

Mr Patrick Brosnan  
Br Martin Browne OSB

Glenstal Abbey  
Murroe  
County Limerick.

Tel 061 – 386103  
Email [delegate@glenstal.org](mailto:delegate@glenstal.org)

### 2.2.2 Services

**HSE**  
Area Manager, Children and Family Services  
HSE Building  
Ballycummin Avenue  
Raheen Business Park  
Limerick.

Tel 061 482792

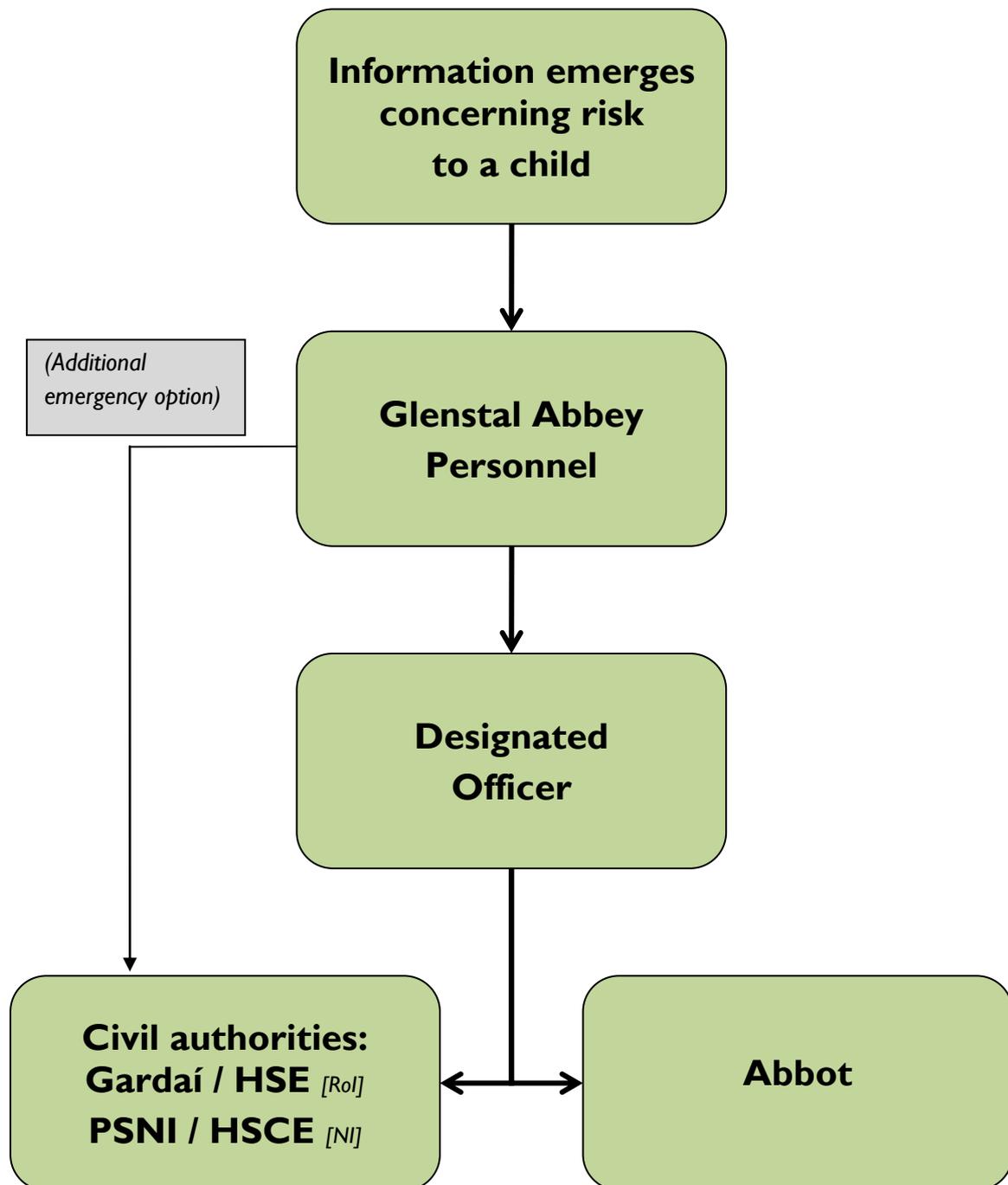
**Gardaí**  
Bruff Garda Station  
County Limerick.

Tel 061 382103

**Towards Healing** (Counselling and Support Service)  
P.O. Box 5654  
Dublin 14.

Tel 1800 303416  
Email [coordinator@towardshealing.ie](mailto:coordinator@towardshealing.ie)

## 2.3 Reporting Procedure



## 2.4 Responding to an Allegation

If a child begins to tell you about abuse it is important that you:

### 2.4.1 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 to one of the Designated Officers immediately (or if the disclosure in any way involves one of the Designated Officers, then report the disclosure to another Designated Officer or seek advice from the National Safeguarding Board Support Team).

**2.4.2** 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.

### 2.4.3 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.

**2.4.4** 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.

**2.4.5 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.

## **2.5 Guidance on the Seal of Confession**

Within the Sacrament of Penance, practices need to be considered that ensure the safety of all those involved, while providing the required privacy for the person receiving the sacrament. A priest must be clear about the status of any conversation relating to an allegation of abuse and ensure that there is no misunderstanding about whether or not the conversation is in the context of confession. Because of the obligations of the sacramental seal, a priest exercising a function under child safeguarding procedures should not celebrate the sacrament of penance with a person whom he knows is a respondent or a complainant in a child abuse case.

## Standard 3

### Preventing harm to children

**Children should have access to good role models they can trust, who will respect and nurture their spiritual, physical and emotional development. They also have a right to an environment free from abuse and neglect.**

### 3.1 Safe Recruitment and Vetting Policy

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all those employed either in a contractual, pastoral or voluntary role in Glenstal Abbey are recruited safely and are suitable for whatever job/role with children they are being asked to undertake.

#### 3.1.2 Selection and Recruitment of Employees and Volunteers

It is important that all possible steps are taken to prevent unsuitable persons gaining access to children. In Glenstal Abbey those responsible for recruitment of employees and/or volunteers will first assess the level of contact with children and the potential risk involved in each post before recruiting employees or volunteers. In doing so they will follow the steps outlined in the Recruitment Checklist (See 3.2 below and Appendix 1).

#### 3.1.3 Declaration Form

All those recruited as employees or volunteers in Glenstal Abbey will be asked to complete the Declaration Form (See Resource Form 5).

#### 3.1.4 Questions

Establishing a fuller picture of the character and attitudes of an applicant is an important part of the safe recruitment process. During any formal interview the opportunity will be taken to assess the applicant's values, motivations, abilities, experience and suitability. (See p.68 of *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*).

#### 3.1.5 Vetting

The Garda vetting procedures of the state should be utilised for all employees and long term volunteers (See Resource Form 3). All applicants to the noviciate will be required to have completed the Garda Vetting Application Form as clearly stated in the Child Protection Policy Concerning those in Formation (See Appendix 4).

#### 3.1.6 Staff Formation

##### *Training in best practice*

All staff shall be given comprehensive training in safe and best practice in working with children and young people. This training will include, at the earliest possible stage, the provision of clear information about how to respond if concerns about child protection arise.

All staff shall be provided with the name and contact details of the relevant Designated Officer(s) for Child Protection and shall be made aware of the procedures for reporting suspicions or allegations of child abuse. They shall be made aware of the commitment in the Church's procedures to act in accordance with the principle that the welfare of children is always the paramount consideration.

### **3.1.7 Confidentiality**

As with all personnel records at Glenstal Abbey, information obtained through the recruitment process is kept confidential.

## **3.2 Recruitment Checklist**

- Step 1:* Identify the contact the person will have with children
- Step 2:* Define the Role
- Step 3:* Create a job description
- Step 4:* Consider selection criteria
- Step 5:* Application Form or CV requested
- Step 6:* Interview
- Step 7:* References sought
- Step 8:* Declaration form completed
- Step 9:* Garda Vetting completed
- Step 10:* Contract of employment
- Step 11:* Induction

## **3.3 Code of Behaviour**

### **3.3.1 It is important for all monks, employees, volunteers and others in contact with children to:**

- treat all children with respect
- provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow
- operate within the Church principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- be visible to others when working with children whenever possible
- challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour
- develop a culture where children can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly
- respect each child's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of their rights, as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem

**3.3.2 In general, it is inappropriate to:**

- spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- take children to your own home, or into the monastic enclosure, especially where they will be alone with you

**3.3.3 Monks, employees, volunteers and others must never:**

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- develop sexual relationships with children
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse

**3.3.4 Monks, employees, volunteers and others must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:**

- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- have a child / children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- discriminate against, show different treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

### **3.4 Operating Safe Activities**

Glenstal Abbey School is the only department of Glenstal Abbey that operates activities for children. The school policy in this area is included in *Appendix 10*. Any other body accessing and operating activities for children in Glenstal Abbey must have its own policies and the Hospitality Department of Glenstal Abbey must be satisfied that these are in place before agreeing to their presence here.

### **3.5 Guidelines for the use of Information Technology**

Glenstal Abbey is committed to best practice in this area and we adopt an amended version of the *Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Policy* of Glenstal Abbey School, which can be found in *Appendix 9*, as our policy.

## Standard 4

### Training and education for keeping children safe

***All Church personnel should be offered training in child protection to maintain high standards and good practice.***

#### 4.0 Training and Education

##### 4.1 Introduction

Glenstal Abbey is committed to best practice in safeguarding children. It is understood that everyone in the Church who comes into contact with children has a role to play in their protection. Training provides individuals with knowledge and skills in safeguarding children and the confidence to perform their roles. A training session also provides a forum where individuals are able to seek clarification on a range of issues.

- All personnel in Glenstal Abbey who come into contact with children are offered training in child safeguarding and good practice.
- At the beginning of every school year all staff are reminded of the standards and safeguarding policies of Glenstal Abbey.
- The Abbey Designated Officers attend training sessions each year to maintain high standards.
- All personnel who have special responsibilities with children are provided with appropriate additional training opportunities.
- The training programme offered to staff is reviewed each year.

##### 4.2 The following areas are covered in the training programme:

- The seven standards of NBSCCC
- Definitions of abuse
- Signs and Symptoms associated with abuse
- Disclosure of allegations
- Glenstal Abbey Policies
- Reporting Procedures in Glenstal Abbey
- Supervision
- Available Support Structures
- Code of Conduct
- Protecting Children and Workers
- Issues specific to a Boarding School
- School Policy for trips and outings

## Standard 5

### Communicating the Church's safeguarding message

***Children are welcomed, cherished and protected in a manner consistent with their central place in the life of the Church.***

#### 5.0 Communications Policy

##### 5.1 Introduction

Glenstal Abbey and Glenstal Abbey School display Safeguarding Notices in prominent places including the main entrance to the school, the monastery reception, the abbey guesthouse and the church porch. The Notice is a statement of the child safeguarding and protection policy and contains contact details for:

- The Abbey Designated Officers and the School Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person
- The HSE local social work office
- The Gardaí
- Support services

This information is also displayed on the monastery and school websites. The websites also provide access to the monastery and school policies in this area. This includes the procedure for reporting child protection concerns and information on support services.

**5.2** All Glenstal Abbey personnel have a working knowledge of our procedures and policies. The boarders in Glenstal Abbey School are likewise aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures that are in place here.

**5.3** Glenstal Abbey operates a policy which reflects a commitment to transparency and openness in the area of Safeguarding and Child Protection. Glenstal Abbey is committed to sharing all information relating to child protection concerns with the statutory authorities as outlined in our policy.

**5.4** Further information or clarification can be had by contacting one of our Designated Officers.

## Standard 6

### Access to advice and support

***Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.***

***Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing.***

#### 6.0 Advice and support

6.1 Glenstal Abbey is committed to ensuring that those who have suffered child abuse receive a compassionate and just response and are offered appropriate pastoral care to rebuild their lives.

6.2 Those who have harmed others are to be assisted to face the reality of their abusive behaviour and facilitated to seek healing.

6.3 Mindful of these needs Glenstal Abbey has the following measures in place:

- All students in Glenstal Abbey School are aware of the support services which are available to those who have suffered abuse.
- An age-appropriate leaflet summarising the main elements of this policy is made available to students in Glenstal Abbey School.
- All Safeguarding Notices displayed in prominent locations in Glenstal Abbey contain information and guidance about where and how to get advice and support.
- The Designated Officers will provide information about where and how to get specific help and advice, whether the abused person is a child or an adult and whether the abuse is current or historical.
- Appropriate pastoral support is offered to a complainant whether an allegation concerns current or historical abuse.
- Glenstal Abbey also strongly recommends that a perpetrator of abuse will seek appropriate remedial and therapeutic help to enable him/her confront the gravity of abuse and thus reduce the risk of reoffending.

## Standard 7

### Implementing and monitoring the Standards

***To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across all Church organisations. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside of Church organisations can help to improve the effectiveness of any measures taken.***

#### 7.0 Implementation and Monitoring

7.1 Glenstal Abbey is committed to ensuring that all of our policies, procedures and codes of conduct are kept up to date.

7.2 To that end the following list has been compiled to facilitate implementation and monitoring of our safeguarding standards:

- Appropriate resources are in place for the implementation of the Safeguarding policy.
- Glenstal Abbey conducts an annual review of the implementation of its policy and procedures and updates any changes in legislation and guidance.
- A record is kept of training attended by our Abbey Designated Officers.
- Personnel are invited to give their views on measures contained in our policy and procedures during the staff forum at the start of each academic year.
- All incidents, allegations and suspicions of abuse in Glenstal Abbey are recorded and stored securely, in line with data safeguarding legislation.

# Appendix 1

## Definitions

### 1.1 Abbot

The Abbot is the chief administrator and spiritual leader of Glenstal Abbey.

### 1.2 Abuse

As defined under four headings in *Children First* and the Department of Education and Skills guidelines. Similarly any form of sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult or another person shall be deemed to constitute a serious matter, whether initiated by the respondent or not:

#### 1.2.1 Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults and medical care. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that his or her wellbeing and/or development are severely affected.

#### 1.2.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between an adult and a child rather than a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

#### 1.2.3 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from the wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

#### 1.2.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.

### 1.3 Allegation

A complaint or accusation made by an alleged victim to the Abbey, or a credible report made to the Abbey by another person because the alleged victim is prevented for a serious reason from speaking directly with the Abbot or Designated Officer.

### 1.4 Victim

A victim shall be deemed to be any minor, student of the school or vulnerable adult who has experienced any of the forms of abuse defined in 1.2 above.

## Appendix 2

### Role of the Designated Officer or Delegate

#### 2.1 Introduction

It is the Designated Officer's responsibility to receive information where it is alleged or suspected that a child (children) has (have) been or is (are) being abused by any member of the Church, including volunteers.<sup>3</sup> The Designated Officer is responsible for managing the allegation / disclosure or concern, from start to finish including:

- the preliminary internal enquiry
- referral to the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI
- any subsequent internal investigations.

