

Archdiocese of Armagh

Sunday 15th February 2026: Safeguarding Briefing (to be read out at Masses)

This briefing can be read out at Mass on the weekend of 14th and 15th February 2026 and may be read by the Parish Safeguarding Representative, Pastoral Council Chair or the Priest.

Good morning/afternoon/evening everyone. [My name is (name), and I am the Parish Safeguarding Representative for (name of Parish).] The purpose of my short address is to provide you with some updated information regarding the arrangements in place in the Archdiocese of Armagh to ensure children and young people and vulnerable adults are kept safe as they participate in the life of the Church.

The Archdiocese of Armagh abides by the National Safeguarding Policy and Procedures which were updated in 2024. Like the other Dioceses in Ireland, we have a Diocesan Safeguarding Committee made up of experienced lay people and clergy who oversee all the safeguarding arrangements. The Archdiocese has a Safeguarding Office based in Armagh, staffed with a Safeguarding Training Officer, and an Administrator, together with our Director for Safeguarding.

We thank all our Parish Reps and volunteers for their continued hard work and dedication in the area of Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Our Diocesan Office ensures that all the Clergy are vetted through Access NI and Garda Vetting. Clergy in ministry within the Diocese carry a valid Ceibret, or ID Card, signed by the Archbishop to confirm they are in good standing wherever they are celebrating Mass or the Sacraments. The Safeguarding Office also ensures that everyone, layperson or cleric who works in a regulated position, with children or vulnerable adults is vetted. Over the past 5 years **3,270** individuals have been vetted by our office.

The Diocesan Office is also responsible for providing training to all Clergy and volunteers, and this takes place every 3 years. Over the last 5 years **1176** individuals were trained in our Parishes. The Safeguarding Office also advises Parishes on the arrangements that must be in place to ensure children can participate safely in our ministry.

I would like to remind you that the Diocese has also put arrangements to provide support to anyone who has been abused by a member of the Church. Counselling arrangements are made through Towards Healing, a free and independent counselling service. In 2024 Towards Healing provided **47** counselling sessions to victims and survivors connected with the Archdiocese of Armagh.

Counselling is also provided by Towards Peace which is for those who wish to reconnect with their Church spiritually. The contact details for both organisations, who work on a confidential basis, can be found on the Diocesan website.

As a further part of our response to victims of abuse the Irish Bishops designate the first Friday of Lent each year as a special day of prayer for victims and survivors of abuse. This year that day falls next Friday 20th February. Parishes across Ireland are invited to offer prayers on that day for those who have been impacted by the terrible sins and crimes of abuse in the Church. In many churches candles will be lit, and Prayers offered as we acknowledge the wrongs of the past and pray for the assistance and guidance of the Holy Spirit as we work to ensure they cannot be repeated. This initiative and the prayer were instigated by a survivor of abuse in the Church, and I ask that everyone remembers victims of abuse in their personal and family prayers next Friday.

Thank you for listening.