



The Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children



Approved by the Standing Committee of the Church of Ireland
for use in the Republic of Ireland

2008



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A theological introduction

The foundation of the Church's approach to all people, including children, is rooted in the biblical affirmation that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God.¹

A glance at the stories and genealogies of the Hebrew Scriptures illustrates that children, in particular, are not only a gift and blessing but also result in the founding of nations and communities.² They are a precious means of remembering the covenant and of passing on the faith of the community.³ They are part of the assembly.⁴

In the New Testament, Christ "...saw children as demonstrating a full and intimate relationship with God. He gave them status, time and respect."⁵ Believers are to become like children in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.⁶

All in all,

"...children are a gift to the Church. The Lord of the Church sets them in the midst of the Church today, as in Galilee, not as objects of benevolence, nor even as recipients of instruction, but in the last analysis as patterns of discipleship."⁷

Moreover,

"God, who in Jesus became vulnerable as a child, calls us to listen to voices which are not heard and to stand alongside those who have no position or power."⁸

It is incumbent on the Christian community, therefore, to create a safe environment for children and to implement carefully a code of good practice in its ministry to children.

¹ Genesis 1.26ff

² See e.g. Genesis 10.21-32 (Shem's descendants); Genesis 22.20-24 (the children of Nahor); Genesis 25.22 (two nations are in your womb); Genesis 46 (the children of Jacob); Ruth 4.13-22 (the genealogy of David); 1 Chronicles 6

³ Exodus 12.24 (the Passover); Deuteronomy 6.20-25; Deuteronomy 11.19 ("Teach them to your children..."); Joshua 4.6 (When your children ask, "What do these stones mean?..."); Psalm 78.6-7

⁴ Deuteronomy 31.12

⁵ *Protecting All God's Children*, 3rd edition, (2004, Church House Publishing, London) 3; see also Matthew 18.2-10 and 19.14; Mark 9.36-42; and Luke 18.16

⁶ Matthew 18.2

⁷ *The Child in the Church* (1976, British Council of Churches, Bocardo and Church Army Press, Oxford) 17, par.43

⁸ *Unfinished Business: Children and the Churches (Report of the Consultative Group on Ministry among Children)* (1995, CCBI, London) v

Preamble



Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children was first published in 1997.

This fourth edition is published in a new format of parts and sections which it is hoped will make the Code more accessible. The ring binder format will also facilitate future revisions and the incorporation of additional material. There will be no separate handbook for workers. Sections of this edition may be downloaded or photocopied and given to workers at induction training to supplement approved training notes.

This edition is also available at www.ireland.anglican.org

Church of Ireland Policy:

“It is the policy of the **Church of Ireland** to set standards for the **welfare of all children** sharing in its ministry with a view to **protecting** them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.”



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Part 1: Policy framework

1.1 Introduction

This edition, published 2008, which is for use in the Republic of Ireland only:

- takes account of the Code's inclusion in the Constitution of the Church of Ireland
- indicates the role and contact details for the Church's Child Protection Office
- provides additional advice on the implementation of the Code
- draws on experience gained in the implementation of child protection policies since the publication of the Code
- updates the Code in line with child protection policies as operated in the Republic of Ireland
- incorporates amendments made to previous editions in accordance with the guidelines issued for the use of voluntary organisations by the Department of Health and Children in the documents '*Children First*' published 1999 and '*Our Duty to Care*' published 2002 and '*Child Protection in the Youth Work Sector*' published 2002 by the Department of Education and Science
- updates the Code in relation to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006 and the Criminal Justice Act 2006: the Code had previously taken account of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 (the 1998 Act) and the Sex Offenders Act 2001
- includes the new Garda vetting procedures provided by the Garda Central Vetting Unit as part of the appointment procedures for clergy and workers
- directs that no new appointments be made until the employment or appointment procedure including an acceptable Garda vetting result has been received from the authorised signatory
- provides that the reporting procedure regarding abuse shall be applied both if the parish panel has a legal interest in receiving the report:- i.e. THE REPORT RELATES TO A PARISH WORKER OR CONCERNS A PARISH ORGANISATION OR SOME ACT OR EVENT WHICH HAS OCCURRED ON PARISH PREMISES OR AT AN EVENT UNDERTAKEN BY THE PARISH or IF A WORKER OR THE PANEL HAS RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE OR FORMED A SUSPICION THAT A CHILD MAY BE SUFFERING ABUSE
- advises that a report should only be made to the statutory authorities if the panel forms an opinion that abuse may have taken place. The panel must act reasonably and in good faith in forming its opinion
- advises that any report to be made should be made by one member of the panel but on behalf of the panel
- advises that a worker who receives a disclosure should also make a report to the appropriate authorities, as well as to the panel, so as to avail of the protection of the 1998 Act - **see 5.10.**

1.2 Church of Ireland child protection policy statement

“It is the policy of the **Church of Ireland** to set standards for the **welfare of all children** sharing in its ministry with a view to **protecting** them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.”

1.3 The purpose of the code of good practice

Thousands of children visit Church of Ireland premises for worship and for other social, educational and recreational purposes each week. The Church’s ministry to them is a priority for the Church and it is only possible because of the commitment of adults who are prepared to work with children. *Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children* is designed to protect and to enhance that ministry.

Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children is designed to enable all parties within the Church of Ireland to fulfil their proper responsibilities within this ministry:

- to create a safe environment which will promote healthy and fulfilling participation of children and young people in educational and recreational activities and minimise the possibility of harm, either deliberate or accidental
- to encourage safe practices for those who work with children
- to set out the appropriate responses and procedures in the event of abuse taking place
- to safeguard those who work with children from the consequences of unfounded accusations.

Any parish, organisation or other body serving children within the Church of Ireland should be able to commit to the policy statement in part 9 and arrange for the display or circulation of the policy statement.

1.4 Definitions used in this document

A number of terms are used quite frequently in this document. In order to make sure that there is no ambiguity about these, the following are some definitions:

- "Child" means a person under 18 years excluding a person who is or has been married. The term young person is used where the context is appropriate but still with reference to an individual under 18 years.
- "Children First" refers to The National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children issued by the Department of Health and Children, 1999.

- "The Code" is used as a synonym for *Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children*.
- "Worker/s" means clergy, teachers, children's and youth group leaders, organists, choir/music group leaders, Sunday school teachers/leaders, toddler group leaders, uniformed organisation leaders, play scheme/holiday club leaders, including all volunteers, temporary workers and paid employees - in fact all who, at times, share in the church's ministry with children.
- "The panel" means the parish representatives appointed to oversee the implementation and use of *Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children* in the parish or those appointed to discharge the same function at diocesan or central events.
- "Parish" means a sole parish, group or union of parishes.
- "The 1998 Act" refers to the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.
- "Statutory Authorities" refers to the Health Service Executive (HSE) which is the statutory body responsible for the safety and welfare of children (formerly the Health Boards) and to the Garda Síochána who are empowered under legislation to investigate these matters.
- Many other terms used in this document are defined in the Constitution of the Church of Ireland.

1.5 Principles of good practice

Clergy, staff and volunteers working within the Church of Ireland's ministry with children are committed to practice which promotes the welfare of children and protects them from harm. The policy, procedures and practices will be reviewed at regular intervals, at least every three years.

In its ministry with children the Church of Ireland will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- following carefully the procedures laid down for recruitment and selection of workers
- providing effective management of workers through supervision, support and training
- adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for workers
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and workers
- ensuring adherence to safety procedures
- reporting concerns to the appropriate statutory authority.

Any parish, organisation or other body ministering with children within the Church of Ireland should be able to commit to the policy statement in 9.3.1. The statement should be clearly displayed in church buildings and / or circulated to parents and parishioners.