He or she is also responsible for ensuring that the person raising the concern/suspicion or making an allegation and the respondent or alleged perpetrator are regularly informed about how the inquiry into the matter is progressing. Where an external investigation is being conducted, advice and agreement about what and how much information to share must be obtained from the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI or from the NBSCCC. It is expected that the Designated Officer will seek advice from the appropriate authority if (s)he is in any doubt about interviewing a person making a complaint about abuse.

#### 2.2 Where the person raising a concern/making an allegation or disclosure is a child, or the parent/guardian of a child who alleges abuse:

Under no circumstances should a Designated Officer interview a child alone. Designated Officers should not interview a child or a child's parents or guardians in any detail about the matter without first consulting the Health and Social Services, as the interview may more appropriately be carried out by the Health and Social Services or An Garda Síochána / PSNI.

#### 2.3 Where an adult is making an allegation or disclosure about historical or retrospective abuse:

The individual should be asked to provide a detailed account of what happened and the circumstances. The Designated Officer should carefully record what is said, and check with the person who has raised the concern/made the allegation, about the accuracy of what has been recorded. Ample time must be given to this. A written note of the details of the matter must be prepared and these notes are to be confirmed by the signature of the person raising the concern. The Designated Officer should try to obtain sufficient information about the nature of the concern for the respondent to know what has been alleged against him or her.

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<sup>3</sup> Where an allegation or suspicion is made against a Designated Officer, the information must be passed to another Designated Officer and the process as outlined should be carried out by them.

## 2.4 Procedure

**The role of the Designated Officer is to:** *(the Designated Officer may be assisted by a suitably qualified record keeper appointed by the Abbot for that purpose)*

**2.4.1** Receive information about a concern or allegation.

**2.4.2** Ensure that the procedure about how to manage concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving monks, employees and volunteers in the Abbey Safeguarding Policy and in *Resource 2 of Safeguarding Children* have been followed, and to ensure a referral has been made to the statutory authority where appropriate, if this has not already happened.

**2.4.3** Create a child protection case file for every referral that includes a log of actions, events and information received using the templates provided by the NBSCCC. Entries should be made as soon as possible after the event but before the end of the day. They must be timed, dated and signed by the author.

**2.4.4** Take possession of any written records made by any person in connection with the case and place them on the Child Protection Case File.

**2.4.5** Explain the procedures for addressing the concern, allegation or disclosure to the person who has raised the concern.

**2.4.6** To contact emergency or appropriate services where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk of harm. An immediate referral in accordance with the Child Protection Recording Form and *Resource 16 of Safeguarding Children* should be made to the Health and Social Services. Where appropriate, if Health and Social Services staff are not available, An Garda Síochána / PSNI should be contacted to ensure that under no circumstances is a child left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention. Consideration should, in all cases, also be given to whether an immediate referral is necessary in order to preserve, and safeguard against the possibility of any loss, deterioration or destruction of potential evidence or forensic evidence.

**2.4.7** Inform the Abbot or Superior and local Church authority that a complaint has been made and make a recommendation to them about any immediate action(s) that may need to be taken in order to ensure the safety of children.

**2.4.8** Make enquiries to identify the present and previous appointments of the respondent in order to establish whether there are any previous concerns about his/her practice, or any current grounds for concern in relation to the safety and well-being of children. (Again, in cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate or possible risk, an immediate referral in accordance with *Resource 2 Procedure of Safeguarding Children* – ‘How to manage concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers’ – should be made to the Health and Social Services.) Where appropriate, if Health and Social Services staff are not available, An Garda Síochána / PSNI should be contacted so as to ensure that under no circumstances is a child left in a dangerous situation pending Health and Social Services intervention.

**2.4.9** Alert the Adviser to be on standby, without identifying the respondent.

**2.4.10** Conduct an initial interview with the respondent as soon as possible, unless (where an earlier referral has been made) the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI have requested that such an interview be deferred. The respondent shall be given information about his or her entitlement to seek legal advice (both civil and, where appropriate, canonical) and about the child protection process. The respondent should be informed that he/she is not obliged, in law, to respond or to furnish evidence, but that any statement provided will be taken into account in the investigation. The Designated Officer and the Church authority should then inform the respondent of the nature and detail of the allegation/concern and the name of the person raising it. The purpose of the interview is to inform the respondent of the existence of the allegation and of the process being followed. The respondent needs to be given enough detail about the disclosure / allegation / concern, and the person raising it, to be able to offer a response. The respondent shall be offered the services of an Adviser. A written record of the interview must be prepared, agreed with the respondent, signed and dated.

**2.4.11** Implement the referral policy as outlined in the Abbey Policy and *Resource 2 Procedure* – ‘How to manage concerns, suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse involving Church staff and volunteers’.

**2.4.12** In cases where a Designated Officer has a concern about a child but is not sure whether to make a referral, he or she should seek appropriate advice. He or she may consult the National Office, the Health and Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána / PSNI on the appropriate steps to be taken. The Designated Officer must keep a written record of the outcome of the consultation with the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI on the Child Protection Case File. Decisions not to refer a matter must always be in consultation with the NBSCCC.

**2.4.13** Ensure the availability of the Advisory Panel, if required, and convene the Advisory Panel at an appropriate time.<sup>4</sup>

**2.4.14** Follow the advice given by Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI where a child protection concern has been referred to them. Allow the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána to conduct their enquiries unimpeded. The Designated Officer should not visit the family or contact family members without prior discussion with investigators.

**2.4.15** Maintain a dialogue with the Investigating Officer or Social Worker to monitor the progress of the case and act on any advice given. Details of contacts made should be recorded chronologically on the Child Protection Case File.

**2.4.16** Ask for an update from the Health and Social Services / An Garda Síochána / PSNI about the outcome of their investigations; this request should be made in writing.

**2.4.17** Conduct an internal investigation at the conclusion any external investigation, or where no such investigation takes place the process should be concluded appropriately. An internal investigation will be initiated in cases where child protection concerns remain or where disciplinary action needs to be considered.

Such an investigation will gather and assess available information from all sources and witnesses. Every effort should be made, in consultation with the Health and Social Services /

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<sup>4</sup> The National Case Management Reference Group fulfils this role for Glenstal Abbey.

An Garda Síochána / PSNI, to avoid the necessity to interview child witnesses for the purposes of disciplinary inquiries.

This investigation (which takes place after the statutory enquiries have been completed) should be conducted expeditiously, taking no longer than three months, wherever possible. In cases where there is a delay, and particularly where a monk has been temporarily removed from active ministry or a lay person suspended from duties, it is important to keep everyone informed of the progress of the investigation and to maintain records of such communications. There can be no excuse for a respondent to be left uninformed and 'in limbo' indefinitely.

Where an investigation concerns a monk, the requirements of Canon Law will also be observed.

## Appendix 3

### School Child Protection Guidelines

#### 3.1 Introduction

Glenstal Abbey School, in adopting the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, seeks to create an environment in which children are:

- listened to, given a sense of security and belonging, kept as safe as possible
- parents are supported and encouraged
- staff are supported and protected.

#### 3.2 It is the school's objective to:

- acknowledge the rights of children to be protected, encouraged and have their rights respected.
- recognise that the welfare of children must always come first, regardless of all other considerations.
- adopt the safest possible practices to prevent or minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening and protect workers from the necessity of risk taking and leaving themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- develop safe recruitment practices and take all reasonable steps to ensure candidates are suitable for working with children.
- recognise that early intervention with vulnerable or at risk children may prevent serious harm from happening to them at a later stage.
- provide an induction course for new staff and ensure that, house assistants and prefects are clear in their responsibilities and the procedures to be followed.

#### 3.3 The School Board adopted the guidelines with the following addition:

That in the interests of fairness to all, the Principal be afforded the same opportunity of having an appropriate person accompany him into a meeting with an employee about to be advised to leave the premises.

#### 3.5 Personnel

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the school is the Headmaster:  
Br Martin Browne OSB

The Assistant DLP is the Deputy Principal:  
Ms Helen Costello

## Appendix 4

### Policy concerning those in formation

#### 4.1 Introduction

A proper selection and formation process for those presenting themselves for a monastic life has a vital part to play in ensuring the care and protection of children and young people in the Church.

#### 4.2 Selection of Candidates

It is important that those who are accepted into formal training for the monastic life have achieved a sufficient level of maturity to allow them to engage in and benefit from a programme of formation. In making this determination, the Abbot and Novice Master shall seek the assistance of those competent in this area, as well as those who know the prospective candidate.

The selection of candidates for the monastic life needs to be seen as an integral process involving the Novice Master and the Abbot.

References from responsible people who have known the candidate over a long period of time are also important aids to the selection process.

#### 4.3 Vetting

The Garda vetting procedures of the state should be utilised. All applicants to the noviciate will be required to have completed the Garda Vetting form.

#### 4.4 Formation

##### 4.4.1 Personal formation

The programme of formation at Glenstal Abbey includes a sound human formation and draws on the insights of the human sciences. It is particularly important that the process of formation fosters the growth and integration of the affective life of the individual, including his sexuality in the context of a celibate lifestyle.

It is essential that formation personnel are satisfied that the future monk can relate appropriately both to children and adults before presenting him for simple and solemn profession of vows.

##### 4.4.2 Health policy

Each candidate accepted into the noviciate needs to be in good physical and mental health so that he can participate actively in the monastic life of the community at Glenstal Abbey.

The applicant will be informed of this policy early in the process of inquiry into the noviciate. Psychological tests and behavioural tests may be a required part of the admissions process. Psychological testing is paid for by the community. The results of these assessments will be shared with the applicants but shall be the property of the Abbot.

#### 4.4.3 Training in best practice

Those in formation for the monastic life shall be given comprehensive training in safe and best practice in working with children and young people. This training will include, at the earliest possible stage, the provision of clear information about how to respond if concerns about child protection arise in the context of formation or outside it. All those in formation shall be provided with the name and contact details of the relevant Abbot's Designated Officer(s) for Child Protection and shall be made aware of the procedures for reporting suspicions or allegations of child abuse outlined in the Abbey Safeguarding Policy. They shall be made aware of the commitment in the Church's procedures to act in accordance with the principle that the welfare of children is always the paramount consideration.

#### 4.4.4 Transfer from other Dioceses and Jurisdictions

Diocesan priests or religious from other congregations may seek to enter the noviciate with a view to joining the monastic community at Glenstal. The monastery's responsibility for the safety and well-being of children and young people includes ensuring that proper procedures are in place in relation to reviewing such applications. In these cases also the Garda vetting procedures of the state should be utilised. All applicants to the noviciate will be required to have completed the Garda Vetting form.

#### 4.5 The monastery shall apply the following procedures:

- Prior to permitting any priest or religious to enter the noviciate, the Abbot and Novice Master shall seek detailed information about the suitability of the candidate for the monastic life from his Bishop or Religious Superior.
- All such applicant priests and religious shall be made aware of the code of good practice for working with children and young people as set out in the Abbey Safeguarding Policy and they shall be asked to give an undertaking that they will abide by it.
- The Abbot and Novice Master shall undertake to ensure that no priest or religious who has been deemed to have committed any form of child abuse is received into the noviciate.

#### 4.6 Confidentiality

As with all personnel records at Glenstal Abbey, information obtained through the application form, reference information, interviews, criminal background check, etc. is kept confidential.

Should the candidate leave the noviciate or the monastery at a later stage, records are retained even after the date of departure. Should the candidate proceed to make simple profession, these records may be passed to the Junior Master. Should the candidate then profess solemn vows, this file will then be joined to the monk's other records held by the Abbot.

## Appendix 5 Policy for Guests

### 5.1 Welcoming guests to the Guesthouse

Persons under the age of eighteen do not normally come to stay in Glenstal Abbey Guesthouse, as the monastery does not engage in residential youth ministry.

If persons under eighteen are to be accommodated in the Guesthouse, (e.g. for a school retreat) they must always be accompanied by and under the direct care of a visiting adult, (e.g. a teacher from the school concerned).

Guests over the age of eighteen who are suffering from a mental or physical disability shall, where possible, only be received if accompanied by a carer or companion. In the case of elderly guests who may be deemed to be vulnerable, special care shall be taken to ensure that their physical wellbeing is attended to.

Spiritual accompaniment shall only be provided in the following rooms; the Guestmaster's Office, the ground floor reception room, the dining room, the sitting room or the conservatory off the sitting room. Alternately, guests may be received in either of the parlours off the reception area of the monastery.

Persons who have a history of abusing children or vulnerable adults may not stay in Glenstal Abbey Guesthouse if they are not accompanied by an appropriate adult who shall be responsible for their supervision during their stay.

Guests staying in Glenstal Abbey Guesthouse may not visit the school buildings or their environs without having first consulted the Guestmaster, who shall seek the permission of the Headmaster and appropriate school personnel.

### 5.2 Training in best practice

Those charged with running the monastery Guesthouse or involved in the spiritual accompaniment of guests shall abide by the monastery's Safeguarding Policy and shall be supplied with copies of same. They shall be made aware of the procedures for reporting suspicions or allegations of child abuse outlined in the Abbey Safeguarding Policy. They shall be made aware of the commitment in the Church's procedures to act in accordance with the principle that the welfare of children is always the paramount consideration. A similar consideration for the protection of vulnerable adults shall be explained to them.

The Guestmaster will exercise due vigilance regarding those who come to the Guesthouse, and where he deems it appropriate, he may require guests to provide references before accepting their booking. Should a guest act in a suspicious manner he or she will be required to leave.

Glenstal Abbey Guesthouse is accustomed to welcoming guests who are in a fragile emotional or mental state and the prudent judgement of the Guestmaster in consultation with the Abbot shall be applied to ensure that these people are appropriately cared for during their stay.

### **5.3 Confidentiality**

The Guestmaster and those monks involved in the running of the Guesthouse or in the spiritual accompaniment of guests may in the course of their duties come across information of a confidential nature regarding safeguarding of children. The procedures described in the Abbey Safeguarding Policy must be followed, including informing the Abbot or one of his Designated Officers, who shall then be responsible for informing the appropriate civil authorities.

### **5.4 Resident Groups**

Residential groups of various kinds are welcome to stay in Glenstal Abbey. Normally these larger groups are only present when the school is not in session and they use school facilities. The Director of Hospitality is responsible for ensuring that these groups have their own safeguarding policies which are in line with best practice.

### **5.5 Day Visitors**

Glenstal Abbey welcomes day visitors and pilgrims. The Abbey Safeguarding Policy applies to all visitors to Glenstal Abbey and it must be adhered to in the interests of safeguarding children.

