



Communications Policy



This Communication Policy is for all those involved in children's activities in *St Mary's Howth*. It deals with communication within the *St Mary's Howth* and with parents and children and the wider community. To contribute to ensuring inclusivity and co-operation this policy emphasises maintaining and improving the current channels of communication amongst those involved in *St Mary's Howth* and with the general public.

Good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed. This requires *St Mary's Howth* use a variety of channels of communication so as to ensure that the relevant people receive the necessary information.

Means of communication:

This policy encourages the use of the most effective communications mechanism depending on context, whilst ensuring the rights of everyone involved in the communication.

Communication methods utilised;

- i. Personal contact
- ii. Phone calls
- iii. Written communication (email, letters, notes)
- iv. Text messages including What's app
- v. Social media
- vi. Website

Communications procedures:

Our communication strategy is based on a module of Display, Inform, and Ask to ensure that relevant information is available to parents/guardians, children and the wider community. We shall use the above communication methods to ensure that this module is achieved.

We shall ensure that the following is displayed and publicly available on our website:

- General information about our (*parish/diocese*) activities.
- Contact details for relevant personnel.
- Child Safeguarding Statement and contact details for relevant person.
- Safeguarding Trust Policy and contact details for our Panel.
- Other supporting policies and procedures that underpin the work of *St Mary's Howth*.

We shall ensure that the following is displayed on our parish premises (or at diocesan activities):

- Child Safeguarding Statement and contact details for the relevant person.
- Panel notice.
- Children's information poster with photos of panel members.
- Details of children's activities.
- Details of our parish website.

We shall ensure that we inform parents about the following:

- Introduce the clergy, staff and volunteers that will be working with their children.
- Who their first point of contact should be within their child's group.
- General information about the activity their child is participating in.
- Calendar of events.
- Details of activities, trips and outing.
- Code of Behaviour for their child's group and the sanctions for breaching that Code of Behaviour.

- Reports on activities undertaken within our groups via our parish newsletter/magazine/website/social media site or Diocesan magazine/website.
- Safeguarding Trust and supporting policies through information leaflets.
- How to make a complaint.
- Any concerns clergy, staff or volunteers have about their child's welfare and safety provided it does not further endanger the child, clergy, staff, volunteers or panel members.

We shall ensure that we inform children about the following:

- Upcoming activities.
- Their rights to be protected, listened to and to have their views taken into consideration.
- Safeguarding Trust through information leaflets and posters.
- The Code of Behaviour that applies to them and the sanctions for breaching that Code of Behaviour.

We shall provide the family of all children joining one of our parish groups with information pack which includes:

- letter of welcome to parents/guardians, programme of activities;
- Safeguarding Trust parent/guardian information leaflet and Safeguarding Trust child information leaflet (if child is over 10 years);
- details regarding the meeting times and arrangements for dropping off and picking up children;
- contact details for clergy, staff or volunteers;
- membership/registration form for submitting child's personal details/medical information/emergency contact numbers/consent authorisation;
- photographic policy/consent authorisation;
- Code of behaviour for members for your group and sanctions for breaching the Code of Behaviour;
- details of where to access of relevant policies and Child Safeguarding Statement or copies of same.

We shall ask parents or guardians to:

- Complete a Membership Registration form for their child annually providing child's personal details, medical information, emergency contact number, consent authorisation.
- Complete consent forms for photographs, outings etc as necessary.
- Ensure that consents are provided by those with parental/ guardian responsibility.
- Keep clergy, staff and volunteers informed about relevant information in relation to their child and family during the year.
- Confirm that the information being provided to them is being received and understood.
- Check in with clergy, staff and volunteers for feedback on how their child is doing.
- Provide feedback to clergy, staff and volunteers on what we are doing well and how we can improve or change to benefit parents and members of our groups.

We shall ask children to:

- Ensure that the information we are providing them with is being received and understood.
- Talk to clergy, staff and volunteers about any concerns that they might have.
- Feel free to approach any clergy, staff or volunteers if they are worried about something.
- Provide feedback to clergy, staff and volunteers on what they are doing well and how they can improve within our groups.

All information provided by parents/guardians and children as part of this Communications Policy shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality. However, if any information pertaining to a child's welfare and safety comes to a clergy, staff members or volunteer's attention through any of these means of communication, they shall follow the relevant procedures laid out in the Safeguarding Trust.

Adopted by the Select Vestry 15th February 2023