1.6 Safeguarding vulnerable adults

The legislative position regarding adults who may be in need of protection is currently being considered by the Law Reform Commission (2006). If an individual has a concern about someone who they feel may be at risk of abuse they should contact the HSE elder abuse social worker to discuss the matter. At present there are no State guidelines. The Domestic Violence Act 1996 would apply to the protection of persons in a domestic relationship because of the conduct of another person in the domestic relationship concerned.

If an individual believes a vulnerable adult is suffering abuse then the matter should be reported to An Garda Síochána.

The HSE maintains an information line for elder abuse Lo-Call 1850 24 1850 while the elderly may access the Senior Help Line for support 1850 440 444.





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Part 2: Areas of responsibility

2.1 Areas of responsibility: an introduction

Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children outlines critical areas of responsibility and procedures which require:

- bishops, incumbents, dioceses, parish personnel and youth organisations having procedures to follow in the event of allegations being made about abuse or suspicions of abuse
- incumbents and select vestries upholding the Code in recruiting, assessing and selecting workers and providing safe premises for parish and associated activities
- the General Synod Board of Education undertaking responsibility for the implementation and oversight of the programme and the provision of advice.

In our ministry with children a tremendous amount of good work is undertaken by excellent, dedicated adults. The purpose of the Code is to affirm this, to support what is already good, to improve current practice in safeguarding children from abuse, and to safeguard all workers against unfounded allegations of abuse.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

CHAPTER XVI MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN

1. *Safeguarding Trust: The Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children*, approved by the Standing Committee of the General Synod and reported to the General Synod, hereinafter referred to as *Safeguarding Trust* shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the Church of Ireland in the Church's ministry with children.
2. Each bishop and diocesan council shall ensure that *Safeguarding Trust* be implemented and adhered to by all parishes, clergy and diocesan bodies within the diocese and in any diocesan activity.



2.2 Central church bodies

The Standing Committee, on behalf of the General Synod, has overall responsibility for the Church's Child Protection Code and has delegated to the General Synod Board of Education responsibility for implementation. The Representative Body has the responsibility, in conjunction with the dioceses, for providing funding to the General Synod Board of Education to provide the necessary resources and training supports.

The General Synod Board of Education, on behalf of the Standing Committee of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, shall:

- ensure that adequate training is provided for dioceses and workers in the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust*
- provide an advisory service to parish clergy, bishops and dioceses; maintain contact with other relevant church agencies/organisations and state agencies, and be the link between the Church of Ireland and the relevant statutory agencies
- monitor the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust*
- advise the Standing Committee and the Representative Body when there is a need to review aspects of *Safeguarding Trust*.

2.3 Dioceses and bishops

1. Each bishop and diocese is required by the Constitution to ensure that *Safeguarding Trust* is implemented and adhered to throughout the church.

Diocesan Councils through their secretaries will be responsible for issuing to each select vestry secretary on an annual basis, a standard form which will be completed and returned by the select vestry, confirming that *Safeguarding Trust* is being implemented by the select vestry in each parish.

2. The diocesan secretaries will liaise with the General Synod Board of Education and exchange information to ensure that *Safeguarding Trust* is being implemented. The provisions and implementation of *Safeguarding Trust* should be regularly reviewed in the light of parochial and diocesan experience.
3. The bishop shall ensure that a current AccessNI check or satisfactory Garda vetting (as appropriate and when available) is in place for a candidate for holy orders prior to ordination or prior to institution to an incumbency or other charge or granted a licence to officiate.
4. The bishop of the diocese shall ensure that those in ministry shall receive continuing training in respect of *Safeguarding Trust*.
5. The bishop shall oversee all issues relating to pastoral care in a parish pending, during and consequent to a report or enquiry in relation to an allegation of abuse.
6. The diocese shall establish a diocesan *Safeguarding Trust* support team whose purpose is to support the triennial review of the implementation of the Code in parishes and provide training where appropriate. The work of the teams is supported by the Board of Education in conjunction with the Child protection officer.

