

**Second Review of Child Safeguarding Practice**  
**in the**  
**Benedictine Abbey, Glenstal**  
**undertaken by**  
**The National Board for Safeguarding Children**  
**in the Catholic Church in Ireland**  
**(the National Board)**

**Date: August 2018**

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## **Background**

The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (the National Board) was established in 2006 to provide advice, services and assistance in furtherance of the development of the safeguarding of children within the Roman Catholic Church on the island of Ireland; and to monitor compliance with legislation, policy and best practice, and to report on these activities as is comprehensively set out in the Memorandum of Association of the Company.

Church authorities who have entered into an agreement with the National Board through signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have committed to following *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.

In order to assess their compliance with the 2016 Standards, the Abbot of the Benedictine Community in Glenstal, County Limerick, Abbot Brendan Coffey, has invited the National Board to undertake a review of practice in 2018. The Benedictines in Glenstal were previously reviewed in November 2013, against the 2009 version of *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, with the report of that Review published and placed on the Glenstal website in May, 2014. This can be found by clicking on the following link [www.glenstal.com/uploaded/Abbey/PDFs/Glenstal\\_Safeguarding\\_Review\\_-\\_12\\_May\\_2014.pdf](http://www.glenstal.com/uploaded/Abbey/PDFs/Glenstal_Safeguarding_Review_-_12_May_2014.pdf) and on the National Board's website [www.safeguarding.ie/publications](http://www.safeguarding.ie/publications).

The purpose of this current Review is to assess the Child Safeguarding practice at Glenstal Abbey against the *Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*; and to establish through evidence:

- Public confidence that the Church body is safe for children;
- Affirmation to Child Safeguarding personnel that they are doing the right things well;
- Confirmation to the Church authority that what they want to be done is in fact being done;
- Independent verification of the Church body's Self-Audit – or correction and/or improvement of its Self-Audit;
- Opportunities for learning.

The process of review was initiated through a letter of invitation from Abbot Brendan Coffey to the National Board and the signing of an MOU and Data Processing Deed. The latter allowed the National Board reviewers to access all material held by the Benedictines at Glenstal Abbey relating to Child Safeguarding and Case Management.

There was a pre-fieldwork meeting held at Glenstal on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with Abbot Coffey, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the Abbey's DLPs and the DLP of Glenstal Abbey School (the Principal) and a member of the Safeguarding Committee who is the Headmaster of Glenstal Abbey School. The purpose was to agree the parameters of the

Review, and to gather background information, all of which is detailed in this report. The Abbot took responsibility for ensuring and facilitating the reviewers' access to all records, to the relevant personnel in the Abbey, to students attending Glenstal Abbey School, and to a respondent.

At this January 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, the National Board reviewers discussed whether it would be possible to have contact with complainants, without causing any alarm or distress to them. It was explained that there is very limited contact between the Order and complainants, and that when there is, it is usually initiated by the complainants. No complainant is currently receiving on-going, active assistance from the Order's Support Person. Having looked at the issue from a number of perspectives, it was agreed that contact from the National Board with a complainant 'out of the blue' was deemed inappropriate.

The Benedictine Monks in Glenstal Abbey, as a religious community, have limited ministry with children. Glenstal Abbey School however is on the campus very near to the Abbey. It is a seven-day boarding, six-day teaching school for boys aged 13-18, although it has begun to enroll day attending students ('day boarders') who now constitute about 25% of the student population of 250. The school forms an integral part of the wider community associated with the monastery; the Abbey's Church, which can be attended by the general public; the Abbey's Guesthouse, which caters for people who want to stay at the Abbey, perhaps to undertake a retreat or simply to have a period of rest; and the Abbey's extensive 400 acre grounds and gardens, which with some restrictions are open to the public to visit and walk through (the restrictions reflect a vigilance around site access protocols). The National Board is clear that the school as a six-day educational facility is accountable for its safeguarding practice to the Department of Education and Skills. However, there a number of monks on the school Board of Governors, Board of Management, teaching staff, and with pastoral care responsibilities for students. In addition, the boarding care components are overseen by a monk who is designated the Director of Boarding. The National Board was therefore invited to review and comment on the safeguarding aspects of those school-related ministries. Boarding schools provide both (residential) care and education, and the reviewers were particularly interested in the care dimension.

The National Board commend the Benedictines for encouraging the reviewers to examine the pastoral care components of the boarding school and for their openness to receiving advice from the reviewers. In addition, the opportunity to engage directly with young people and school staff allowed for a more holistic review which examined how Child Safeguarding procedures are put into practice, and not simply policy and procedures documents.

As part of the quality assurance approach adopted by the National Board, a copy of the Review Report was legally scrutinised by the National Board's lawyer.

Abbot Coffey has confirmed that the reviewers have had access to all Case Management and Safeguarding material available in the Abbey.

## **Introduction**

Glenstal Abbey is home to a community of monks, who live by the rule of Saint Benedict. There are 35 current members of the community listed on the Abbey's website; these include three monks who are studying abroad, and a further two in nursing-home care elsewhere. Thirteen monks are involved in Glenstal Abbey School in some role. The monastery is located in Murroe, County Limerick on a 400 acre estate which is open to the public. On the Abbey grounds is a monastery for the monks, a church open to the public, a boarding school, a farm, and a guesthouse for those who choose to make a retreat or to rest and reflect upon life.

The monks follow a prayerful and liturgical life, assembling together four times a day for Divine Office and Mass. According to the Glenstal Abbey website,

...there is a rich variety of monastic work at Glenstal but there is no one specific work associated with monks. The monastic apostolate is primarily one of presence, witness and service. The Work of God, the Sacred Liturgy, is to come before all else in the life of a monk.

The Benedictines at Glenstal Abbey have committed to following the policies and standards set out in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*, and all monks have made a commitment to honouring the National Board's guidance in relation to maintaining safe environments for children and young people. All of the monks who have responsibilities in Glenstal Abbey School sign up to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, published by the Department of Education and Skills in 2017 - see [www.glenstal.com/school/our-school/safeguarding](http://www.glenstal.com/school/our-school/safeguarding). For the avoidance of doubt, the National Board did not review the Child Safeguarding practice in the school, as that is outside the remit of the National Board. The care aspects of the boarding school however were considered and will be commented on in the report below.

The Terms of Reference for this Review cover the period, in terms of Case Management, from the date of the last review published in 2014 (following fieldwork in 2013). New cases reported to the Abbey since 2013 were therefore examined in this review, along with cases still being managed since the last review. Practice relating to all the Standards is assessed from the date of the introduction of the revised Standards in 2016.

## **Previous Review**

The previous Review Report published in 2014 made six recommendations:

### **Recommendation 1**

That all visiting monks and other clergy who come to stay in the monastery and who seek to minister in public at Glenstal Abbey should be required to sign a Declaration and to present to the Abbot a letter from their Ordinary / Superior stating that they are in good standing, and that a register is developed to record that this documentation has been produced and recorded.

