

## **Safeguarding Policy for Glenstal Abbey Guesthouse**

### **Welcoming guests to the Guesthouse**

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

If persons under 18 are to be accommodated in the Guesthouse, (e.g. for a school retreat) they must always be accompanied by and under the direct care of a visiting adult, (e.g. a teacher from the school concerned).

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

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

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

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

### **Training in best practice**

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

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

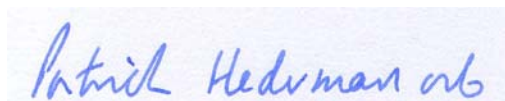
Glenstal Abbey Guesthouse is accustomed to welcoming guests who are in a fragile emotional or mental state and the prudent judgement of the Guestmaster in consultation with the Abbot shall be applied to ensure that these people are appropriately cared for during their stay.

## **Confidentiality**

The Guestmaster and those monks involved in the running of the Guesthouse or in the spiritual accompaniment of guests will in the course of their duties come across information of a confidential nature. The procedures described in *Abbey Policy on Protection and Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults* must be followed, including informing the Abbot or one of his Delegates, who shall then be responsible for informing the appropriate civil authorities.

## ***NOTE ON DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE AND THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION***

The maintenance of trust in the Sacrament of Reconciliation requires the guarantee of absolute confidentiality, allowing for no exceptions. This is known as the Seal of Confession and guarantees to the penitent that anything revealed to the confessor will not be divulged to anyone else (canon 983). It is not desirable for the confessor to undertake to divulge matters revealed in confession, even when the penitent gives consent. Pastoral wisdom would advise that in the event of a child or young person disclosing in confession that they have been abused, the confessor should sensitively reassure the child or young person that they are not at fault. The confessor should encourage the child or young person to disclose the abuse to an adult they trust (for example, a relative, teacher, friend) and to have that person report the abuse. The confessor must at no time act in any manner that might violate the seal or compromise the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the eyes of the faithful. When an abuser confesses to a priest previously undisclosed child abuse, the priest should advise the penitent to seek the professional help he/she requires immediately, for his/her own well-being and in order to prevent any recurrence of abuse.



8<sup>th</sup> November 2010

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

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*Date*