2.4 The incumbent and select vestry

Incumbents and select vestries shall:

1. Following the approval of the bishop of the diocese, ensure that within each parish, or group or union of parishes*, there is a panel of at least three people ('the panel') trained to implement *Safeguarding Trust*. Training will be provided and shall be undertaken at a course which is recognised by the General Synod Board of Education. The panel shall include the incumbent or in exceptional circumstances a person nominated by the incumbent together with a man and a woman.

NB A panel member should not be involved in any work with children or youth organisation at parish level. A panel member should not be the spouse of the incumbent or another panel member or be an immediate relative of another panel member.

*If in exceptional circumstances, due to lack of available parishioners, it is not practical to appoint a panel of three persons and subject to the prior approval of the bishop, alternative arrangements may be made for the appointment of a panel, subject to such conditions as the bishop shall decide.

2. Implement and maintain good practice in the recruitment, assessment, training, management and support of workers.
3. Require each worker in respect of any position involving contact with children to accept a statement of mutual responsibility and commitment.
4. Establish a practice of reviewing the work of each worker at regular intervals and in particular before the expiry of any probationary period which may apply. Such work should thereafter be reviewed on an annual basis.
5. Plan and supervise the work of the parish or parish organisations so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
6. Follow the guidelines set out in this Code, and in the appropriate State guidelines, on how to respond to the disclosure, concern or allegation of any form of child abuse.
7. Ensure that suitable notices are displayed on parish premises giving relevant information to children and parishioners regarding the statutory authorities to whom they can report their concerns.
8. Affirm in writing to the Diocesan Council annually that *Safeguarding Trust* is being used in the parish.
9. Exercise reasonable care when letting a church hall or other premises for activities which will involve work with children. All external bodies or tenants must sign an annual agreement accepting the terms of the *Common Protocol for Churches relating to Independent Organisations working with children and young people* - see 9.3.12.
10. Take all reasonable care that the premises in which children's and youth work takes place, and equipment used for such work, are safe for such purposes.
11. Confirm that the appropriate insurances advised by the Representative Church Body are put in place by the parish insurer.

2.5 The Parish Panel and the Diocesan or Central Event Panel and a note on suitability for membership

The panel is the designated body (in place of a designated officer) for receiving reports of suspected child abuse and while one member will convey a report to the statutory child authorities, the panel acts collectively.

Parish panel

The parish panel functions as a sub-committee of the select vestry with the membership nominated by the rector and appointed by the vestry. Members, other than the incumbent or priest in charge, are not required to be members of the select vestry. Issues regarding employment and health and safety would normally be advised directly to the vestry but the reporting of child protection concerns are handled strictly on a need to know basis. For composition of the parish panel see **2.4.1**.

Diocesan or central event panel

Where a youth camp or children's event is being held and serving a greater area than a parish, a diocesan or central event panel should be formed. This would be composed of a senior cleric together with a layman and laywoman. The responsibilities and duties would be the same as those of the parish panel set out below.

The parish panel has a duty to receive reports of concerns of a child protection nature and to make contact with the statutory authorities being the HSE or An Garda Síochána. Panels may receive concerns from a range of individuals, including children, parents, workers, or parishioners, and these may relate to a disclosure, allegation or other concern regarding a child's welfare. Each member of the parish panel must complete training to deal with child protection concerns.

The panel's responsibilities include:

- being the designated contact point for:
 - a worker, parent or parishioner who has received a disclosure from a child that he/she may be suffering or has suffered abuse
 - a worker, parent or parishioner who has concerns of a child protection nature relating to children's work or youth ministry in the parish
 - a child who wishes to report abuse
- making contact with the duty social worker in the appropriate HSE child and family services area or, in an emergency, with An Garda Síochána and reporting any allegations against workers, disclosures or concerns (if appropriate)
- being an immediate contact point for workers when an allegation, disclosure or concern of child abuse is made about a worker or is related to children's work or youth ministry in the parish in accord with the procedures set out in these guidelines and to report should it be appropriate to the duty social worker in the appropriate HSE child and family services area or, in an emergency, to An Garda Síochána listed in these guidelines if this has not already been done