**Recommendation 2**

That the Abbot ensures that all Garda Vetting of the monks of Glenstal Abbey is brought up to date as quickly as possible and is renewed in a timely fashion as required.

**Recommendation 3**

That a Training Audit is conducted with all monks, school staff and other lay staff to identify their Child Safeguarding Training needs, on the basis of which a Three-Year Child Safeguarding Training Plan is developed and implemented.

**Recommendation 4**

That the Prior as a member of the Safeguarding Team brings the results of his annual audit of compliance to that forum as early as possible each year so that a formal written Child Safeguarding Plan for Glenstal Abbey can be generated and published annually.

**Recommendation 5**

That the Safeguarding Team develop a programme of consultation with the Students of Glenstal Abbey School and with their parents on how best to optimise child safeguarding in the school and on the wider Abbey campus.

**Recommendation 6**

That the Safeguarding Team adopts the practice of having an agreed taker of minutes who records, types up and places on the Safeguarding Team meetings file a formal minute of all meetings of the group.

Towards the end of 2014, the then Abbot wrote to the National Board stating that all six recommendations had been implemented and this review confirmed that this is the case.

**Process of Review**

An initial discussion took place between the CEO for the National Board and Abbot Coffey in late 2017, following which he brought the matter of the proposed review to the Community at Glenstal Abbey. Once he had the approval of his Community, there was a pre-fieldwork meeting held at Glenstal on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with Abbot Coffey, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is a Monk, the Abbey's two DLPs and the School Principal who is also the schools DLP and the school Headmaster, where the parameters of the review were agreed. Abbot Coffey wrote to the National Board on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 inviting it to conduct a Review of all Child Safeguarding practice against *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*.

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, the National Board sent to the Abbot all of the pre-review written materials, including the National Board Review - Stage 1 - Pre-fieldwork Questionnaire. The completed questionnaire when returned gave an overview of cases, safeguarding procedures and personnel. Very helpfully to the reviewers, on April 18<sup>th</sup>, Abbot Coffey sent them a document put together by the Glenstal Abbey's Safeguarding Committee which addressed all seven Standards and every Indicator, stating how the Community complies with each and identifying where the supporting evidence for each Indicator was to be found. A date and the timetable for the fieldwork visit were subsequently agreed.

The Community placed a notice on the Glenstal Abbey and on Glenstal Abbey School websites to inform people that the Review was taking place, and inviting anyone with views on child safeguarding practice to come forward. This is reproduced here:

**Notice of Review of Safeguarding Practice**

The Benedictine Community of Glenstal Abbey has invited the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) to conduct a review of safeguarding practice. If you have any views about Safeguarding in Glenstal, we invite you to come forward to us (061-621000) or to the NBSCCCI (01-5053124).

If you wish to report a child safeguarding concern, please contact one of the following:

Designated Liaison Persons - Mr Pat Brosnan and Fr. Martin Browne OSB - 061-621000 / [delegate@glenstal.org](mailto:delegate@glenstal.org)

An Garda Síochána - 01-6663430

TUSLA - 061-588688

The fieldwork visit took place on May 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018, when the reviewers met the Abbot, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the Prior, DLPs (one of who is a lay man responsible for Training), the Headmaster, the school Principal, some teachers, the Dean of Boarding, an advisor to a respondent and the support person. In addition, sessions were held with the School Student Council and with the Pastoral Care Team responsible for the welfare of students.

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An open invitation was offered to all of the monks in the Glenstal Abbey Community to meet with the reviewers to discuss any aspect of Child Safeguarding at an open meeting before supper on the first day of the fieldwork, but no monk took up this offer. The reviewers did however meet with the former Abbot during the allocated time.



## **STANDARDS**

This section provides the findings of the Review. The template employed to present the findings are the seven Standards, set down and described in the Church document, *Safeguarding Children: Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland, 2016*. Glenstal Abbey agreed to adopt *Safeguarding Children 2016* as its Child Safeguarding Policy through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

The seven Standards are:

### **Standard 1**

*Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments*

### **Standard 2**

*Procedures for responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or allegations*

### **Standard 3**

*Care and Support for the Complainant*

### **Standard 4**

*Care and Management of the Respondent*

### **Standard 5**

*Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe*

### **Standard 6**

*Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message*

### **Standard 7**

*Quality Assuring Compliance with the Standards*

Each Standard is supported by a number of Indicators by which compliance with the particular Standard is measured. To support implementation of the Standards, the National Board has produced detailed web-based Guidance. Glenstal Abbey has mostly adopted the Guidance of the National Board. The document prepared by the Community in advance of the fieldwork indicates the extent to which the monks have accepted the National Board's Guidance.

This Review, while noting the existence of written procedures, concentrates as much as is possible on actual practice, through a combination of observation, the examination of written records of actions taken, communication with students, interviews with Community personnel involved in student welfare, safeguarding personnel, and discussions with personnel in statutory agencies about their experience of the Community from a Child Safeguarding perspective.

An assessment of practice under each Standard is set out below.

## **Standard 1**

### ***Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments***

*Church bodies provide an environment for children that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. They provide access to good role models whom the children can trust, who respect, protect and enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.*

Standard 1 sets out the requirement for Church bodies to create safe environments for children and young people, and the expectation that children are safe whilst under the care and supervision of Catholic Church personnel. The Indicators which support the standard relate to the reasonable steps that should be taken to promote the wellbeing of children by making sure – as far as possible – that those who minister with children are safe, know how to engage positively with children, and enrich their lives through the teachings of the Gospels.

Glenstal Abbey is a community of monks, the majority of whom have relatively little if any direct contact with children. However, there are 13 monks who teach in or have caring/pastoral responsibilities in the school, including in the boarding section and non-scholastic activities. As has already been stated, the school's child safeguarding policy and procedures are those of the Department of Education and Skills; however, the monks have dual accountability, having also committed to following the procedures of the Catholic Church as set out in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016*. This report will offer comment only in relation to the how the Indicators under each Standard in *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016* have been met.

In November 2017, the Headmaster and School Principal, in consultation with the Board of Management of Glenstal Abbey School, invited the UK Boarding Schools Association (BSA) to conduct a Boarding Audit against the UK Department of Education *Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards, 2015*. In the absence of any similar regulatory oversight body in Ireland, the school's management asked BSA to assess the quality of their boarding, including care of the students; health and welfare provision; domestic arrangements; use of free time and leisure activities; quality of boarding premises; and quality of leadership and management. The reviewers were given a copy of the report produced and note its findings and recommendations. Under the heading, *Quality of Boarding Leadership and Management*, the audit report first states a safeguarding indicator and then gives an assessment of the level of compliance with this:

Suitable procedures are in place to ensure that the welfare of children is safeguarded and that best outcomes for boarders are promoted.

Appropriate procedures were in place to ensure compliance with all legal requirements, particularly in terms of Garda vetting and reporting of issues to Tusla.

There are 12 recommendations in all, and the school's leadership is committed to implementing these.

**Indicators that ensure Standard 1 is being met**

<b>1.1</b>	The Church body follows effective practice guidelines and legislative requirements in the recruitment of all Church personnel and in assessing their suitability to work with children.
<b>1.2</b>	The Church body implements effective practice on the expected standards of adults' behaviour towards children.
<b>1.3</b>	The Church body implements effective practice in encouraging children's positive behaviour.
<b>1.4</b>	The Church body implements effective practice in safe care for all children, including those with specific needs.
<b>1.5</b>	The Church body ensures that the safe use of Church property by external groups complies with effective child safeguarding practice.
<b>1.6</b>	The Church body has in place clearly written whistle-blowing procedures to support and assist Church personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards children involved in Church activities.
<b>1.7</b>	The Church body has a clearly written complaints procedure regarding safeguarding concerns that are not allegations of abuse.
<b>1.8</b>	The Church body implements effective practice for Church personnel on assessment of hazards when working with children.
<b>1.9</b>	The Church body implements effective practice for the appropriate use of information technology, including social media by Church personnel and by children.
<b>1.10</b>	The Church authority has responsibility for ensuring that all clerics/religious, who are members of the Church body and are, ministering with children in an external organisation/Church body, agree to follow effective safeguarding practice.

There is a Safeguarding Committee in Glenstal Abbey. It has a membership of six people who all have a role in Child Safeguarding on the campus, including two lay persons, the Principal of the Abbey School and the lay Abbey DLP and Trainer. The reviewers met with the Safeguarding Committee as part of its fieldwork for the Review. The committee meets every two months or so, and all three DLPs on the Abbey campus are members. It identifies developments at a national level and translates these for implementation at the level of the school and monastery. It oversees training and is responsible for coordinating all written documents related to Child Safeguarding on the campus - the Three-Year Child Safeguarding Plan; the annual Self-Audit; the annual Training Needs Analysis; and the annual Training Plan.

The Abbey Community conforms to good practice requirements, e.g. a Sacristy Register is maintained and checked regularly by the DLP. There is a notice in the Sacristy about need for visiting priests to both show their credentials and to put details in a register. Visiting priests to the Abbey do not have access with students in the Abbey School.

There is a different register employed in the Abbey for longer stay visitors; they fill out requisite forms in advance of their arrival, and they present a letter of good standing from their Ordinary. Glenstal Abbey also gets them Garda vetted.

**1.1** There are 30 monks in residence in Glenstal Abbey Community, two in nursing homes and a further three studying abroad. The age spread of monks is from 36 to 99, with almost all monks active and in ministry of some kind. Each monk has a role; some as already stated teaching or having administrative or pastoral responsibilities in the school. Other monks are active in the guesthouse, in the archives, in the domestic running of the Monastery or in administration. There is a sense of an active community who come together at regular stages in the day to pray and worship.

All monks go through a monastic formation process, which takes place within the Abbey, while their academic requirements are met in institutions in Ireland and across the world (for example, in Rome, England and Canada). New applicants are inducted by the Novice Master, whose responsibilities include taking up references and obtaining Garda vetting. The Abbot keeps the Community members' personal files in his office, including those on novices. The Bursar is responsible for the recruitment of all personnel in the Abbey complex (farm work, gardening, maintenance etc.) and again, Garda vetting is a requirement for anyone being hired to work there. The school follows Department of Education and Skills guidelines for recruitment of teachers, SNAs and school personnel.

All monks and lay personnel are Garda vetted; in addition any monk who ministers in the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly observes the requirements of the Archdiocese.

It is the nature of monastic life that clergy from elsewhere visit regularly, for short stays or for longer periods. The Community states in the document presented to the reviewers in advance of the fieldwork that:

Visiting clergy who wish to concelebrate are asked to present a valid celebret and record the details in the log book in the sacristy. This is available for inspection. Visiting monks fill out the relevant form from the NBSCCCI guidance depending on their level of ministry and send this in advance to the Prior. He keeps these records in his folder. This is also available for inspection.

**1.2** Glenstal Abbey has taken and is using the National Board's safeguarding guidance - *Safeguarding Children: Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland*. As part of the process of familiarising monks and staff with the guidance, the lay DLP developed a landscape document which cross-references the new National Board's guidance with the previous Glenstal Abbey guidance; and the monks found this a useful tool, as the challenge to understand the extensive new guidance *ab initio* could have been overwhelming. All of the monks have committed to following the National Board's guidance in full, including the code of behaviour for adults relating to children and young people. The reviewers witnessed a number of exchanges between adults and students over their three days visiting the Abbey and the Abbey School and were impressed with the respectful nature of these exchanges. The school also has an *Anti-Bullying Policy* and programme, and the students are made aware of how to report any concerns they may have in relation to their own safety and welfare or that of any other student, whether the perceived threat is from an adult or another student or students.

In reality, life for the monks is separate from life in the school where the children's (students') activities are concentrated. The Monastery church is open to the public, and children may attend, but always in the presence of their parents/guardians/teachers. Within the church the monks concelebrate on the altar. Sixth year students serve Mass on Sundays and children from all years participate in the school choir who sing on Sundays.

There is a limited engagement through sacramental preparation for some students in the school, essentially those who may not have received the Sacrament of Confirmation prior to their arrival there.

The open layout in the school, with a lot of classroom windows looking in on a central meeting area where students mingle, makes for an easy to monitor environment. The reviewers had the opportunity to review the BSA's Audit report of Boarding, which referred to the number of students per dormitory as being higher than is the norm in boarding school accommodation in the UK; the report also referenced the need for a refreshment of some areas of the living quarters for the boarding students. Up to six students at a time share the same small dormitory room, and the old building has many 'blind spots'. There are seven Housemasters and a Dean of Boarding for the six years of boarders, all of whom have their own separate sleeping accommodation, and there are alarms and CCTV installations to minimise the possibility of people being able to move about unnoticed during the night time. There is also a night warden who remains awake and patrols the school and campus through the night and who is on call in case of emergencies.

**1.3** Most of the Benedictine Community's ministry with children takes place in the Abbey School. The reviewers met with the Pastoral Care Team and with the Students' School Council to hear first-hand from both staff and students about their views on and experiences of Child Safeguarding. The Pastoral Care Team is made up of the Dean of Boarding and the School Chaplain (both monks), with the Matron, the lay School Principal, the Deputy Principal, the lay Guidance Counsellor and the lay Housemaster. The six-person group has good gender and professional balance, with three women and three men with a variety of training and employment experiences between them. They meet weekly and concentrate on the welfare of the students. They discuss concerns that may have arisen in relation to an individual student who may be presenting as withdrawn or lacking in motivation for example; and they share their knowledge and perspectives. A response plan is agreed to deal with the needs of the individual student; and if the issue seems to be medical, for example, the Matron and the school GP would take the lead role in following through with the student, and if needs be, with their parents.

A total of 14 written policies is available on Glenstal Abbey school website at <https://www.glenstal.com/school/our-school/policies>. These policies include: *Anti-Bullying Policy*; a *Code of Conduct* for the students; a *Computer Network and Acceptable Usage Policy*; a *Foreign School Tour Policy*; a *Guardianship Policy*; a *Pastoral Care Policy*; and a *Substance Abuse Policy*, amongst others.

A housemaster explained the Anti-Bullying Programme that operates in the school and the raising of awareness among the school community of the unacceptability of such behaviour. A restorative justice model has been adopted to deal with bullying behaviour, and as described by team members, it appears to be quite effective in bringing about positive change. This approach was also described by the members of the Student Council with whom the reviewers also spoke; these students referenced the benefits of the approach, not just in relation to discipline but also in relation to creating a caring and supportive environment for all students attending the school. There is an emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own behaviour, along with older students looking out for the more recently arrived ‘Juniors’.

**1.4** The effective practice in safe care for all of the students in Glenstal Abbey School is evidenced and discharged by the work of the Pastoral Care Team as a body, and also by the individuals who make up the membership of that team. The Matron and nursing staff (the Health Centre), with the assistance of the school’s GP, looks after the specific health needs of students, which on occasion can include mental health concerns. The implementation of the anti-bullying programme and the on-going review of its operation go a long way to ensuring that the needs of vulnerable students are highlighted and responded to.

The Abbey School has a *Guardianship Policy* that applies to students who come to the school from abroad. This policy requires that the parents of each foreign student appoint an Irish-based Guardian who takes ‘local’ responsibility. The school’s Guardianship Policy states that:

All international students are required to have an Irish resident guardian whilst studying at Glenstal. Guardianship provides an additional level of support for an international student whilst they are in Ireland, and allows them to have another adult outside of the School to whom they can turn to for assistance or advice, and who will provide accommodation when the School is closed as it may be impractical to travel home.

As the person with shared delegated parental responsibility, the role of guardian complements the requirement of Housemasters to act in ‘loco parentis’. Effective partnership between staff concerned with pastoral care, parents and guardians will safeguard the welfare of international students. Some parents choose to appoint a family friend or relative, but where this is not practicable professional guardians can be appointed using reputable, and ideally accredited, guardianship agencies.<sup>1</sup>

**1.5** The Abbey allows the school facilities to be used during the summer period by outside organisations that run language courses or other types of activity-based programmes. Previous discussions and advice was offered by the National Board to the Benedictine Community at Glenstal to ensure that the incoming organisation always has its own safeguarding policy and insurance, so that it is clear that they, and not the Abbey staff, are responsible for the safety and well-being of the children and young people during the summer activities. Glenstal Abbey has a Hospitality Department which

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<sup>1</sup> Glenstal Abbey School Guardianship Policy and Agreement  
<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1526393760/glenstalcom/cssytob1ryvusykybld/GuardianshipPolicy.pdf>

handles issues related to non-Abbey or Abbey School staff utilising facilities at the Abbey, including the Guesthouse.

**1.6** The whistle blowing procedures exist, but these have not been activated by anyone yet. The policy is also detailed in the separate Employee Handbook which is issued to all staff of the Abbey.

**1.7** Under this indicator, there have been no recorded complaints brought to the attention of the monks regarding child safeguarding concerns which do not relate to allegations of abuse. The Abbey would follow the National Board's Guidance 1.7A in the event of receiving such a complaint. Separate to the Abbey, the school has a very active anti-bullying policy, and complaints made in line with that policy are recorded and dealt with within the school.

**1.8** There certainly was a heightened awareness amongst the Abbey's Safeguarding Committee and the Abbey School staff of the need to understand the risks presented in managing the care of students on the very open campus at Glenstal. The Abbey rests in 400 acres of open parkland which is accessible by the public. There have been instances of unwelcome visitors which have required intervention by An Garda Síochána; and in one case the monks had to seek an exclusion order on a particular individual who was a cause of concern.

It is part of the wide range of educational opportunities made available to the students of Glenstal Abbey School to travel abroad during school term time, generally to improve their foreign language skills, but also to take part in trips and activities with other educational and developmental goals. The school has a *Foreign School Tour Policy*, in which the following is stated:

**1. Introduction**

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Glenstal Abbey School to encourage, where appropriate, extra-curricular and/or co-curricular activities which further the broader educational development of students, including school tours. All school tours must comply with the provisions of DES Circular M20/04. The Board delegates its authority to approve School Tours to the Headmaster. Any staff member proposing to organise a tour should complete a Tour Proposal Form and submit it to the Headmaster for approval before proceeding to arrange the tour.

**2. Purpose of School Tours**

The objective of an educational tour should be to provide a significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of pupils in the particular grade(s) taking part in the tour which cannot be provided by in-school activities alone. Tours organised purely for recreation/vacation may not take place during term time. Tours organised on days when students would otherwise be in class should conform to the following DES guidelines:

- (a) Educational visit involving an exchange of groups of students with another school
- (b) Educational visit involving attendance at a course of instruction
- (c) Educational visit involving active participation in a music or drama festival
- (d) Educational visit to a conference or exhibition of clear educational value
- (e) Educational visits should be appropriate to the age group/grade concerned
- (f) Educational visits involving significant linguistic or cultural benefit.<sup>2</sup>

All of these trips require risk / hazard assessments, and these are conducted in line with Department of Education requirements.

One of the destinations that the school has used for students who wish to improve their spoken Spanish has been Argentina; and while no significant problems have been caused for students who have travelled there, the school informed the reviewers that it will be phased out in recognition of the extreme distances involved if any such problem were to arise in the future; and that in future, Spain will be substituted in its place. Irish families that become host families for students from abroad coming as part of an exchange arrangement are Garda vetted.

An issue that had arisen during a school trip to another European country was discussed with the reviewers. Advice was offered that the Headmaster and School Principal should as a matter of routine always conduct post-trip reviews to assess what might need to be done to address any issues that might arise and what lessons could be learned to prevent a reoccurrence. The reviewers have issued a separate letter to the school leadership offering detailed advice in relation to this.

**1.9** The monks follow the National Board's procedures in relation to the use of IT. There were not any issues of concern drawn to the attention of the reviewers relating to the monks and adult personnel. The school did advise of some mobile phone bullying behaviour which has resulted in two processes: firstly the restorative justice approach already referred to as part of the anti-bullying programme being activated; and secondly, a more restrictive mobile phone use regime being introduced, which involves junior students handing up their mobile phones at certain times; and all students having periods during the 24-hour cycle in which the use of their mobile phone is prohibited. However, from a student welfare perspective, the reviewers were advised that any student who needs to phone home can access a telephone in the school. This is a recognition of the needs that boarding students have to be able to contact their parents if for any reason they are upset or distressed during the times in which their mobile phone use is restricted.

**1.10** Many of the monks who are priests provide ministry in the neighbouring parishes; and some of the monks have international profiles which lead to invitations to

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<sup>2</sup>Foreign School Tour Policy

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1526393759/glenstalcom/hvac1ksjmlwi67i7tqzx/ForeignSchoolTourPolicy.pdf>



travel. Each monk has a celebret to show that they are in good standing. Monks ministering to parishes within the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly and other diocesan contexts, adhere to diocesan requirements and follow local policies and procedures.

**Assessment by Reviewers**

The reviewers are of the opinion that the Benedictine Community at Glenstal Abbey takes its responsibilities for Child Safeguarding seriously and has created a very safe environment for the students and other children and young people who undertake any activities on the Abbey's campus; and in relation to the Abbey School specifically, have put structures, policies and practices in place that promote and support their safety and welfare.

**Standard 2**

***Procedures for responding to Child Protection Suspicions, Concerns, Knowledge or allegations***

*Church Bodies have clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. They also enable the Church to meet all national and international legal and practice requirements and guidance.*

At the time of the last Review published in May 2014, there were six members against whom allegations had been made. Two were alive, two were deceased and two had already left the Order many years ago. Of the two living monks, the allegations against one were investigated and considered to be without foundation. The other living monk admitted the abuse and has been living under a restricted regime since.

**Indicators that ensure the standard is being met**

<b>2.1</b>	<p>The Church body has clearly written child safeguarding procedures and access to the personnel to implement them if suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations are received about the abuse of a child.</p> <p>These procedures specify that all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities (apart from those received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation) will be reported.</p> <p>In addition to reporting to the statutory authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• if the allegation relates to a Church authority, the National Board must also be informed;</li><li>• if the allegation relates to a cleric or religious, the National Board and the Church authority must also be informed;</li><li>• if the allegation relates to a lay member of Church personnel, the Church authority must be informed.</li></ul>
<b>2.2</b>	<p>The Church body records all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations and action taken which complies with relevant data protection legislation, statutory guidance on confidentiality and storage of information.</p>
<b>2.3</b>	<p>The Church authority shares information about child protection suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations with those who need to know, in order to keep children safe.</p>

Since the last Review the Benedictines have been notified of one allegation against a deceased member, against whom there were previous allegations. The file on this priest had been examined as part of the first Review published in 2014.

In June 2014, the then Abbot received correspondence from a past student, stating that he had experienced sexual abuse in 1960s by a monk who he did not name; and he added

that he did not wish to pursue the matter. When invited by the Abbot to name the monk, the complainant did so. This allowed the Abbey's DLP to notify An Garda Síochána, Tusla and the National Board, which he did without delay. All three agencies sent letters confirming receipt of the notifications.

The Abbot also informed the complainant that there was a professional counselling service available to him to which he could be referred. This offer was made twice and was declined twice. The complainant did write to the Abbot telling him that he was grateful for the response he had received and that he was greatly relieved having made the report.

This was the only case management activity recorded, other than the on-going close supervision of the living monk who is under a restricted regime. That situation is described under Standard 4 below.

**Incidence of safeguarding allegations received by the Benedictines of Glenstal against members of the Community**

Total number of members against whom allegations have been made since 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1975 up to the 2018 review	<b>6</b>
Total number of allegations received by the Benedictines of Glenstal since 1 <sup>st</sup> January, 1975	<b>11</b>
Number of allegations received since the last review published in 2014 against Benedictine members	<b>1</b> (against one of the 6 previously accused)
Total number of Benedictines accused of child abuse since the last review published in 2014. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers against living members of the Community</li> <li>• Numbers against deceased members of the Community</li> <li>• Numbers against former members of the Community</li> </ul>	 0 <b>1</b> 0
Status of accused : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In ministry</li> <li>• Out of ministry</li> <li>• Retired</li> </ul>	 0 0 0
Number of allegations reported to An Garda Síochána involving members of the Benedictine Community in Glenstal since last review published in 2014. Number of allegations reported to the Benedictines by An Garda Síochána involving members of the Community since the last review published in 2014.	<b>1</b> 0
Number of allegations reported to Tusla involving members of the Benedictine Community in Glenstal since last review. Number of allegations reported to the Benedictines by Tusla involving members of the Benedictine Community in Glenstal since the last review published in 2014.	<b>1</b> 0
Number of members who have been convicted of having committed an offence or offences against a child or young	0

person since the last review published in 2014.	
Number of members who have been found guilty in a canonical process since last review published in 2014.	0

In addition, the Benedictines have received reports that are unrelated to the monks. This is quite common when someone writes in asking for prayers for recovery from some traumatic event in their lives. On each occasion when this has arisen, the Benedictine Abbey's DLP has informed the complainant of the requirement for him to pass all information on to An Garda Síochána and Tusla, and has followed this with a report to those agencies.

Glenstal Abbey School also informed the reviewers of a report it made in 2017 relating to an allegation made by a student, and note that this was promptly passed by the school's DLP to Tusla (in accordance with DES procedures at the time); and the student's parents were also informed of the mandated obligation on the DLP to report. While the details of this incident are not shared here, the school has been awaiting a response from Tusla before taking any further action. The National Board reviewers offered advice on appropriate next steps that the Abbey School management could take; and also recommended that further attempts be made to obtain a response from Tusla.

Because of the small size of the Glenstal Abbey Benedictine Community and its location on one site only, it does not have regular interagency meetings with An Garda Síochána and with Tusla. Meetings have been held on an 'as needed' basis from time to time. As reported in the first review published in 2014, the relevant personnel had a meeting with HSE (the precursor of Tusla in relation to child safeguarding), An Garda Síochána and the National Board to review all case management issues and to ensure that all cases had been appropriately notified to the statutory authorities. The DLPs have the names and contact details of officers in both Tusla and An Garda Síochána to use if and when required, and these statutory agency staff are known to them.

The Benedictine Community at Glenstal Abbey is currently managing one monk under a Covenant of Care and is in close and regular contact with named individuals in both An Garda Síochána and in Tusla in relation to this.

### **Assessment of Standard 2**

The Benedictine Community in Glenstal Abbey has successfully met the requirements set out in the three Indicators under Standard 2. While the demands of case management are relatively light, all matters that are required to be addressed have been. An issue related to the Abbey School is also being managed appropriately.

The Abbey follows the National Board's Guidance in relation to achieving compliance with Standard 2.

### **Standard 3**

#### ***Care and Support for the Complainant***

*Complainants who have suffered abuse as children receive a compassionate response when they disclose their abuse. They, and their families, are offered appropriate support, advice and pastoral care.*

The Abbot has appointed a monk to provide support to complainants. He has enjoyed very positive engagement and clearly has offered pastoral support on the complainants' terms. At this stage of development of these helping relationships, contact is at the discretion of the two complainants who wish to maintain this. It was reassuring to hear the warm and accepting comments of the Support Person towards complainants. Both complaints relate to the same (deceased) priest.

Historically, some complainants have availed of counselling, others remain in contact either by way of visits to Glenstal or through correspondence at Christmas, Easter etc. Others have decided against having any direct contact with the Benedictine Community or Abbey School. The Benedictines at Glenstal Abbey pay towards the costs of the Towards Healing services.

#### **Indicators that ensure the standard is being met**

<b>3.1</b>	The Church authority offers appropriate pastoral care to complainants, which recognises their unique needs. This should include an offer from the Church authority to meet the complainant in person.
<b>3.2</b>	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel - lay, religious or clergy - whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the complainant. This is done in consultation with the complainant.
<b>3.3</b>	The Church body works in cooperation with relevant organisations and seeks specialist advice from the statutory child protection services when necessary

The Support Person provided a written report on his work, in which he noted that his involvement stems from his time as DLP when one complainant declined the offer of a support person, preferring to remain involved with him as the first person with whom he had made contact.

The outreach to the most recent contact from a complainant has been described under Standard 2 above.

#### **Assessment of Standard 3**

The amount of direct contact with complainants is minimal; however this appears to be at their request and is appropriate. The Support Person noted that there has been an absence of conflict with complainants, and settlements have been agreed in a manner that has preserved their continuing relationships with the Benedictines. The reviewers would

suggest that this is as a result of the pastoral and compassionate way complainants have been received and responded to by representatives of the Community. There is undoubtedly a genuine concern for those who have been harmed in the past by Benedictines in Glenstal.

**Standard 4**

***Care and Management of the Respondent***

*The Church Authority has in place a fair process for investigating and managing child safeguarding concerns. When the threshold for reporting has been reached, a system of support and monitoring for respondents is provided.*

**Indicators that ensure the standard is being met**

<b>4.1</b>	The Church authority has access to appropriately trained personnel – lay, religious or clergy – whose clearly defined roles are to listen to and represent the pastoral needs of the respondent. This is done in consultation with the respondent.
<b>4.2</b>	The Church authority has arrangements in place to inform the respondent that an allegation has been received about them, and has a procedure for deciding whether an interim management plan needs to be put in place for the respondent.
<b>4.3</b>	When statutory authority investigations and assessments have been completed, the Church authority resumes the preliminary investigation/collecting the proofs as provided for in Canon 1717 (1)-(3) (cleric) and Canon 695 (non-ordained religious).
<b>4.4</b>	The Church authority has in place suitable arrangements for the monitoring of a respondent, where there is a case to answer, until (and if) the Church authority no longer has responsibility for monitoring the respondent.

There is one monk living in Glenstal against whom allegations have been made (respondent); these were related to his life prior to coming to Glenstal. He has accepted his guilt, and there is a detailed safety plan in place under which he is supervised. This plan is reviewed annually and there is regular communication with the civil authorities in two jurisdictions relating to the monk's movements. Part of the safety plan has been informing the parents of the students in the Abbey School of his residence in the Abbey.

A monk has been appointed to the role of Advisor to the respondent. He has attended National Board training for this role in 2017, which he found to be relevant and helpful. He has been undertaking this role for a number of years and is happy to continue to do so. He sees this role as an expression of his being a confrere to the respondent.

For his part, the respondent monk is very compliant and co-operative. He was provided with an opportunity to respond to a questionnaire issued by the reviewers, within which he stated his satisfaction with the care and management of his situation. Given the proximity of the Abbey to the school, contact with students is not allowed. In 2013 there was an appropriate slight relaxation of restrictions, which allows him limited supervised access to some school events which are public.

The 2014 Review, although conducted against the 2009 Standards, examined the way in which respondents were dealt with prior to 2016 and did not identify any difficulties in this regard.

**Assessment of Standard 4**

The Benedictine Community at Glenstal Abbey follow the National Board's guidance in relation to Standard 4. There is only one living respondent in the Abbey, and the reviewers are satisfied that his situation is being appropriately managed and that he is being suitably cared for.



## **Standard 5**

### ***Training and Support for Keeping Children Safe***

*Church personnel are trained and supported in all aspects of safeguarding relevant to their role, in order to develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to safeguard and protect children.*

One of the DLPs also is a National Board-registered Trainer. He advised the reviewers of training he has delivered to all of the monks and to the lay teaching staff of the Abbey School. Further training specifically for the school staff is being sourced by the Headmaster and Principal.

### **Indicators that ensure the standard is being met**

<b>5.1</b>	The Church authority takes responsibility to ensure that the induction of all personnel – lay, religious or clergy – includes training in the Church’s child safeguarding policy and procedures.
<b>5.2</b>	The Church body conducts an annual training-needs analysis that identifies all Church personnel who require training and develops a training plan based on this.
<b>5.3</b>	The Church body ensures delivery at a local level of basic training programmes that are identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board’s Training Strategy, where this has been identified as necessary through the annual training-needs analysis.
<b>5.4</b>	The Church body ensures that Church personnel who have specific child safeguarding responsibilities have appropriate, role-specific training that is identified and approved by the National Board, as outlined in the National Board’s Training Strategy.
<b>5.5</b>	The Church body provides children who access Church-related activities and their parents/guardians with information, advice and support on keeping children safe, and involves them in Church child safeguarding training initiatives wherever possible and appropriate.
<b>5.6</b>	The Church body facilitates the provision of an appropriate level of support to all involved with the Church in relation to their responsibilities to safeguard children.

The Trainer undertook the National Board’s Trainers’ Programme at the invitation of the Director of Safeguarding in Limerick Diocese; and he undertook his supervised training practice in that diocese. He acts as Trainer for Glenstal Abbey as well as for Limerick Diocese, but there is no overlap or conflict between these roles. The busier diocesan role means in fact that he is building up experience that enhances his role in Glenstal.

In interview with the reviewers, the Trainer explained that in May 2017, he undertook a joint presentation with the Abbot to the Abbey's Community Meeting Training in Glenstal, in the form of an Introduction of the Policy and Standards of the Catholic Church in Ireland. He explained that all monks in the Community attended this training session. When asked he said in relation to the Children First Act 2015 that people seem positive and have been reassured about mandated reporting and joint reporting with DLP. He explained that he has delivered training in the Abbey School, by invitation, based on Tusla's Children First e-learning programme. Finally, he shared the observation that training for staff has generated much greater awareness of access issues on campus. (The reviewers experienced this increased awareness themselves when being challenged by a non-teaching member of staff when attempting to enter the school through a side-door).

