

Statement from the Vincentian Community (Congregation of the Mission)

16 November 2022

Over the past 15 years the Vincentian Community (Congregation of the Mission) has received allegations of abuse from former students of our schools: St. Patrick's College Armagh, St. Vincent's Castleknock, St. Paul's Raheny and St. Peter's National School Phibsborough. Some of these allegations date from the 1950s.

A number of allegations have also been made against some of our priests working in other ministries.

In total 45 allegations of abuse have been made against nine priests all of whom are deceased.

17 people have alleged that they were abused at our schools. This number (17) includes one allegation of bullying and another of physical abuse.

Two additional allegations of abuse have been made against a non-teaching employee dating back to the 1960s.

Additionally, concerns have also been received about the behaviour of three priests in our schools although no specific allegations of abuse have been received. A concern has also been expressed about another priest in one of our other ministries who is also alive. No formal allegations have been made against any of these four priests. However, the Congregation is following very strict procedures as laid down by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in dealing with this matter.

One of the priests against whom allegations have been made is Fr. Donal Gallagher CM who was included in the Murphy report of 2009. To date we are aware of 29 allegations relating to Fr. Gallagher. These are included among the 45 allegations referenced above.

There is one allegation from a former pupil of one of our schools, against a priest who is still alive and who is no longer a member of the Congregation. This allegation is currently under review by the statutory authorities and the priest in question is not in active ministry.

All matters relating to any form of abuse have been brought to the attention of the National Board for Safeguarding children in the Catholic Church and all policies and procedures have been strictly followed.

Our records show that the Congregation has paid out a total of €1.4m in compensation and legal fees.

- Compensation: € 1,015,000
- Legal Fees: € 436,150

As is appropriate, all settlements were made through engagement with legal representatives. The legal fees of the claimants were in all instances paid by the Congregation. As all the priests were deceased at the time of the allegations, no legal fees were paid in defending any cases.

In light of recent revelations relating to abuse at boarding schools, it is possible that the Congregation may receive further allegations.

Our current policies and procedures are rigorously implemented have been audited by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church and by Tusla and we are doing everything possible to ensure that no such abuse could occur today.

We deeply regret and sincerely apologise for the suffering people have endured or experienced as a result of abuse. And we ask any other person who has suffered abuse at any of our schools or ministries to contact us or the relevant authorities. We wish to assure those who make contact that we will assist as best we can.

Statement from the Vincentian Congregation.

safeguarding@vincentians.ie