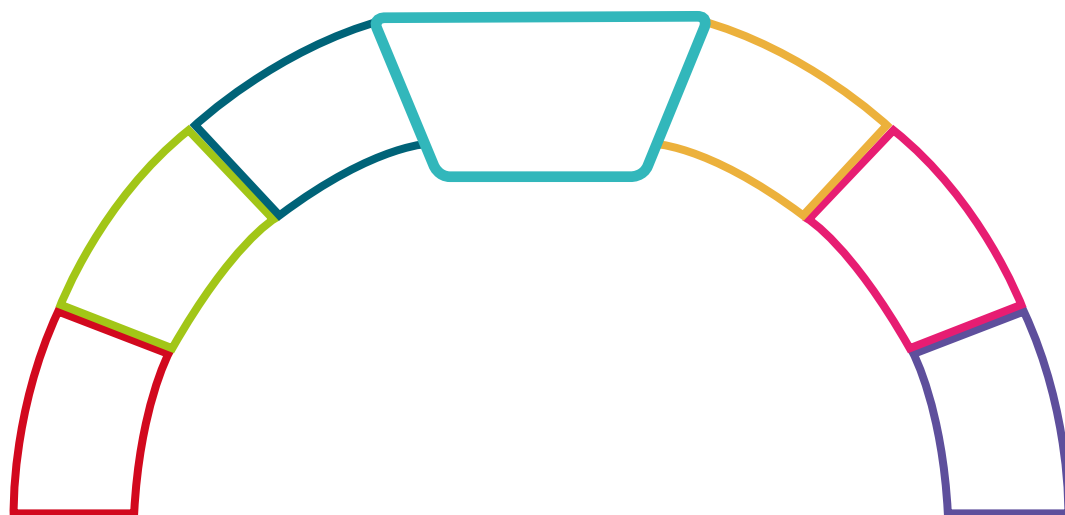


GAP

Guidance, Advice and Practice



Paper 1

May 2018

Child Safeguarding and Digital Media



THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN
IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND



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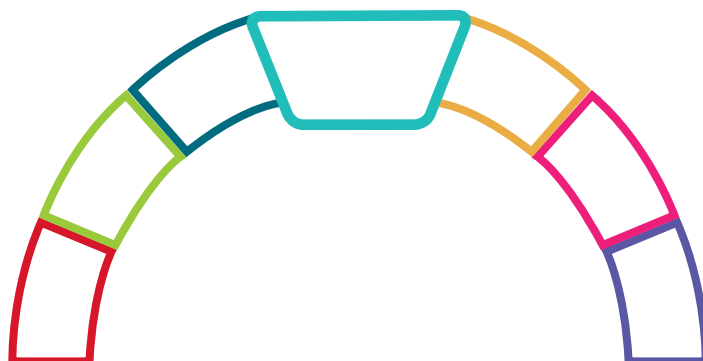
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About the GAP Papers



The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCCI) was established 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. The National Board also monitors compliance with legislation, policy and best practice and to report on these activities annually, all as comprehensively set out in the Memorandum of Association of the Company, Coimirce.

Article 4 (iii) of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company requires the National Board to: “ report and provide, upon request from the Constituents or any Constituent, support, advisory and training services to such Constituents or Constituent on policies and practices relating to safeguarding of children.”

The National Board already provides comprehensive Guidance to support the implementation of Safeguarding Children, Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016. These series of Guidance, Advice and Practice (GAP) Papers further complement that detailed guidance on topics of current interest to constituents.

The bridge logo above encapsulates the aim of these GAP papers, each brick represents one of the seven safeguarding standards; the keystone signifies the importance of quality assuring compliance with the standards, which is the responsibility of the Church authority. A major part of quality assurance is becoming aware of new challenges or gaps to safeguarding as they emerge. This series of papers aims to provide the reader with information on guidance, advice and practice, which will assist in developing best practice in safeguarding children, identifying where there are risks and how to minimise these risks. To do this these papers draw on the experiences of the National Board, research and information already available to the reader from other sources.

The GAP papers are not intended to be read as definitive positions on the chosen topic. The National Board does not claim to have inserted all available research and knowledge; nor do we claim to be masters of best practice offering indisputable views. Each of these papers will focus on a particular gap in terms of safeguarding children, and each paper will provide guidance advice and practice to help overcome these gaps, building the reader's knowledge on the subject and in informing practice, which will be underpinned by the seven safeguarding standards.

Effectively using **G**uidance, **A**dvice and **P**ractice to bridge the **GAP**.

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1. Introduction

In 2001, Pope John Paul II issued 'motu proprio' the Apostolic Letter *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela* (SST)¹ in which the Norms concerning grave delicts reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) were promulgated. Under Article 4 § 1, Reservation to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was extended to a delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor below the age of eighteen years; in other words, crimes of a sexual nature by a cleric must be addressed by the CDF. Similarly, non-ordained religious who have committed a sexual crime against a minor must be dealt with through the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life within the Holy See.

The text of the *Normae de gravioribus delictis*, was revised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2010². This revised document contains modifications to both the substantial and the procedural norms found in the original text of SST. In particular, article 6 § 1 n. 2 adds a new delict of '...the acquisition, possession or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors under the age of 14, for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology³'. This grave 'delict against morals' is reserved to the CDF and a cleric who commits this delict is subject to the same range of prescriptive penalties as in SST, Art 4 §1, including dismissal from the clerical state.

In 2017, Pope Francis said '...in recent years the Church has come to acknowledge her own failures in providing for the protection of children: extremely grave facts have come to light, for which we have to accept our responsibility before God, before the victims and before public opinion. For this very reason, as a result of these painful experiences and the skills gained in the process of conversion and purification,

the Church today feels especially bound to work strenuously and with foresight for the protection of minors and their dignity, not only within her own ranks, but in society as a whole and throughout the world⁴.'

This statement was in response to the Declaration of Rome⁵, which states in its opening two paragraphs that:

'Every child's life is unique, meaningful and precious and every child has a right to dignity and safety. Yet today, global society is failing its children. Millions of children are being abused and exploited in tragic and unspeakable ways, and on an unprecedented scale all over the world.'

'Technology's exponential advancement and integration into our everyday lives are not only changing what we do and how we do it, but who we are. Much of the impact of these changes has been very positive. However, we face the dark side of this new-found world, a world which is enabling a host of social ills that are harming the most vulnerable members of society.'

This paper intends to inform good child safeguarding practice in the Catholic Church in Ireland. It begins by providing a definition of what is meant by Digital Media, then sets out important references relevant to this topic including policy, legislation, international treaties and EU directives which reference aspects of children's rights that have informed policy development. The paper also provides research references and evidence based information on the harmful effects of child pornography, online grooming and other forms of abuse that use electronic media. The paper concludes by providing practice guidance on how ministry with children can incorporate the use electronic and digital media in ways that are safe, for both the child and the adult user.

1 Pope John Paul II (2001) *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana

2 Pope Benedict XVI (2010) *Normae de Gravioribus Delictis*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

3 Pope Benedict XVI (2010) *Normae de Gravioribus Delictis*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

4 Pope Francis (2017) *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Participants in the Congress on Child Dignity and the Digital World* Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

5 Pontificia Universita Gregoriana Centre for Child Protection (2017) *Declaration of Rome World Congress: Child Dignity in the Digital World*.

Rome: Pontificia Universita Gregoriana.

2. What do we mean by digital media?

For the purposes of this paper, digital media is defined as electronic communication examples of which include ‘...software, digital images, digital video, video games, web pages and websites, including social media, data and databases, digital audio, such as MP3 and electronic books. digital media often contrasts with print media, such as printed books, newspapers and magazines, and other traditional or analog media, such as images, movies or audio tapes.’⁶

The use of digital media enables communication and interactive dialogue between persons or parties and allows the sharing of information. Whilst the use of digital media is positive, it can also provide the opportunity for abuse. It is therefore important to be aware of the risks involved, and to put in place good safeguarding practice to protect children online.

Abuse of children online can take many forms, including grooming, cyber bullying, pornography, exploitation and emotional abuse; and this paper will explain each of these types of abuse, while also indicating how to safeguard children from them.

Children today are highly skilled in the use of technology and it is their preferred medium of communication⁷. We therefore need to encourage positive use of technology which keeps children safe.

3. Important references

(a) The Declaration of Rome

In October 2017, Child Dignity in the Digital World – a World Congress was hosted at the Gregorian University in Rome when a number of interested parties including Church leaders, government officials, technology companies (such as Google, Facebook etc.), NGOs and others came together to discuss the challenges and opportunities to improve

safety of children online. Following on from the Congress the ‘Declaration of Rome’ was presented to Pope Francis. There was recognition that problems of abuse of children online cannot be solved by one nation or one company or one faith acting alone. The Congress concluded that the abuse of children online ‘... is a global problem that requires global solutions. It requires that we build awareness, and that we mobilize action from every government, every faith, every company and every institution’⁸.

This Declaration of Rome issues a call to action and lists 13 recommended initiatives:

1. To world leaders to undertake a global awareness campaign to educate and inform the people of the world about the severity and extent of the abuse and exploitation of the world’s children, and to urge them to demand action from national leaders.
2. To leaders of the world’s great religions to inform and mobilize members of every faith to join in a global movement to protect the world’s children.
3. To the parliaments of the world to improve their laws to better protect children and hold those accountable who abuse and exploit children.
4. To leaders of technology companies to commit to the development and implementation of new tools and technologies to attack the proliferation of sex abuse images on the Internet, and to interdict the redistribution of the images of identified child victims.
5. To world’s ministries of public health and the leaders of non-governmental organizations to expand the rescue of child victims and improve treatment programs for victims of abuse and sexual exploitation.

⁶ Wikipedia (2017) *Digital Media*. Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_media (Accessed 15th January 2018).

⁷ GoodTherapy.com (2012) *How Texting Changes Communication*. Available at <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/texting-teens-adults-communication-0726126> (Accessed 18th January 2018).

⁸ Pontificia Università Gregoriana Centre for Child Protection (2017) *Declaration of Rome World Congress: Child Dignity in the Digital World*. Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana

6. To government agencies, civil society and law enforcement to work to improve the recognition and identification of child victims, and ensure help for the massive numbers of hidden victims of child abuse and sexual exploitation.

7. To the world's law enforcement organizations to expand regional and global cooperation in order to improve information sharing in investigations and increase collaborative efforts in addressing these crimes against children which cross national boundaries.

8. To the world's medical institutions to enhance training for medical professionals in recognizing the indicators of abuse and sexual exploitation, and improve the reporting and treatment of such abuse and sexual exploitation.

9. To governments and private institutions to enhance resources available to psychiatric and other treatment professionals for expanded treatment and rehabilitation services for children who have been abused or exploited.

10. To the leading authorities in public health to expand research into the health impacts resulting from the exposure of young children and adolescents to graphic, extreme internet pornography.

11. To leaders of the world's governments, legislative bodies, private industry and religious institutions to advocate for and implement techniques to deny access by children and youth to internet content suitable only for adults.

12. To governments, private industry and religious institutions to undertake a global awareness campaign directed at children and youth to educate them and provide them with the tools necessary to use the internet safely and responsibly, and to avoid the harm being done to many of their peers.

13. To governments, private industry and religious institutions to undertake a global awareness initiative to make citizens in every country more alert and aware regarding the abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and to encourage them to report such abuse or exploitation to appropriate authorities if they see it, know about it or suspect it.

(b) UNCRC and EU Directives

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC⁹) contains a list of forty two indivisible and inalienable rights which signatories (including the Holy See, United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland) must uphold for children. Although all of the articles of the UNCRC are interrelated, they are often discussed under four overarching principles

- Article 2 – Non-discrimination - Each child should be treated fairly, with respect recognising their unique characteristics;
- Article 3 – Best interests of the child - All interactions between an adult and a child, within a child safeguarding framework must be based on the best interests of the child;
- Article 6 – Right to life, survival and development - Children must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse;
- Article 12 – Respect for the views of the child - Children have a right to express their opinions and have their views considered in matters which affect them.

In addition to the principles outlined above two articles are of particular importance to this topic. Article 3.2 requires that 'States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.'

⁹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (United Nations)

Article 13.1 requires that ‘the child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice.’

A directive of the EU on combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and child pornography, came into force on December 17th, 2011¹⁰. The expectation was that all EU members would transpose the directive into national legislation. On March 4th, 2015, the Missing Children Europe organisation published a document¹¹ in which the performance of 27 EU members, including the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom in transposing the directive into their national legislation was evaluated against the following seven indicators:

- Knowingly obtaining access via information and communication technologies to child pornography;
- Online grooming;
- Disqualification arising from convictions, screening and transmission of information;
- Victim identification;
- The extra territorial extension of jurisdiction;
- Assistance, support and protection measures for child victims;
- Take down and blocking measures.

Neither the Republic of Ireland nor the United Kingdom was found to be fully compliant with the EU directive, when their domestic legislation was examined in this survey.

Right to life, survival and development: Children must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse online and through digital media. There should be a zero tolerance approach to bullying online, grooming, sexting etc. Complaints and allegations of inappropriate communications from child to child or from adult to child must be dealt with decisively and firmly; and any unacceptable behaviour must be reported and addressed without delay.

Safety mechanisms and security software should be purchased to prevent the downloading of child pornography and other forms of digital abuse.

Respects for the views of the child - Children have the right to express their opinions: It is well known that one aspect of child abuse by adults has been the silencing of children . This disempowerment of children and the secrecy demanded of them have compounded the abuse and disabled children from speaking out at an early stage; and when they have had the confidence to raise concerns, all too often they have not been believed. It is critical that children are empowered and given a voice as part of good child safeguarding practice. They should be involved as far as possible in developing good digital practice; and they should be informed of the Church’s procedures and be given opportunities to express their anxieties if they feel under threat.

¹⁰ Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on Combating the Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography, and Replacing Council Framework Decision 2005/68/JHA, 2011 (European Parliament)

¹¹ Missing Children Europe (2015) *A survey on the Transposition of Directive 2011/93/EU on Combating Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography*. Brussels: Missing Children Europe.

(c) National Legislation

A range of domestic laws in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland provide for the protection of children. A listing of the main Acts and Statutory Orders and Regulations is available in Appendix 1. The Table below sets out the key pieces of national legislation and their provisions.

Republic of Ireland	
Title	Main Provisions
Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017	<p>This most recent piece of legislation has in its introductory description that it is An Act to give effect to Directive No. 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011.</p> <p>The following offences are defined in the 2017 Act, along with the punishments available to a court if a person is found to be guilty of any of them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining, providing etc. a child for purpose of sexual exploitation ('child' is person under 18 years); • Invitation etc. to sexual touching ('child' is a person under 15 years); • Sexual activity in presence of child ('child' is a person under 17 years); • Causing child to watch sexual activity ('child' is a person under 17 years); • Meeting child for purpose of sexual exploitation ('child' is a person under 17 years); • Use of information and communication technology to facilitate sexual exploitation of child ('child' is a person under 17 years); • Amendment of S.2 of Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 – extended definition of 'child pornography'; • Amendment of S.3 of Act of 1998 – extended definition of 'sexual exploitation'; • Amending S.4 of Act of 1998 – changed definition of actions involved in organising etc. child prostitution or production of child pornography; • Amending S.5 of Act of 1998 – changed definition of producing, distributing, etc. child pornography; • Amending S.5 of Act of 1998 – adding to definition of participation of child in pornographic performance; Amending S.6 of Act of 1998 – changed definition of possession of child pornography; • Amending S.1 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006 – changed definition of 'person in authority'; • Amending S. 2 of Act of 2006 – changed definition of sexual act with child under 15 years of age; • Amending S.3 of Act of 2006 – changed definition of sexual act with child under 17 years of age; <p>There are further minor amendments of other previous legislation contained in the 2017 Act.</p>
Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998	<p>The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998, which is amended by Section 6 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Act 2007, deals with a number of offences involving children under the age of 17. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child trafficking and taking a child for sexual exploitation. • Meeting a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation. • Allowing a child to be used for child pornography. • Producing, distributing, printing or publishing child pornography . • Possession of child pornography.

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006	This Act defines the offences of Defilement of child under 15 years of age, and Defilement of child under the age of 17 years. The Act of 2006 also amends a number of previous Acts.
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Northern Ireland	
Title	Main Provisions
Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008	<p>This is a comprehensive statutory instrument that in Section 3 defines a number of sexual offences against children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape of a child under 13. • Assault of a child under 13 by penetration. • Sexual assault of a child under 13. • Causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity. • Sexual activity with a child (under 16 years). • Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity (under 16 years). • Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child (under 13 years; or under 16 years, if not reasonable to believe that child is over 16 years). • Causing a child to watch a sexual act (under 13 years; or under 16 years, if not reasonable to believe that child is over 16 years.) • Arranging or facilitating commission of a sex offence against a child (under 16 years). • Meeting a child following sexual grooming etc. (under 16 years). • Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity with a child (under 13 years; or under 18 years if not reasonable to believe that the child is over 18 years). • Abuse of position of trust: causing a child to watch a sexual act (under 13 years; or under 18 years if not reasonable to believe that the child is over 18 years). • Sexual activity with a child family member (under 18 years). • Inciting a child family member to engage in sexual activity (under 18 years). • Paying for sexual services of a child (under 13 years; or under 18 years if not reasonable to believe that the child is over 18 years). • Causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography (under 13 years; or under 18 years if not reasonable to believe that the child is over 18 years). • Controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography (under 13 years; or under 18 years if not reasonable to believe that the child is over 18 years). • Arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography (under 13 years; or under 18 years if not reasonable to believe that the child is over 18 years). • Amending The Protection of Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 (NI 17) on indecent photographs of children – age raised to under 18 years. <p>There are further minor amendments of other previous legislation contained in the 2008 Order.</p>
Protection of Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1978	<p>Section 3 - (1) any person who—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) takes, or permits to be taken any indecent photograph of a child; or (b) distributes or shows such indecent photographs; or (c) has in his possession such indecent photographs with a view to their being distributed or shown by himself or others; or (d) publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that the advertiser distributes or shows such indecent photographs or intends to do so, shall be guilty of an offence.

<p>Communications Act 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 127 (1) provides that it is an offence if any person sends a message or other matter by means of a public electronic communications network which is grossly offensive, indecent, obscene or menacing, or if a person causes any such message or matter to be sent. • Section 127 (2) provides that a person is guilty of an offence if, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another, he sends or causes to be sent by means of a public electronic communications network a message he knows to be false, causes such a message to be sent, or persistently makes use of a public electronic communications network.
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4. Principles in working safely online to protect children from abuse

Good child safeguarding practice in this area is informed by policy, legislation and practice identified in Section 3, in particular the four principles enshrined in the UNCRC¹²

Non-discrimination: Children join the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism and participate in Church life through a variety of ministries including altar serving, children’s liturgy, sacraments, prayer services, gospel teachings, and a range of youth activities. Ministry with children should be a joy and embraced as a living, joyful experience for all involved. Almost all children, irrespective of age, race, or ability use technology in a positive way¹³; and for many, electronic communication has replaced direct contact and conversation as their communication method of choice¹⁴. In this changing cultural context of childhood and adolescence, it is important and appropriate for members of the Catholic Church in Ireland to become aware of the risks involved in children using digital media, and to put safeguards in place, especially where children are involved within a Church context where the abuse of children was widespread in the recent past.

All children should be welcomed and encouraged to participate in Church life, and therefore appropriate steps should be taken to communicate with them in safe ways that they understand and in a language which is familiar to them. Digital media can be a great asset in communicating in safe ways with children of all ages, whose first

language is not English, and where they have limited verbal communication. As ministry with children is to be embraced, using appropriate and safe digital media provides an opportunity to involve children in a non-discriminatory way in the life of the Gospel.

Best Interests of the Child: Communication with children through digital media should always have at its core the best interests of the child. This can be achieved through

ensuring at all times appropriate use of language, images, photography and messaging. The purpose of communicating with children through digital media within the Church is to provide them with information about God’s teaching. That includes simple messaging, such as arranging meetings, through to profiling the work of the Church body as it relates to children. The needs of the child should at all times govern the communication, which should never be used in an overt or covert way to harm a child.

Right to life, survival and development: Children must be safeguarded from all forms of abuse online and through digital media. There should be a zero tolerance approach to bullying online, grooming, sexting etc. Complaints and allegations of inappropriate communications from child to child or from adult to child must be dealt with decisively and firmly; and any unacceptable behaviour must be reported and addressed without delay.

¹² United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (United Nations)

¹³ Ofcom (2014) *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*. London:Ofcom.

¹⁴ Ofcom (2014) *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*. London:Ofcom.