The reviewers read the Training Audit Reports for the years 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. These are what the Community call their training needs analysis. Since the introduction of the Church's 2009 Standards, Glenstal Benedictine Community has presented or has had personnel attend 58 separate Child Safeguarding training events, seven of which happened in 2017. Training has been provided to the Safeguarding Team; the Monastic Community - those in formation have Safeguarding input as part of their overall formation for monastic life; and employees – there are a total of 103 employees on campus.

The Abbey School has child protection training at the beginning of each school year which follows State Child Protection regulations for Schools. Those with specific responsibilities and those involved with sports have additional Child Safeguarding training sessions. The recent focus of training within the school has been on preparing for the implementation of all of the provisions of the Children First Act 2015.

Over the course of a year, there can be a few volunteers benefitting from work experience in maintenance or grounds-keeping at the Glenstal Abbey campus, but these adults do not have any engagement with the students in the Abbey School. They get a very basic induction when they arrive, which includes Child Safeguarding; they sign all documentation required of any employee; and they are police vetted.

Some Gap Students work in the Abbey School as well and are treated as school staff for the year they work there. They have induction similar to that provided to the Housemasters, which includes Child Safeguarding, as they do work with students.

Since the introduction of the revised 2016 Policy and Standards in June of that year, the following training has been undertaken by monks and staff of the Glenstal Abbey Community and School:

Monastic Community	Training for new Church Authorities Priest advisers Workshop on implementing new Standards Introduction to new Standards Induction on Standards Children First Children First; Internet Safety
Abbey School	Refresher for School staff Safeguarding induction for new school staff Vetting seminar Understanding sexual behaviour of young people DES CP Procedures Child Safeguarding and Digital Media Children First Non-teaching school staff – e.g. cleaners, maintenance staff etc. A general induction session into Child Safeguarding
Child Safeguarding personnel	Preliminary Investigation Tusla briefing Guidance on new Standards National Safeguarding Conference Train the Trainers Risk Management, and Risk Management Plans Children First DLP Update training

Ten of these courses were presented by the National Board; three were presented by the Joint Managerial Body (JMB); two were Tusla e-learning courses; and one was organised by the Northside Inter-Agency Project (NIAP). The remaining five were presented by Glenstal personnel to the teaching staff of the Abbey School, or to monks of the Glenstal Abbey Community. The in-house Trainer is developing a training session for non-teaching staff which is tailored to their specific needs; this will be delivered during 2018.

The reviewers are satisfied from an examination of the Training Log that those in child safeguarding roles in Glenstal Abbey Community have completed the National Board's training for that role; and that those in safeguarding roles in the Abbey School have completed the DES safeguarding training.

Indicator 5.5 is difficult to comply with; however, the reviewers were provided with evidence of Glenstal Abbey School's efforts to do so. In response to a recommendation from the first review published in 2014, the school has attempted to engage children and their parents in raising awareness of Child Safeguarding by seeking their views. The Student Council has participated in this and have been involved in the development of a bookmark which contains information for students on what to do if they feel that they or someone else is at risk. The Student Council members who the reviewers met were also

well able to describe the operation and benefits of the anti-bullying approach adopted within the school.

Many of the families of the students at Glenstal Abbey School live at some distance from it and this makes it difficult to engage them in this area. They have been invited to share their best thinking regarding Child Safeguarding at the school, but the response has in the main been quite disappointing. There is a Parents' Weekend at the beginning of each school year at which Child Safeguarding is addressed and discussed.

The reviewers have examined the Training Plan 2018 for Glenstal Abbey, in which a number of target groups have been listed and their training requirements identified. These are the Monastic Community; Teaching staff; Housemasters and Sports Coaches; Guesthouse and Hospitality staff in the monastery; lay staff working in the Abbey School; and lay staff not working in the school. The Safeguarding Committee of the Abbey is drawing up a tailored training for the non-school lay staff during 2018, as they have not been able to find an 'off the peg' course suitable for them.

The training planned for each target group is both appropriate and sufficient in the judgement of the reviewers.

#### **Assessment of Standard 5**

The Benedictine Community in Glenstal Abbey is in the very fortunate position of having a National Board registered Trainer as part of its safeguarding team. This allows both the Abbey Community and the Abbey School to benefit from on-site training, some of it designed around their specific needs.

There is an annual Training Audit, an annual Training Plan, and evidence of accessing external training as required. There is a commitment to role specific training. The reviewers are satisfied, based on the evidence that they saw, that the Benedictines in Glenstal Abbey fully meet the requirements of Standard 5.

**Standard 6**

**Communicating the Church’s Safeguarding Message**

*Church Bodies appropriately communicate the Church’s child safeguarding message*

**Indicators that ensure the standard is being met**

<b>6.1</b>	The Church body has a written plan, which details how the Church’s child safeguarding message will be communicated.
<b>6.2</b>	The Church body makes information regarding how to safeguard children available to all.
<b>6.3</b>	The Church body ensures that it communicates the Church’s child safeguarding message to people whose first language is not English, as well as to people who have specific needs.
<b>6.4</b>	The Church body establishes links with other local organisations in order to promote a safe and caring community for children and to share best child safeguarding practice.

Glenstal Abbey is one campus, so the requirements in relation to Standard 6 are different to that required in a diocesan context. What is important to establish is whether all who need to have information on Child Safeguarding are receiving it in sufficient detail and in a form that is accessible and understandable.

There is a Communications Plan 2018 for Child Safeguarding which addresses the needs of the whole campus. It is simply and clearly set out in a one-page template format, under the following headings:

<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who responsible</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Review date</b>
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This is commended and the reviewers encourage that reviews are conducted as indicated.

In the very comprehensive document prepared by the Benedictines at Glenstal for the reviewers, they state that

...we have attempted to have a single communications plan campus wide with coordinated signage and ways of displaying information so as to avoid confusion. It is necessary that the information displayed on school safeguarding notices is different from those on monastery notices, as the school have different DLP & D/DLP and fall under the DES regulations. We have tried in so far as is possible to keep everything standard, both on web pages and on notices and printed information.

Both the Abbey’s website and the Abbey School’s website have dedicated Safeguarding pages; the Abbey’s page is more easily accessed as it is signposted on the home page, whereas the school’s page is accessed through a drop-down menu under the heading *Our*

*School.* It is suggested that both should be signposted on the relevant home pages. The information on both Safeguarding pages is adequate; but both could be more helpful if they contained information on *How to report a concern*.

There are printed notices posted at all the main entry points to the Abbey School and to the Abbey itself which provide information on the relevant Safeguarding Policy and the various contact details for DLPs and for statutory agencies.