## Appendix 6

### Recording Policy – Data Protection

#### 6.1 Introduction

In February 2009, the NBSCCC issued its document *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. This guidance was endorsed and adopted by all the members of the three sponsoring bodies, namely, the Irish Episcopal Conference, the Conference of Religious of Ireland, and the Irish Missionary Union. Standards were created against which the practice of all participating parts of the Church would be assessed. *Standard 2* of the Guidance relates to 'Procedures – How to respond to child protection allegations and suspicions.' Criterion 2.4 of Standard 2 states the following: - "There is a process for recording incidents, allegations and suspicions, and referrals. These will be stored securely, so that confidential information is protected and complies with relevant legislation." Criterion 2.6 of Standard 2 states the following: - "There is guidance on confidentiality and information sharing which makes clear that the protection of the child is the most important consideration. The Seal of Confession is absolute."

Glenstal Abbey undertakes to meet the requirements of *Standard 2* through the adoption and implementation of this Recording Policy:

#### 6.2 Recording Policy

When an incident, allegation, suspicion or referral arises against any monk, member of staff, or volunteer, a case record will be created. It will record the information that has come to light, the actions taken, by whom and when. It will be accurate, fair, and kept up to date. The contents will be typed, where possible, to ensure legibility. The subject of the case file will be asked to agree to the creation of the file and to its content. Access to the content will be given on an agreed basis only, unless there is a clear requirement to share the information with others to prevent harm coming to a child or young person.

The case file will adhere to the structure outlined in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. When created, the case file will be stored securely in a fireproof, locking cabinet in an agreed location. All case management safeguarding files must be retained for a period of 100 years. All other files pertaining to safeguarding should be stored for a period of 30 years.

#### 6.3 Confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality that applies to the records created recognizes the right of subjects to have their privacy protected. Information gathered or stored on them will not be shared with others unless the following applies:-

- Permission has been given by the subject to share the information with others
- There is a clear need to share the information to protect a child or young person
- A court order or legal obligation requires disclosure
- There is an overwhelming public interest in disclosure

The National Office for Safeguarding Children has a mandate to review and monitor practice within the Church. To that end, access to case records will be given to ensure that Standards are being met and that the Recording Policy is being adhered to. When a file is created, the National Office will be notified to enable them to record the fact on a central index. The information shared will comprise the name of the subject of the file, the date on which it was created and who completed the task. All other information will be held in the case file itself.

## Appendix 7

### Policy on Supporting Vulnerable Students and Intimate Care

#### 7.1 Policy Statement

Glenstal Abbey School is committed to best practice in managing and responding to students in the school who are psychologically vulnerable and may be at risk of engaging in self-injurious behaviour.

#### 7.2 Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify for all Glenstal Abbey School staff:

- how to offer support to students who are distressed and psychologically vulnerable and may be at risk of harming themselves
- how to offer support to students who self-injure,
- how to promote the development of the student's self-esteem
- how to support staff members who come in contact with students who self-injure
- how to minimise the risk of the incidence of self-injury increasing in the school
- who needs to be informed, when parents need to be contacted, when external agencies need to be contacted

This document aims to reduce the risk of injury and ill health to students, staff and others and to provide as safe an environment as possible. This necessitates that staff adopt a responsible attitude in preventing and reporting incidents.

#### 7.3 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff working in Glenstal Abbey School.

#### 7.4 Definitions

- **Emotional distress** refers to mental anguish and suffering. Anyone can experience emotional distress for any number of reasons and in some cases there is no identifiable reason.
- **Self-injury** is a coping mechanism.
- **Self-Injury** is any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour that inflicts physical harm on someone's own body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. It can include cutting, scratching, burning, banging and bruising, overdosing and deliberate bone-breaking/spraining. The most common forms of self-injury are scratching, cutting, burning and overdosing. Self-injury is often habitual, chronic and repetitive.
- **Suicide** is the deliberate ending of one's life. It is different than self-harm/self-injury but those who self-injure are in emotional distress, and those who end their lives are in emotional distress. It is vital that all emotional distress is taken seriously to minimise the chances of self-injury and suicide. All talk of suicide and warning signs must be taken extremely seriously.

It is of the utmost importance that all incidents of self-injury are taken seriously and that the underlying issues and emotional distress are thoroughly investigated and necessary emotional support given, in order to minimise any greater risk. Any mention of suicidal intent should always be taken seriously and acted upon as a matter of urgency.

### **7.5 School / Management Responsibilities**

- The Headmaster is responsible for providing an induction to this document to all staff.
- The Headmaster is responsible for providing training to staff, where this is identified as necessary.
- The Headmaster will appoint a designated liaison person (DLP) to whom all concerns regarding emotional distress in a student and self-injury and potential vulnerability in this regard is reported.
- The Headmaster is responsible for providing practical and emotional support for key staff dealing with emotionally distressed children and self-injury.
- The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that this edition of this document is available and accessible to staff.
- The Headmaster is responsible for monitoring and analysing near misses, critical incidents and hazards, and to take appropriate action.
- The Headmaster is responsible for facilitating the provision of education to students on emotional distress e.g. the provision of information sessions facilitated by external experts and/or the DLP.

### **7.6 Staff Responsibilities**

- All staff will listen to students in emotional distress in a non-judgmental way.
- Report the matter to the DLP as soon as you become aware of the problem, and inform the student that you are doing this.
- Do not promise confidentiality to the student.
- Make it known to the students that you are available to listen.
- Remain calm and non-judgemental at all times.
- Avoid dismissing a student's reasons for distress as invalid.
- Encourage students to be open with you and reassure them that they can get the help they need if they are willing to talk.
- Endeavour to enable students to feel in control by asking what they would like to happen and what help they feel they need etc.
- Encourage all students to seek health and happiness in their lives every day.
- Discuss and promote healthy coping mechanisms and suggest ways in which students can be empowered to make positive changes in their lives.

- Provide access to information and resources regarding low self-esteem, emotional distress, self-injury and its causes.
- Monitor the reactions of other students who know about the self-injury.
- Avoid asking a student to show you their scars or describe their self-injury.
- In the case of a student who has self-injured avoid asking him to stop self-injuring – as this may be removing the only coping mechanism he has.

### **7.7 Designated Liaison Person Responsibilities**

- The DLP will keep records of students exhibiting emotional distress, self-injury incidents and concerns.
- The DLP will liaise with local services such as the GP and social services on what resources are available to support students who are emotionally distressed or who may self-injure.
- The DLP will liaise with the Headmaster following all incidents of self-injury.
- The DLP will inform the student's parents and liaise with them as to how best to manage the situation.
- The DLP will ensure that s/he is fully confident in his/her understanding of self-injury and seek additional information and / or training if s/he feels it necessary.
- The DLP will contact other organisations and key services in the area and find out what help and support is available for young people who self-injure.
- The DLP will liaise with the Headmaster and student to decide if any other members of staff who have contact with the student should be made aware of the self-injury and underlying concerns.
- The DLP will ensure that all first-aiders are well informed about self-injury.
- The DLP will report any mention of suicidal feelings or behaviour as a matter of urgency.
- The DLP will take care of his/her own emotional well-being and seek support as and when necessary.

### **7.8 Student Responsibilities**

- When under emotional distress or feeling the urge to self-injure at school, talk to a teacher or staff member as soon as possible.
- Discuss any additional support you feel you may need while you are going through emotional distress.
- Be aware that the teachers and designated staff are there to help you. The more you can talk to them the better able they will be to give you the support and help you need.
- Endeavour to seek fun and laughter every day.

- If you are worried that a friend may be self-injuring then do talk to a teacher for support and guidance.
- If you are concerned that a friend may be suicidal, or has mentioned suicide, then alert a teacher straight away.
- Never encourage anyone to try self-injury themselves.

### **7.9 Parent Responsibilities**

- Understand and endorse your school's emotional distress and self-injury policy.
- Educate yourself regarding emotional distress and self-injury and discuss the subject with your child.
- If your child is self-injuring, work closely with the school and take an active role in deciding the best course of action for your child.
- Keep the school informed of any incidents outside of school that you feel they should know about.
- Take care of yourself and seek any emotional support you may need in dealing with your child's emotional distress.

### **7.10 Warning Signs**

Self-injury is very often carried out in secret and there may be no warning signs that a student is self-injuring. There are some indicators that a student is suffering internally and may self-harm:

- Negativity and lack of self esteem
- Appearing unhappy or depressed
- Out of character behaviour
- A history of bullying or problems at home
- A sudden change in friends or withdrawal from a group
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse or risk taking behaviour

### **7.11 Indications of Self-injury**

- Obvious cuts, scratches or burns that do not appear to be accidental in nature.
- Frequent "accidents" that cause physical injury.
- Regularly bandaged arms/wrists.
- Reluctance to take part in physical exercise or other activities that require a change of clothes.
- Wearing long sleeves and trousers even in hot weather.

### **7.12 Intimate Care**

This is defined as any procedure involving touching, or carrying out what could be described as an invasive procedure. This may include:

- Dressing and undressing
- Use of toilet facilities
- Washing, bathing or showering
- Various invasive procedures

### **7.13 Guidelines for Staff regarding Intimate Care**

- Treat every child with dignity and respect
- Ensure an appropriate degree of privacy
- Be consistent
- Involve the child in their care
- Report any concerns

Only trained and vetted staff are assigned to these duties and the child should be comfortable with the carer provided. Except in the case of a medical professional, the carer should be the same sex as the child. Appropriate monitoring of staff involved in these activities will be put in place.

All intimate care arrangements will be made in conjunction with the child's parents or guardians. For intimate medical care the policies of the School Health Centre will augment these guidelines.

## Appendix 8

### Anti-Bullying Policy

#### 8.1 Introduction

##### 8.1.1 Our School

Glenstal Abbey School finds its inspiration in the *Rule of Saint Benedict*. Though the *Rule* was written specifically for monks, much of its teaching is of immediate relevance to the life of our school. In particular, we place a high value on life in community and personal relationships.

We seek to foster in our school, among both students and staff, a genuine commitment to the welfare of all: an enthusiasm for life in all its aspects, combined with compassion, kindness, consideration and respect for others. We expect good manners, good behaviour and good will from all members of our community. Every individual is unique and has unique gifts and talents and unique needs. In matters of conduct and discipline, it is our aim to respect students' distinctiveness, in keeping with St Benedict's teaching that the one in charge should 'so temper all things that the strong may have something to strive after, and the weak may not fall back in dismay' (RB 64:19).

The school seeks to provide a structure for daily living within which good behaviour is encouraged and supported. Furthermore, in accordance with St Benedict's injunction to the Abbot that he must 'adapt himself to a variety of characters', (RB 2:31), the school seeks to implement a fair and consistent, though suitably flexible, system of rewards and sanctions. Perpetrators of aggressive, intimidating or bullying behaviour may face strong sanctions. Yet, as St Benedict makes clear, the purpose of punishment is to bring about reform, and we take as our starting point his advice to the Abbot that he 'must hate faults but love the brothers' (RB 64:11), and that he must deal with those who are guilty of misdeeds 'so that they may be healed' (RB:30:3). The healing of the harm done by bad behaviour, by and to the individuals concerned, and reconciliation with others are therefore at the heart of this policy, to which a willingness to forgive is also integral.

##### 8.1.2 Bullying Behaviour and the Ethos of the School

Bullying of all kinds is about intimidation and abuse of power directed towards the vulnerabilities in others in any community. As a community living in the spirit of the *Rule of St Benedict*, Glenstal Abbey School strives to provide a stable and peaceful home to people of every temperament and ability, background and outlook. All will be helped to reflect on the ways in which they can contribute to and live up to this ideal. Bullying is the antithesis of a community of faith and virtue, and so must be confronted firmly and with compassion. It is an injustice which must be challenged. Equally, the school is committed to implementing educational and awareness programmes around the issue of bullying. Through the operation of this policy we therefore aim to maintain a positive and supportive culture among all students and staff and to deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions up to and including permanent exclusion.

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the school because:

- It is harmful to the person who is bullied, as well as to those who engage in it and those who support them, and can in some cases lead to lasting psychological damage and even suicide.
- It interferes with a student's right to enjoy his learning and leisure time free from intimidation.
- It is contrary to the *Rule of St Benedict* and all our aims and values.

### 8.1.3 Promoting Positive Behaviour

Glenstal Abbey School is committed to creating structures and nurturing a culture in which disclosure of bullying behaviour is supported, where peer support is fostered and acknowledged, and where all staff are engaged in the prevention and detection of bullying behaviour. To that end, positive peer support will be acknowledged and rewarded. From January 2011, a student 'Anti-Bullying Committee' will be a key part of the school's strategy for promoting positive relationships between students. We will endeavour to facilitate all parties to act with compassion, understanding and empathy.

The school's Mission Statement sets forth our desire to 'maintain an inclusive climate of learning'. This encompasses the academic, emotional, psychological, spiritual, practical and experiential dimensions of life. Therefore, the school cannot condone behaviour which undermines others' potential to develop their unique God-given talents their sense of identity, their ability to communicate and their capacity to contribute and participate in life, both within and outside the school. The school will aim to avoid the use of language which labels someone as either a 'bully' or a 'victim', as such labels serve only to limit the person's capacity to change and integrate the experience. In the spirit of maintaining mutual respect, a key focus of the school's approach will be the heightening of awareness of bullying behaviour.

## 8.2 Bullying

### 8.2.1 Defining Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is behaviour which inflicts hurt or distress by taking unfair advantage of and inappropriately exercising power over another person in some way, making that person feel uncomfortable or threatened. It is often repeated over a period of time in circumstances where it is difficult, if not impossible, for that person to defend him/herself, whatever his/her personal strength or weakness. Bullying behaviour can be both public humiliation and private torment.

When two or more people of roughly the same strength (emotional, psychological and physical) have a disagreement, even if it leads to some kind of fight, their behaviour, though undesirable, should not be confused with bullying. Bullying behaviour is always an unequal relationship. As part of the school's CSPE programme, junior students will be trained each year to act as 'Peer Mediators'.

Bullying behaviour includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Physical:** Hitting, Kicking; Pushing people around; Spitting; Taking; Damaging or hiding possessions

- **Verbal:** Name-calling; Humiliating; Offensive jokes; Excessive ‘slagging’; Taunting; Teasing; Insulting; Spreading rumours; Demanding money; Cruel and unkind remarks about physical attributes or appearance; Hurtful remarks about family members.
- **Psychological:** Undermining a person’s self-confidence, sense of safety, sense of sexual identity/orientation, race or gender.
- **Exclusionary:** Intimidating; Isolating; Excluding a person from a group; Graffiti which is not respectful of the dignity and integrity of a person.
- **Inciting others:** Promoting bullying behaviour in a group; Forcing others to collude or to stand by and do nothing.
- **Cyberbullying:** Using the internet, mobile phone messaging, social networking sites (such as Facebook, and Twitter) etc to deliberately upset someone else.

Bullying behaviour is not limited to the above categories and includes any actions which disrespect the integrity and dignity of another human being. These behaviours may be sexist, racist, related to sexual orientation (homophobic), related to a person’s home circumstances, or a person’s appearance, health, disability, or any other perceived difference, rational or otherwise.

It is a common mistake to view the one who is harmed by bullying behaviour as weak, and even to see him as the problem. As a school community we must be clear at all times that it is the bullying behaviour which is the problem. The school will never subscribe to the view that bullying is simply a fact of life and that it is impossible to solve. We must be clear that almost every bullying problem can be solved.

### 8.2.2 Legal Consequences

All members of the school community need to be aware that any person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong for which there can be legal consequences outside the school. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment, which can be subject to criminal or civil proceedings outside the school.

## 8.3 Procedures for Dealing with Reports of Bullying Behaviour

Glenstal Abbey School wishes to be worthy of the trust of all its stakeholders, and to be seen to take decisive action against unfairness and injustice of all kinds. Accordingly, much care has been taken in the compilation of these procedures in order to ensure that the school deals fairly with all reports. (These procedures apply only to reports of bullying behaviour against another student. Procedures for responding to reports of bullying behaviour against staff are dealt with in the school’s Dignity in the Workplace Policy and the Code of Conduct.)

### 8.3.1 Reporting

#### *Students*

A student who is experiencing bullying behaviour, or who is worried about another student suffering, should report this without delay, and can do so in several ways. He can:

- Tell his parents, his Housemaster / Assistant Housemaster, the Chaplain, one of his teachers, the Headmaster or a responsible older student.

- Contact the School Counsellor for advice.
- Contact the School Matron or Nurse in the Health Centre.

#### *Parents*

Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform a Housemaster or the Headmaster without delay.

### **8.3.2 Receiving a Report**

School personnel who learn of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- Respond quickly and sensitively by confirming the school's relief that the issue is out in the open and can be dealt with.
- Offer advice, support and reassurance to the one who is being targeted.
- Report the allegation to the Headmaster as soon as possible.

School personnel should reassure the student, but must not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The Headmaster should record the complaint in the Incident Book and co-ordinate the school's response to the complaint.

### **8.3.3 Assessment and Investigation**

The Headmaster will normally interview those involved on both sides of the relationship, as well as any witnesses, as soon as possible, acting in good faith, in accordance with school policies, in order to establish the facts of the case. He may decide to ask any or all of the Deputy Principal, the Director of Boarding, the relevant Housemaster(s) and the School Counsellor to be present. The Headmaster will refer the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour to the School Counsellor, to explore his feelings and begin the process of integrating them. The student who has engaged in bullying behaviour will also be referred to the School Counsellor, as it is school policy to provide support and counselling for all student parties involved. The parents of both students or sets of students may be invited to attend a meeting with the Headmaster and/or the School Counsellor.

The Headmaster will at all times remain aware that the first-named offender may not be acting alone or may not be the ringleader, and may in fact be a colluder or have been incited to bullying behaviour. He will be mindful that some of the peers will have participated as bystanders and be reluctant to tell the truth on initial questioning and he should remain alert for signs of this. He and other staff colleagues will seek out all students involved in the incident, including the bystanders, and shall ensure they each receive appropriate support, counselling and, if warranted, sanction. Their parents will be informed of any sanctions imposed. Staff shall seek to identify the leader of the bullying behaviour and decide on the best path for changing that student's behaviour, in consultation with the School Counsellor, outside professionals where appropriate, the student's own parents.

The underlying aim of all such investigations will be to re-educate each student involved into the benefits of valuing each individual, standing up to and reporting unfair treatment of others, and the dangers associated with secrecy and bullying.

### **8.3.5 The School's Response**

When a complaint is upheld, the school's response will take account all of the circumstances of the case, school policies, the needs of the individual students and the needs of the whole school community. The response will include one or more of the following:

- Advice and support for the one who has endured the bullying behaviour and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help him.
- Advice and support for the one who has engaged in the bullying behaviour in trying to change that behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning, and involvement of the Chaplain and School Counsellor. In some cases it will be appropriate to work more on establishing his awareness that his behaviour is damaging, rather than addressing him in a confrontational way.
- A 'No Blame Approach', where the support of the peer group will be sought to solve the problem.
- Conflict Resolution Mediation strategies, targeting the perpetrator as an individual to accept responsibility, before having a supervised meeting between him, the person who suffered his behaviour, and the relevant peer group, to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict.
- A disciplinary sanction, in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct, such as detention, Headmaster's detention, gating, loss of privileges, additional duties, written work or menial but not degrading manual work. In some cases, where students' behaviour is deeply ingrained and they find it difficult to change their ways, an ongoing programme aimed at developing pro-social skills, perhaps involving external agencies and professionals, may be required. In very serious cases, after a fair hearing before the School Disciplinary Committee, a student may be suspended from school for a number of days. In extreme cases, by decision of the Board of Management, a student may be permanently excluded from the school.
- Action to break up 'power bases' – groups within the school with a measure of hierarchical 'pecking order', for whom bullying others has become endemic, where members incite each other or others to engage in bullying behaviour, collude in it or stand by in the face of it. The school will adopt a shared approach in order to alter the dynamic. The appropriate supports and sanctions will be put in place so that the offenders can be rehabilitated.
- Involving the HSE or An Garda Síochána;
- Involving external psychological, medical or other support agencies.
- Such other action as may appear to the Headmaster to be appropriate.
- Noting the outcome in the relevant Incident Book.

### **8.3.6 The Aftermath and Moving Forward**

The behaviour and bearing of the two parties, and their relationship with each other will be monitored for as long as is necessary after the incident.

- Housemasters and staff will be informed and advised to be alert to any potential 'backlash' which may arise from the discovery/disclosure.
- Housemasters, teachers and tutors will be engaged in supporting the boy who has suffered and, in consultation with him, a number of peers will be selected to involve him and support him in the immediate aftermath, thus diminishing his sense of isolation. The student Anti-Bullying Committee may be involved in supporting the student.

- At a time determined by the student, and with the support of the School Counsellor, he will be facilitated to communicate with those who behaved in a bullying manner towards him. It is important to acknowledge that this step will not be required of the boy if he does not wish it. He may feel he does not want to engage in this process and his decision will be respected.
- As part of the counselling process, the boy engaged in the bullying behaviour will be encouraged to explore how he might make reparation to the other student. It is important to teach the student that there is always a pathway for change which he can, with support and facilitation, identify and follow.
- Parents of both parties will receive regular updates from the school for as long as is required. Parents are encouraged to contact the school should they have particular concerns.
- Where appropriate, the Headmaster may address a class group, a year group, a House, or a full School Assembly, reminding them that any behaviour which disrespects another is not acceptable in Glenstal Abbey School.

**8.3.7 Other actions may include:**

- Sharing relevant information with students, so that they may be more vigilant and sensitive.
- Reviewing potentially vulnerable individuals for signs or symptoms of being bullied.
- Increased supervision of areas of the school where opportunities for bullying behaviour might arise.
- Reviewing groups within the school for symptoms and signs of bullying behaviour and keeping students who might fit the profile of a bully under appropriate observation.

## Appendix 9

### Information and Communications Technologies Policy

#### 9.1 Internet Access

Broadband internet is available throughout the monastery and school. This is filtered in the school, to prevent inappropriate material being accessed. For further information regarding internet usage please refer to the Glenstal Abbey School Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP).

#### 9.2 Technical Support

All computers, peripherals and associated infrastructure are maintained by the ICT Manager. Technical support is provided to all users by the ICT Manager and problems should in the first instance be notified to him.

#### 9.3 Email

Electronic mail is an important means of communication in the diverse environment of Glenstal Abbey and School. Email is available and accessible to all monks and staff.

#### 9.4 Network Access

In the school, access to the local area network (LAN) is restricted by username and passwords. All users are responsible for the safekeeping and integrity of their password. The LAN is the property of Glenstal Abbey and may be used only for legitimate and relevant purposes. All activities which take place on the LAN are governed by the AUP.

#### 9.5 Photographs

Photographic, digital and video images of children will not be published by Glenstal Abbey without the consent of the parent or guardian of the child.

#### 9.6 Mobile Phones and similar devices

These devices may be used at appropriate times by children as this is an important means of keeping in touch with their families. Misuse of mobile devices is governed by the provisions of the school's *Code of Conduct* and its *Anti-Bullying Policy*.<sup>5</sup>

#### 9.7 Inappropriate or Illegal Material

Glenstal Abbey reserves the right to monitor and log any and all aspects of its computer system including, but not limited to, monitoring websites visited by users, monitoring chat and newsgroups, monitoring file downloads, and all communications sent and received by users.

Computer and network resources shall not be used to disseminate, view, store or generate pornographic text or images, or any other unauthorised materials such as abusive, obscene, threatening, defamatory, offensive or harassing images or material. Breaches will be regarded as a serious offence. Offenders shall be liable for disciplinary action, including possible termination of service, suspension or expulsion, and civil and / or criminal charges.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 8.

## Appendix 10

### School Tour Policy

#### 10.1 Introduction

Glenstal Abbey School has a duty of care to all its students and to school personnel. We seek to safeguard the welfare of students while on school tours and also to support school personnel who accompany students.

#### 10.2 When a tour involves an overnight stay, the Tour Leader must ensure that:

- every reasonable step be taken to ensure the safety of all tour members. Students must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. In the case of foreign tours, students should have EHIC cards well before departure.
- there be appropriate and adequate supervision for each activity undertaken on the tour. Furthermore both students and those accompanying the tour must undertake appropriate training for each activity on the tour. Training and supervision are at the discretion of the Tour Leader.
- Once the tour details have been approved, ask for a non-returnable deposit. Make it clear that the deposit is non-returnable and that students will not be taken if their behaviour is unacceptable or unsafe in the interval before the tour takes place.
- All students must complete an Application Form in full.
- The ratio of adults to students be appropriate; a ratio of not more than 10:1, and if a higher ratio is proposed then this must be authorised by the Headmaster. If the Tour Leader brings a group without an Assistant, he/she must have back-up support available.
- Child protection procedures are in place in line with the DES guidelines and the relevant child protection procedures put in place by Glenstal Abbey School.
- **Parental consent forms have been issued and returned signed; the onus is on parents to return all completed documentation and failure to do so may mean that a student may not be permitted to travel.**
- Suitable arrangements have been made for the medical needs of all pupils.
- He/she is in possession of the following information:
  - Details of medical conditions.
  - The student's GP's name, address and telephone number.
  - Written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer same.
- First aid provision is available. The medical kit should always include a thermometer and the medical histories of all participants, the information being acquired from the School Health Centre and Parents/Guardians.
- Parents/Guardians are sent the following information:
  - Dates and times of departure and return – parents/guardians must have agreed to meet their student on return.

- Details of accommodation such as hotel or exchange family name, address and telephone number.
  - Names of Tour Leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults.
  - Standards of behaviour expected in respect of, for example, alcohol, smoking and general group discipline.
  - Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole, and whether parents/guardians need to arrange additional cover.
  - Details on the cost of the visit including methods and deadlines for payments. All payments are to be considered non- refundable including the final payment.
- A school emergency contact has been nominated and that the Tour Leader has these details. The Tour Leader should also ensure that all those accompanying the trip and school contact person have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures and the names of all members of the group, with emergency contact details of parents/guardians or next of kin. All those on ski trips should carry on their persons when skiing the name and address of their hotel, the phone number of the Tour Leader and a mobile phone that works. The working conditions and provision of credit in the phone are the responsibility of the student's parents/guardians. Students on a ski trip should wear helmets and are not permitted to do "off piste" skiing.

The Headmaster must ensure that all staff and others accompanying the tour are appropriately selected and accept that the Tour Leader is in charge. It would also be expected that all have appropriate experience of supervising students of the relevant age on the tour.

### **10.3 Information retained at the school**

Full details of the visit should be retained at the school while the tour is in progress. This should include:

- the itinerary and contact phone number/address of the group.
- a list of group members and their details.
- contact names, addresses and phone numbers of the parents/guardians.
- copies of parental consent forms.
- copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers.
- a copy of the contract with the tour company/hotel etc.

It is the Headmaster's responsibility to ensure that this information is available at all times, particularly if the tour takes place when the school is closed.

### **10.4 Prohibition**

The consumption of alcohol by students under the Irish legal age limit is forbidden for all tours. Consumption of alcohol by students over the Irish legal age, even those with parental permission to do so, is at the sole discretion of the Tour Leader and these students must at all times obtain written permission from the Tour Leader before consuming alcohol.

Up to the time of departure it shall remain the prerogative of the Tour Leader to refuse a student participation on the tour without a refund, should the student's behaviour give cause for grave concern. Parents/Guardians should be made aware of this policy and put in writing that they have become so, before making any payment.

## Appendix 11 'Whistleblowing' Policy

### 11.1 Introduction

Glenstal Abbey is committed to high standards of ethical, moral and legal conduct. In line with this commitment and the Abbey's commitment to open communication, this policy aims to provide an avenue for employees and volunteers to raise concerns and reassurance that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for 'whistleblowing'.

This policy is intended to act as a procedure by which properly grounded concerns can be reported and to cover protections for you if you raise concerns regarding behaviour or activity at Glenstal Abbey relating to:

- incorrect financial reporting
- unlawful activity
- safeguarding and abuse of children
- activities that are not in line with Glenstal's policies
- activities, which otherwise amount to serious improper conduct

### 11.2 Safeguards

**Harassment or Victimization:** Harassment or victimisation for reporting concerns under this policy will not be tolerated.

**Confidentiality:** Every effort will be made to treat the complainant's identity with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

**Anonymous Allegations:** This policy encourages employees to put their names to allegations because appropriate follow-up questions and investigation may not be possible unless the source of the information is identified. Concerns expressed anonymously will be explored appropriately, but consideration will be given to:

- the seriousness of the issue raised
- the credibility of the concern
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

**Bad Faith Allegations:** Allegations in bad faith may result in disciplinary action.

### 11.3 Procedure

#### Process for Raising a Concern

The whistleblowing procedure is intended to be used for serious and sensitive issues. Such concerns, including those relating to financial reporting and unethical or illegal conduct may be reported directly to the appropriate civil authorities or the Monastery Bursar.

Employment-related concerns should continue to be reported through your line manager, or to the Bursar or one of the Monastery Superiors.

**Safeguarding and Child Protection:** Any concerns in this area should be reported to one of the Designated Officers appointed by the Abbot, or the Designated Liaison Person appointed by the Board of Management of the school. Concerns can also be reported directly to the HSE, An Garda Síochána or the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church. Contact details are posted on the monastery website and on the notice boards.

**Timing:** The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it is to take action.

**Evidence:** Although the employee is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, the employee should be able to demonstrate to the person contacted that the report is being made in good faith.

#### **11.4 How the Report of a Concern will be handled**

The action taken by Glenstal Abbey in response to a report of concern under this policy will depend on the nature of the concern. The Abbot and the Seniorate shall receive information on each report of concern and follow-up information on actions taken.

**Initial Inquiries:** Initial inquiries will be made to determine whether an investigation is appropriate, and the form that it should take. Some concerns may be resolved without the need for investigation.

**Further Information:** The amount of contact between the complainant and the person or persons investigating the concern will depend on the nature of the issue and the clarity of information provided. Further information may be sought from or provided to the person reporting the concern.

In the case of a Safeguarding or Child Protection concern being raised, the procedure followed will be that as set out in the *Abbey Safeguarding Policy* and in the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.