- being a contact point if a worker has received a disclosure that a child may be suffering abuse
- being an immediate contact point for parishioners who may have an allegation, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse related to children's work or youth ministry in the parish and to act in accord with the procedures set out in these guidelines
- undertaking, on behalf of the select vestry, the responsibilities listed as 2 to 7 in the preceding section - **see 2.4**
- leading the recruitment process (including interviewing and nomination for appointment) for persons willing to serve as workers in the parish. The panel may include others in the interview process where a post requires specialist skills to be assessed. The rector or priest in charge, as chair of the panel, would act as originator for the vetting procedure - **see 3.3**
- advising workers on their responsibilities in respect of the Code and arranging appropriate training
- ensuring a mixed gender of workers where appropriate
- advising the select vestry in respect of its responsibilities
- auditing records such as the accidents and incident book in case disturbing patterns emerge
- meeting with the diocesan support team for a triennial review of the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust* procedures within the parish
- keeping records of all appointments, reports and other relevant documents regarding *Safeguarding Trust*.

Panel members - suitability for membership

The people best suited to the foregoing tasks are those whose occupations, or lengthy voluntary experience, have brought them into contact with children. Those who have already participated in foundation training in child protection, e.g. nurses, teachers, social workers, probation officers and doctors may be particularly suitable. Consideration should also be given to those who could bring particular gifts and skills to the panel, e.g. those with administrative experience.

Parishes need to indicate the duration of appointment as a panel member, perhaps a period of five years which might be renewable, so that the role and responsibility is shared among parishioners.

NB A panel member, other than the incumbent, should not be directly involved in activities involving children in the parish or in any organisation or body for which the individual is serving as a panel member. A panel member should not be the spouse or immediate relative of another panel member.

Proposed panel members should be vetted, prior to appointment, as required for all parish workers.



2.6 Providers of pre-ordination and post-ordination training, and the training of lay readers

- Those who have been nominated for training should first receive an appropriate AccessNI check or satisfactory Garda vetting, subject to residence, before commencing training. This may be undertaken by the university which validates the course of study.
- The principal of The Church of Ireland Theological College or Theological Institute will be responsible for ensuring that all its students have a working knowledge of *Safeguarding Trust: the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice* while undergoing their training and prior to their placement in parishes or in any work involving children.
- The bishop of the diocese shall ensure that similar education for lay readers and those training for non-stipendiary ministry is provided in the diocese.
- The bishop of the diocese shall ensure that continuing education in relation to child protection is provided.

2.7 The Church of Ireland Youth Department, Diocesan Youth Councils and other youth organisations

- The Church of Ireland Youth Department and every Diocesan Youth Council shall implement *Safeguarding Trust*.
- All Church of Ireland groups using Church of Ireland premises should be required to be trained in and uphold the Code and sign the appropriate documentation.
- External or independent organisations shall implement a child protection policy in accordance with the State Guidelines *Children First*, provide the documentation set out in *Common Protocol for Churches* and sign the appropriate form of approval - **see 9.3.12**.

2.8 Child protection officer (CPO)

The child protection officer (CPO) will advise on and support the implementation of the child protection policy of the Church of Ireland *Safeguarding Trust* throughout the Republic of Ireland and provide professional advice and assessment to parish panels, bishops and other church authorities in relation to the reporting of any child abuse issue.

The CPO will also assist in the development and review of policy, design and deliver training and monitor implementation of the Code. The CPO will contribute to the annual report and compile statistical data where relevant in addition to other related tasks.

The CPO may be contacted at Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6, 01- 4978422 or 01-4125662, email cpori@ireland.anglican.org



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Part 3: Recruitment and selection of parish workers

3.1 The importance of good recruitment and selection procedures

The majority of people who want to work with children are well motivated and without them the children's and young people's organisations within our church could not operate. Unfortunately some individuals will try to use voluntary and community organisations to gain inappropriate contact with children.

- Good recruitment and selection procedures will help screen out and discourage those who are not suitable from joining your organisation.
- Good recruitment and selection procedures benefit everyone. Staff and volunteers will have a clearly defined role. This will enhance their self-confidence, which will have a positive impact on children.
- Parents will be assured that all possible measures are being taken to ensure only suitable people will be recruited to work with children.

3.2 Summary of the recruitment process for children's workers

The following steps are necessary to ensure good practice:

Defining the role

This involves thinking through what exactly the role of a new worker is to be, and what skills will be required for him/her to perform effectively. The incumbent or person delegated by him/her consults with others to draw up a description of the job to be done and what is involved in doing it. Sample job descriptions for paid workers or role descriptions for volunteers may be adapted to suit. The job should be advertised appropriately and/or discreet enquiries made amongst people who may have the capability of fulfilling this role. Avoid 'press-ganging' people simply 'because there is no one else'.

Application form

This should be supplied with a clear job/role description and, where appropriate, with information of what is expected of the worker. This form allows potential church workers to provide all relevant details which must be treated confidentially - **see 9.2.3.**



Declaration

All applicants are asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children. All applicants are required to declare any past criminal convictions and cases pending against them. Such information will be dealt with in a confidential manner and will not be used to discriminate against applicants unfairly. Only those applicants who formally express a willingness to undergo a vetting check should be interviewed.

Interview

All potential workers will be interviewed by the parish panel sometimes in conjunction with other relevant individuals (**see 2.5**). This is also the opportunity to explain the Code and ensure that the person has the ability and commitment required to put the policy into practice - **see 3.4**.

Identity details

You must take steps to verify the subject's identity by examining:

- an original birth certificate or marriage certificate (where appropriate)
- a photo identity document such as a passport or driving licence
- a recent utility bill/bank statement or similar document confirming the subject's address.

References

References should be taken up with at least two people who are not family members and, ideally, one of whom should have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's previous work or contact with children. References should be taken up in writing and should be followed up orally. A pro-forma reference request form is available - **see 9.2.4**.

You will get a more accurate and reliable reference if you ask specific questions. In particular, referees should be asked to confirm that they have no concerns about the applicant working with children.

Garda vetting check

Applicants deemed to be suitable at interview should be informed they will be the subject of a Garda vetting check and that work should not be commenced until this process has been completed to the satisfaction of the panel - **see 3.3**.

Record keeping

Details of the selection and recruitment procedure should be recorded. In particular, a note should be kept of any matters arising during the trial period and any training needs identified.

Ratifying the appointment

At the conclusion of the selection and recruitment process the parish panel recommends the individuals to the select vestry which is the appropriate body to ratify the appointment of the individual. A contract of employment (in the case of a member of staff) or a volunteer agreement (in the case of a volunteer) is signed by the individual and incumbent on behalf of the select vestry. The volunteer agreement may take the form of a letter of appointment. A contract of employment with a paid worker should be drawn up by the parish solicitors.

3.3 Garda vetting

A willingness to participate in the Garda vetting process must be a compulsory requirement for all posts and a willingness to participate should be confirmed in writing as part of the application procedure.

Only applicants deemed to be suitable at interview should complete a Garda vetting form. Vetting application forms are available from the authorised signatory at the Church of Ireland Board of Education. Completing the form will require a list of all residences ever used by the applicant together with a statement regarding any convictions or current investigations. The completed form is returned to the Board which in turn will check it and forward it to the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) for processing. When the check is complete it will be returned to the Board and forwarded to the parish.

The applicant, volunteer or paid worker must not commence his/her role until a response that is satisfactory to the panel, on behalf of the employing parish, has been received.

In the event of any trace showing on the response from the vetting unit the authorised signatory will advise the rector regarding the steps to be taken including the possible need to consult the bishop or commissary of the diocese. A decision in regard to any appointment is a matter for the select vestry following the nomination by the panel.

The GCVU will not only look for records which are an exact match with the personal details given but will also include any which are a close match such as similar names and addresses. This is done to minimise the possibility of someone trying to evade detection by making small changes to their personal details. The organisation's attention will normally be drawn to any such discrepancy. It is the parish panel that makes the decision to appoint or decline an application.

A satisfactory vetting check will be regarded as valid for a period of up to five years.

Vetting currently only applies to those considered for appointment since 1 September 2006. Existing workers may well be subject to a vetting check in the future. This check, like an annual appraisal, should be used as a way of affirming those who give such a commitment to the life of the parish.

Vetting documentation is sensitive and must be treated as very confidential. Your attention is drawn to the note on data protection - **7.3**.

3.4 Aspects of interviews

Notice

Volunteers to be interviewed should be given at least two weeks notice though a shorter period may be in place by mutual agreement. A shorter notice may be applied to applicants for paid posts. Written notice of arrangements should be given where possible.

References

References should be taken up and referees subsequently contacted. If issues are raised by the referee ask that these be put in writing. A volunteer reference form is provided in **9.2.4**.

Study and prayer

Study the applications and CVs well before the interviews and pray about the process.

Questions - see 9.3.13

Panel members should agree on what questions are to be posed and by whom in advance of the interviews. The same questions should be posed to each person volunteering/applying for the same position/post.

The venue and setting the scene

- Ensure that there is a suitable waiting area and someone to greet the interviewees.
- Ensure that the room in which interviews are held is quiet, well ventilated and with no likely interruptions.
- Explain how the interview will proceed.
- Put the candidate at ease - ask first about his/her interests or hobbies.
- Ask whether he/she needs any explanation or expansion of the information already given.
- Confirm the selection panel's understanding of the candidate's qualifications and experience and assess his/her suitability for the post.
- If the job involves working in a team, explain what kind of team it is.
- Give time for the candidate to ask questions towards the end of the interview.
- Tell the applicant when he/she can expect to have a decision.
- Any notes made by the panel members in respect of any interview should be filed and retained.

NOTES

An interview is in some ways an artificial situation and it can be difficult to be at ease. It is in the interests of the interviewer to create as relaxed an atmosphere as possible to be able to assess the potential of each candidate. Interviews are not about scoring points and trying to catch people out to make them look foolish. Interviews are about assessing a person for a particular job. It is not a win/lose situation but a two-way enquiry to see if a particular person is the best candidate for the job.

It must be made clear that the application procedure does not lead automatically to a particular role and both the panel and applicant should keep the procedure confidential. It may be that the interviewers decide the candidate is suitable for a totally different role which may not involve working with children.

3.5 Workers from abroad

Background checks may not be possible for many overseas applicants. When recruiting workers from abroad, certificates of good conduct can sometimes be obtained from the police or church leaders in their home church. However, these need to be treated with caution. As with any other criminal conviction certificate, it can only provide 'known' information.

Panels must make every effort to verify suitability of candidates by careful use of references and interview. **NB** What constitutes an offence in this State (and would be seen as child abuse) may not be in the country from which the applicant originates. References therefore need to be viewed with this in mind.

It is advisable also to require candidates to sign a sworn declaration that there is nothing in their background which would prevent them working with children and young people - see suggested pro forma **9.2.7**.

Contact the Board of Education for further information.

3.6 Young people under 18 years working with children

It is never appropriate to require someone aged less than 18 years to take on the role of leader or be in sole charge of children as this would mean leaving a child in charge of children. At least two adults should be in charge of any group of children.

Under 18s are assisting in order to gain expertise, citizenship development, personal or professional development and are not expected to take on the full range of duties of a worker and must not be left in sole charge of children/young people. Under 18s will **not** be vetted.

Young people under 18 years of age who work with children, e.g. for part of the *Gaisce* