DIOCESE OF GALLOWAY
Safeguarding Office

ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT
OCTOBER 2026

Safeguarding remains the responsibility of everyone

Poe Leo during his recent visit to France met with survivors of abuse and repeated his closeness to those who suffer the "wounds of abuse." He also spoke of the need to be courageous and determined in being committed to a culture of vigilance and safeguarding to prevent abuse in its many forms.

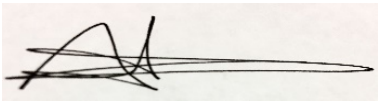
It is good that the Universal Church addresses the issues of safeguarding, but as a Local and a National Church we too must be active and effective in this regard.

The eight national Diocesan Safeguarding Advisors continue to work closely with the Bishops Conference of Scotland (BCoS) and are guided by Luisa Campbell, General Secretary of BCoS and Bishop Brian McGee, Safeguarding Lead for the BCoS and Bishop of Argyll and the Isles.
The national body, the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA), which is the independent agency monitoring safeguarding practice in every Scottish Catholic diocese, religious community and Catholic organisation continues to be an integral part of safeguarding nationally. The agency works with a range of organisations involved in safeguarding, both in the Catholic Church and in the secular world and seeks to discover and share best practice through collaboration with individuals, groups, and centres of excellence.
In the diocese, we continue to make safeguarding an integral part of parish life. Our Diocesan Safeguarding Trainers have embarked on a process of training for Parish Safeguarding Coordinators (PCS's), and this training is being delivered throughout the diocese. It is hoped that all the PSC's will have attended the training by the end of this calendar year. The training itself was developed at a national level by the Safeguarding Training Advisory Group (STAG) with membership drawn from individuals with a wide range of expertise and background knowledge.

Our Diocesan Safeguarding Action Plan is essential to our diocesan safeguarding strategy, and it is continually reviewed and updated by the Diocesan Risk Assessment Management Team (DRAMT), the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Group (DSAG) and the Safeguarding Operational Core Team (SOCT). Each of these have an important role to play in our overall diocesan approach to safeguarding, and each make their own contribution in reviewing, assessing and enhancing our policies, procedures and practice guidelines. Examples of such involvement over the last twelve months have been our involvement in processes of Quality Assurance Framework, Awareness of GDPR/Artificial Intelligence and the development of a Volunteer Code of Conduct.

On Saturday 07 November 2026 members the Safeguarding Community from across Scotland will meet at Strathclyde University for the Annual Safeguarding Conference organised by the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (SCSSA). The theme for this year is ' ***Sacred Spaces - Safer Places : A call to action'.*** The Conference is directed at clergy, religious, Parish Safeguarding Coordinators, volunteers, employees and all who have a role within the Catholic Church safeguarding in Scotland. In other words, it is for us all. Anyone wishing to attend should contact their local Parish Safeguarding Coordinator for more information.

As those tasked in the diocese with ensuring vigilance, attentiveness and clear and unambiguous policies and outcomes, we would like to express our thanks to all who contribute to the mission of safeguarding and so assure that our parishes and diocese are safe places for all, in particular for our children, young people and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding remains the responsibility of all. We must all maintain our commitment.

Signed: W.R McFadden 

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Father William McFadden (Vicar General) Tony Fisher (Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser)