



Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin

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06 September 2024

To Principal & Staff,

I want to share with you my response to the *Report of the Scoping Inquiry into Historical Sexual Abuse in Day and Boarding Schools Run by Religious Orders*. Like everyone I have been reading through it in recent days and I am appalled at the depravity of abuse outlined in that report.

It is not easy reading. Behind every sentence, paragraph and page is someone who as a child suffered hugely in the very place where they should have felt safe. I commend the survivors and their families who showed extraordinary courage in coming forward to share their story.

While we have become accustomed to reports in recent years, it is worthwhile to bring all of them together to help us appreciate and seek to respond to the extent and seriousness of this epidemic that has plagued Irish society for far too long. Church schools should always lead by word and above all by example on how to look after children in their care and particularly children with special needs.

I realise schools in the diocese, at both Primary and Post Primary level, feature in the Report. I know this is very upsetting to current staff, students and families. As Bishop, I want to assure everyone of the robust safeguarding protocols that permeate every aspect of school life today.

I also know for survivors and victims, the assurance of these safeguarding protocols, by no means lessens the pain and suffering caused in the past. I know that apologies can be just empty words to those who have experienced such trauma and to their families who are their constant companions on this difficult journey. However I want to express heartfelt sorrow and to promise that as Bishop I will do my utmost to ensure that the work of safeguarding continues to be a priority in our diocese. The Diocese supported the work of the Scoping Inquiry and will continue to do so.

Our schools today are safe places but we must continue to be vigilant to ensure policies and procedures which have been put in place for the safeguarding of children will continue to be fully implemented.

At Masses this Sunday we will be remembering all survivors of abuse and their families, as well as staff, students and boards of management of schools that feature in the Report.

Blessings to all of you as this New School Year sees the end of the first week of September,

✠ Denis Nulty

Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin