

Abbey Policy on Protection and Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults

The monks of Glenstal Abbey are vowed to a celibate way of life and mutual respect among persons. The monastic community views sexual abuse or sexual exploitation by its members, employees or associated personnel to be morally reprehensible.

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

I. An Allegation

- A. The Abbot investigates the allegation. Credible allegations involving minors will immediately be reported to law enforcement officials. In all cases, reports to the Health Services Executive and the Gardaí will be made as required by *Our Children, Our Church* (paragraph 8.6) and the relevant guidelines of the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Education and Skills. Similarly all reasonably credible allegations relating to the school will be reported to the school Board of Management.
- B. The investigation normally will include:
 - an interview with the person making the allegation.
 - an interview with the person against whom the allegation is being made.
 - an interview with other knowledgeable persons.
- C. The Abbot seeks appropriate advice.
- D. All allegations of abuse of a minor will be responded to promptly. Based upon the investigation the Abbot takes appropriate action:

- The person against whom the allegation has been made will be required to take immediate leave from any assignments which involve contact with minors.
- All the requirements of civil law will be complied with.
- The victim and the victim's family will be attended to with compassion and assisted in obtaining counselling and medical care.

II. Pastoral Response to the Complainant

- A. Anyone who may have been abused or exploited is encouraged to contact either the Abbot or those designated by Glenstal Abbey as Delegates.
- B. When the Abbot receives an allegation from a victim he invites the victim to tell his/her story, not only to listen to the victim and ascertain the facts, but also to evaluate the victim's needs.
- C. When one of the Abbey's employees receives an allegation from a victim, the employee immediately communicates the information received to the Abbot.
- D. After appropriate consultation, the Abbot normally initiates the following:
 1. He recommends that the complainant contact one of the Delegates.
 2. He encourages the victim to seek counselling with *Faoiseamh*. In exceptional circumstances other supports may be provided.

III. Intervention with the Accused

- A. The Abbot informs the accused of the allegation, requesting that he/she choose someone as his/her Support Person and inform the Abbot who this person is.
- B. Based upon the investigation, the Abbot decides whether or not to suspend the accused from his/her present duties.
- C. The Abbot may require the accused to undergo a psychological evaluation. The Abbot will provide this professional with all relevant information in his possession pertaining to the alleged abuser.
- D. If the accused is to receive professional treatment, the Abbot may take the following steps, if the accused is a monk:
 - Have the accused live at the monastery under a supervised regime.
 - Find some appropriate work or vocational retraining for the accused.
 - When treatment has been successfully completed, the Abbot, in consultation with the treatment professionals and others, establishes an aftercare programme.

- E. On completion of the recommended treatment and the aftercare programme, and on receipt of a positive evaluation, the Abbot, after appropriate consultation, will consider giving this monk a permanent assignment with appropriate safeguards which will be communicated to supervisors and colleagues.
- F. If at any time the Abbot determines that the monk cannot continue in monastic life, he will seek to have the monk leave the monastery voluntarily. If the monk does not leave voluntarily, the Abbot may initiate a canonical process for dismissal.

IV. Public Statement

It may be appropriate for the Abbot to issue a short statement.

V. Definitions

- A. **Abbot:** the Abbot is the chief administrator and spiritual leader of Glenstal Abbey.
- B. **Abuse:** As defined under four headings in the Department of Education and Skills guidelines. Similarly any form of sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult or another person shall be deemed to constitute a serious matter, whether initiated by the accused or not:

1. Neglect

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

2. Emotional Abuse

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

3. Physical Abuse

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

4. Sexual Abuse

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

- C. **Allegation:** a complaint or accusation made by a victim to the Abbot or a credible report made to the Abbot by another person because the victim is prevented for a serious reason from speaking directly with the Abbot.
- D. **Victim:** A victim shall be deemed to be any minor, student of the school or vulnerable adult.



8th November 2010

Patrick Hederman OSB
Abbot of Glenstal

Date