

Loreto Sisters

Guidance on Minute Taking

This guidance is provided for Church personnel who have the task of taking accurate minutes of the decisions of meetings of committees and other working groups involved in child safeguarding at parish, diocesan, and in the case of a religious order, at provincial level.

The appointed minute taker at a meeting is faced with the challenges of deciding how much to record, and how to write this up in summary form without leaving out important information. They also may wish to take part in the discussions at the meeting and need to be able to do so without too much difficulty. It is not envisaged that a minute taker would simply attend to take notes and otherwise not participate.

It is useful for a committee that meets regularly to appoint a minute taker who will undertake this task for an agreed period of time, perhaps for a year. After this time, the arrangement can then be reviewed and, if necessary, changed for the next year. This ensures that time is not wasted at the beginning of meetings debating who will take the minutes. It will also ensure that minutes are taken for each meeting.

Minutes are a summarised record of what took place at a meeting. They record where and when the meeting took place, who was in attendance, who chaired the meeting, who gave apologies for their inability to attend, what agenda items were discussed, and what decisions were made under each agenda item. They also record a list of resultant actions required, along with the names of people responsible for undertaking these, and any deadline by which they have to complete them.

The minute taker needs to listen keenly to all discussions once the chairperson calls the meeting to order. Occasionally they may need to seek clarification of what was said or agreed rather than risk making an inaccurate record.

The minute taker makes rough notes of what was agreed and who is going to do it. They write these up in an agreed format, check them for accuracy with the chairperson, and distribute them to all members of the committee or working group. At the next committee meeting, the written minutes will be reviewed for accuracy, amended if required and then signed and dated by the chairperson. The minute taker places these signed minutes into a minutes file for safekeeping and ease of future reference.

The following checklist is helpful:

- When and where was the meeting ?
- Who attended ?
- Who did not attend (apologies) ?
- What topics were discussed ?
- What was decided ?
- What actions were agreed upon ?
- Who is to complete the actions, and by when ?
- Were any written materials distributed at the meeting (e.g. discussion document, copy of correspondence, draft working document, etc.)? If so, are copies available ?
- Is there anything special that the reader of the minutes should know or do ?
- What is the date, time and place of the next meeting ?