Safety mechanisms and security software should be purchased to prevent the downloading of child pornography and other forms of digital abuse.

Respects for the views of the child - Children have the right to express their opinions:

It is well known that one aspect of child abuse by adults has been the silencing of children¹⁵. This disempowerment of children and the secrecy demanded of them have compounded the abuse and disabled children from speaking out at an early stage; and when they have had the confidence to raise concerns, all too often they have not been believed. It is critical that children are empowered and given a voice as part of good child safeguarding practice. They should be involved as far as possible in developing good digital practice; and they should be informed of the Church's procedures and be given opportunities to express their anxieties if they feel under threat.

5. Risks to children online

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through social networks, playing online games or using mobile phones. Children and young people may experience cyber bullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse. Among the risks online - when using the Internet, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, e-mail and chat-rooms - is exposure to inappropriate material, whether through verbal messages, or the use of photography or imaging. The following are examples of risks to children through the display of inappropriate material:

Use of Abusive Images: Photos and videos can be taken of children, which show them in a sexualised way or actually being abused. In addition, images of children can be manipulated to depict them in sexualised positions. The term indecent is often used, though it is difficult to get a strict legal definition of this term – (various pieces of legislation define crimes such as public indecency, indecent exposure and indecent assault).

Therefore it is a matter for a court to decide whether a particular behaviour or image was indecent. Irrespective of this, the dissemination of such photographs /

videos / images is damaging to the subject, and once they are placed online they can be communicated multiple times and be spread across the world in seconds; they can be downloaded and stored; they can be copied; and they are difficult to delete. Adults and children can and do make and spread indecent and abusive images which have significant negative emotional impact on the subject.

Pornography and sexual abuse online:

Child Pornography can be described as the depiction of children, often in a sensual or erotic way (in pictures or in written descriptions) intended to cause sexual excitement for the viewer/reader. Children are abused and exploited in the making of pornography and are further abused each time their image is viewed.

There is an international element to the production and spreading of indecent images, photographs, and videos of children, whereby those who make them can be located anywhere in the world. Innocent pictures of children can be manipulated for the purposes of sexual gratification of abusers.

There is some evidence to suggest that young people have become involved in the viewing, possession, making and distribution of indecent and/or child abuse/pornographic images.

It is an offence in both jurisdictions for children who have reached the age of criminal responsibility, and for adults, to produce and/or disseminate images which exploit and sexually abuse children.

Sexting: Sexting involves a child / adolescent sending text messages which use sexually explicit language, images or video on their mobile phone, computer or tablet. A child receiving such messaging may feel under pressure to pose in sexually explicit ways and send images of themselves naked and/or performing sexual acts.

¹⁵ NSPCC (2018) *What is Sexual Abuse?* Available at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/> (Accessed 18th January 2018).

Equally, an adult can send sexually inappropriate and sexually explicit images to a child through sexting.

Sextortion: Sextortion is the solicitation of minors for sexual purposes. 'Predators that practice sextortion pressure their victims to give them sexually explicit photos and/ or favours in exchange for their secrecy of previously obtained private information or for a promise to hold off on future violent acts'¹⁶. Because the images are still available, the abuser may continue to post the images into the victim's adulthood; and of course they may have been circulated far outside the original circle

Exploitation: Children can be exploited by adults and by other children for their sexual gratification, in person and online. Exploitation involves using children for sexual purposes and it can take the form of engaging a child in sexual acts directly or by video/ webcam. As is the case for all forms of sexual abuse, children who are trapped by sexual exploitation may feel threatened, caught and despairing.

Emotional abuse: Children who are sexually abused also suffer long lasting emotional abuse. This is true whether the sexual abuse happens in person or online. Children may feel responsible for the abuse, if they have unknowingly engaged in conversation online. They may have been threatened with exposure and as a consequence are forced to lead secretive online lives. The consequences are damaging and can be long term.

Cyber Bullying: Cyber Bullying, whether by Internet, mobile phone or any other method, is the use of new technologies that allow bullies to anonymously torment their victims. Cyber bullying is online bullying between children and young people. It mimics everyday "bullying" through threats, telling lies about someone, making fun, spreading rumours or gossip and posting stories which may be true or false, but which could have a devastating impact on the child being bullied.

Cyber bullies can post messages, images or videos, which seek to demean and embarrass another child.

While a young person may or may not be in physical danger, they may receive email, chat or text messages that make them feel embarrassed, upset, depressed or afraid. This can damage their self-esteem and pose a threat to their psychological wellbeing. Cyber bullying includes¹⁷:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

Grooming: While grooming can happen at any time, it can be more prolific online where the identity of the groomer can remain anonymous. Grooming is the development of a relationship between an adult and a child, where the adult is pretending to be the child's friend online. This can be done by either masking his/her identity or age. The purpose is to gain the child's trust so that they can then move to using the child for sexual gratification, abuse or exploitation. This technique is often known as 'online enticement', 'grooming' or 'child procurement'.

¹⁶ Edgington, S. (2011) *Will Your Child Be a Victim of Sextortion?* Available at www.shawnedgington.com/texting/will-your-child-be-a-victim-of-sextortion (Accessed: 15th January 2018).

¹⁷ NSPCC (2018) *What are Bullying and Cyberbullying?* Available at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying-and-cyberbullying/what-is-bullying-cyberbullying/> (Accessed 15th January 2018).

Great care needs to be taken to ensure that children do not divulge personal information, such as their full name, age, address, email address, phone number, hobbies, name of their school etc.; to someone they meet on the internet.

Physical Danger: Risk of real physical danger arises when there is an encouragement for them to meet the person who has contacted them online. Often the invitation to meet is from an adult masking as a child.

Online Cliques: There are risks for some young people who may be encouraged to engage in inappropriate, antisocial or illegal behaviour while using digital technologies. Just as in the real world, groups or cliques can form online and activities that start out as harmless fun, such as voicing an opposing opinion to another member of a chat room, can quickly escalate to something much more serious.

Anonymity of abuser online: The identity of the abuser online can be disguised through the use of false names, age, and location. Adult abusers can groom children by pretending to know their networks and by hiding their real identity in order to obtain identifying information from the child. In doing so the abuser can trick the child into sending photographs, performing sexual acts online, and/or agreeing to meet. Great care needs to be taken when developing online relationships so that each user is aware of exactly who they are speaking to. All concerns must be reported to the criminal investigating agencies [police] if there are doubts about the true identity and motive of the person a child is engaging with online.

6. Protections

Each user is responsible for the information or data that is on their electronic device. It is important that Church bodies and individuals take steps to ensure safe use of the digital media. To help with this there are some general principles that must be accepted:

- It is not acceptable to behave or communicate in ways which might suggest that you are
- It is not acceptable to behave or communicate in ways which might suggest that you are trying to develop a personal relationship with a child.
- It is never appropriate to post any content that could be deemed abusive, defamatory, obscene or libellous.
- It is never appropriate to post comments that indicate or appear to endorse grossly irresponsible behaviour or law breaking of any kind.

The National Board recommends that if digital media is being used in the course of ministry with children, child safety will be enhanced by:

- Having an internet procedure which contains rules for safe use of all electronic technologies.
- Having e-safety agreements.
- Installing appropriate software to improve security.
- Having written agreements in place with children and their parents about the use of technology, text messaging and use of language and imaging.
- Having a web camera use procedure.
- Having protocols about adults' communication with children which is in keeping with the ethos of the organisations and in line with the need to safeguard children.
- Having user names, logins and passwords so that log on access is controlled.
- Not communicating with children through a personal e-mail address or sending personal messages to a child, or using personal social networks to engage with a child. It is not appropriate to accept a child as a friend on a personal page.
- Ensuring that all forms of abuse online, including bullying, grooming etc. are reported.
- Ensuring that all material posted online is appropriate (both age-appropriate and content appropriate), is not misleading and is socially acceptable.
- Ensuring that the online material is monitored regularly and that any offensive or inappropriate material is removed.

- Protecting personal information by not allowing public access to e-mail addresses, mobile numbers etc. Sharing of information needs to be monitored to ensure minimal appropriate information is shared.
- Ensuring photographs and images are only used for defined purposes and having appropriate consents.
- Examining and assessing risks of electronic communication, particularly when starting a new venture or with the introduction of new technology.
- Having an Internet procedure which contains rules for safe use of all electronic equipment

7. Summary of practice issues

DO

- Ensure your mobile phone, computer, notebook and other technological equipment is password/ PIN protected. This will ensure that other people cannot use your equipment.
- Have a separate online account/ identity which is not your personal one to distinguish between personal communication and your ministry.
- Have clarity around the use of personal equipment when communicating with children in ministry.
- Make sure that anything that is posted online by you is appropriate; remember that once it is posted online it is public. This includes chats and images/ photographs.
- Switch off Bluetooth, as this allows another person to access your equipment and pretend to be you.

DO NOT

- Share your personal information with children. This includes personal mobile phone numbers, social networking accounts, personal website/ blog URLs, online image storage sites, passwords/ PIN numbers etc.
- Use your personal mobile phone to communicate with children/young people either by phone call, text, email, social networking site.

- Access or share inappropriate images of children.
- Add or allow a child whom you are ministering to join your contacts/friends list on personal social networking profiles.
- Play online games with children; always check before you play online with someone you do not know.

8. What to do if you are worried or have concerns

As a user of digital media, you may become concerned about something you see or read. It is important that you share your concerns and report anything which you feel believe is inappropriate or abusive towards children.

In line with Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland 2016, all allegations, suspicions and concerns must be reported to the police and the statutory child protection services. If in doubt, you should consult with the Church body's DLP.

Given the international nature of abuse online it may be appropriate for the police to liaise with colleagues across the world, and your computer may need to be examined by the police to obtain contact information that may assist their investigations.

9. Reference documents on use of electronic media by children or involving children

Title	Published by	Type
National Board Guidance on Electronic Communications	NBSCCCI available from https://www.safeguarding.ie/images/Pdfs/Standards/Standard%201.pdf	Guidance Document
Bullying and Cyber bullying: History, Statistics, Law, Prevention and Analysis	The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications Vol. 3, No. 1 Spring 2012	10-page academic article
Determining the Effects of Technology on Children	Honours Program at the University of Rhode Island, 2011	51-page academic paper
Digital dangers - The impact of technology on the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and young people	Barnardos and Marie Collins Foundation, 2015	92-page report
Garda Síochána Policy on the Investigation of Sexual Crimes against Children Child Welfare	An Garda Síochána, 2010	107-page policy document
Growing Up Digital: Media Research Symposium	American Academy of Pediatrics, Oct. 1, 2015	7-page summary of symposium discussions
A Guide to Internet Safety for Children	Office for Internet Safety – www.Internetsafety.ie [This website has a detailed Publications page]	3-page electronic guide
A Guide to Internet Safety for Parents	Office for Internet Safety – www.Internetsafety.ie	3-page electronic guide
EU Kids online	LSE Media and Communications Department – 2014 http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Home.aspx	45-page online interactive report
EU Kids Online Survey	EU Kids Online Network, 2009 [two versions]	56-page research report
Online “Predators” and Their Victims	American Psychologist - February–March, 2008	18-page academic paper

Protecting children from harmful content	Council of Europe's Group of Specialists on Human Rights in the Information Society, June 2009	19-page report
Technology and Youth: Protecting your Child from Electronic Aggression	US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention - www.cdc.gov	2-page Tip Sheet
Risks and Safety for Children on the Internet: the Ireland Report	Dublin Institute of Technology, Centre for Social and Educational Research	61-page report
Safer Children in a Digital World	Byron Review – Children and New Technology, March 2008	226-page report
Social Media, Help or Hindrance: What Role Does Social Media Play in Young People's Mental Health?	Psychiatria Danubina, 2014; Vol. 26, Suppl. 1, pp 340–346	7-page conference paper
Study on the Effects of New Information Technologies on the Abuse and Exploitation of Children	United Nations Office Vienna, May 2015	76-page report
The Prevalence and Impact of Bullying Linked to Social Media on the Mental Health and Suicidal Behaviour Among Young People	HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention, and Department of Education and Skills, March 2014	84-page literature review
NSPCC example of e-safety policy	NSPCC: Updated June 2016	Sample policy
CEOP Command's Thinkuknow programme provides resources, training and support for professionals who work directly with children and young people.	Child Exploitation and online protection command (CEOP) Police UK https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/	Range of resources for professionals, parents, children etc.
Interfaith faith based social media e policy guidance document	SBNI: January 2017	Policy guidance