As mentioned earlier, a clearly phrased and well-designed safeguarding bookmark has been produced for the school's students, and they participated in its development. Foreign language versions of the student bookmark in French, German and Spanish are planned for the new academic year. Each student is issued with a Study Diary at the beginning of the academic year, and there is a designated Safeguarding page in this. It is suggested that this page is made more age-appropriate, and perhaps the Student Council could assist in reviewing it with the school's leadership.

The Glenstal Abbey Community has well-established links with An Garda Síochána, Tusla, DES, and with the National Board. It is also closely connected with the local community and parish of Murroe; and a monk currently chairs the local Community Council. The Abbey's lay DLP worked professionally within the mental health services of HSE and is well connected with a range of local and national agencies and services. In addition, as has been evidenced under Standard 5, the Abbey and Abbey School personnel are involved in child safeguarding training with a number of outside agencies. The reviewers are satisfied that Glenstal Abbey is not an inward-looking or isolated entity, but is in fact open to requesting and receiving relevant information from a variety of sources on a regular basis.

The Abbey School held a special Student Assembly in early 2014 at which the National Board's Review Report was communicated to the students and its implications discussed. This is highly commended as a real example of relevant communication to key stakeholders. It is evidence of a great respect for the student body and of taking the welfare of students seriously.

### **Assessment of Standard 6**

The reviewers have seen good evidence of an understanding of the need to communicate the child safeguarding message across the whole Glenstal campus. There is a clear openness to sharing information and to developing new ways of doing so.

**Standard 7**

***Quality assuring compliance with the Standards***

*The Church Body develops a plan of action to quality assure compliance with the safeguarding standards. This action plan is reviewed annually. The Church body only has responsibility to monitor, evaluate and report on compliance with the indicators under each standard that apply to it, depending on its ministry.*

**Indicators that ensure the standard is being met**

<b>7.1</b>	The Church authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• puts in place arrangements to ensure and evaluate its compliance with the safeguarding standards at a local level;</li><li>• produces a report on the level of compliance established through this audit exercise;</li><li>• notifies the National Board in writing of the completion of this annual audit report.</li></ul>
<b>7.2</b>	The Church body produces a three-year child safeguarding plan that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• outlines the actions that will be taken to keep children safe;</li><li>• identifies who is responsible for implementing these actions;</li><li>• specifies the time frame within which actions are completed;</li><li>• identifies the resources to ensure that the plan's objectives are realised.</li></ul>
<b>7.3</b>	The Church authority invites the National Board to carry out an independent review of its safeguarding practice in relation to the applicable indicators of the seven safeguarding standards, in accordance with standard terms of reference at a frequency agreed with the National Board.

As well as implementing Child Safeguarding policy and providing effective Child Safeguarding practice, Church bodies are also expected to review their continuing development and to participate in on-going quality assurance. Reviews are not simply box-ticking exercises to achieve a 'high score', but rather are a tool to assist in continuous improvement.

Under Indicator 7.1, Glenstal Abbey provided the reviewers with their self-audit reports for the years 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017. The 2014 audit was based on the first review published in 2014 by the National Board and the Recommendations that were contained in this. Of most relevance to the current Review is the Self-Audit report for 2017, which is based on the new guidance under Standard 7. The Child Safeguarding Committee is involved in this exercise and reported to the reviewers that the template produced by the National Board is not a good fit for the Glenstal Abbey Benedictine Community. One of the requests made by the Community in the discussions prior to the Review fieldwork was to assist in the development of a tailor made template that would better fit the one campus model of the Abbey. The reviewers undertook to request the National Board to assist Glenstal with this request.

The Abbey and Abbey School DLPs have both made their written reports on foot of their 2017 Self-Audits; and the Abbot has written to the CEO of the National Board to confirm that the Self-Audit exercise has been completed.

The document that the Glenstal Community Safeguarding personnel provided to the reviewers in advance of the fieldwork is also, in effect a self-audit exercise and has been extremely useful to them in obtaining an oversight of how the seven Standards are being implemented in practice.

One Indicator that appears to be challenging Glenstal Abbey is **5.6:**

The Church body facilitates the provision of an appropriate level of support to all involved with the Church in relation to their responsibilities to safeguard children.

The achievement of this has been flagged in the last three Safeguarding Plans, while being identified as unmet in three Self-Audits. It may be that there is some confusion about the meaning of the term *appropriate level of support*, and the reviewers have undertaken to assist the Community to define what is needed and to then fully implement Indicator 5.6. The reviewers spoke with the various DLPs, the Trainer, the Safeguarding Committee, the Support Person and the Advisor, and there is no concern evident that any of these individuals who make up the safeguarding team in Glenstal are in urgent need of support.

In relation to Indicator 7.3, the Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey at Glenstal, having consulted with that Community extended the invitation to the National Board to conduct this Review, in the knowledge that it would be one of two trial Reviews that would be conducted to test the usefulness or otherwise of the new Review Methodology that has been developed to measure compliance with the revised Standards of 2016. This was both a courageous and a generous invitation. It is also evidence of being prepared to meet the requirements of Indicator 7.3.

### **Assessment of Standard 7**

The experience of the National Board of its dealings with the Benedictines at Glenstal Abbey is that they want to develop child safeguarding to the highest standard for the sake of their students. They are prepared to interrogate themselves and their performance, and also to have external auditors assess their progress and reflect their findings back to them. Their approach to this Review has been generous, responsible and mature, and the National Board looks forward to continuing to assist the Glenstal Abbey monks and staff to continuously improve their Child Safeguarding.



## **Conclusion**

The National Board's reviewers engaged with the Abbot of Glenstal, his safeguarding personnel and appropriate Abbey School personnel in trialling the National Board's revised review methodology. It was clear at the outset that the emphasis in Glenstal should lie in the creation and maintenance of an environment that is safe for children, given the extent of ministry with children within the Abbey School. At the end of the review process it is fair to conclude that there is a really good awareness around the importance of keeping children safe and giving children a voice in their care. In addition the reviewers assess that there is a calm measured and sensible approach to child safeguarding. Through observation and direct engagement with monks, staff and children, the reviewers note a warmth and care for the children and a desire to support them grow within a healthy school environment.

At the beginning of this report the rationale for conducting the review was set out as:

- Public confidence that the Church body is safe for children;
- Affirmation to Child Safeguarding personnel that they are doing the right things well;
- Confirmation to the Church authority that what they want to be done is in fact being done;
- Independent verification of the Church body's Self-Audit – or correction and/or improvement of its Self-Audit;
- Opportunities for learning.

The overall assessment is of a religious community who have a prayerful life, who understand the need to prioritise child safeguarding; who are absolutely clear about their responsibilities around reporting and responding to allegations and who offer care to those who have been harmed as well as to their members who may have harmed children.

Within the safeguarding personnel and within the pastoral care team there is good understanding of roles and commitment to setting and maintaining best practice standards.

The reviewers commend Abbot Coffey, the monks, the trainer/DLP and school leadership and pastoral care staff for their sincere approach to safeguarding children.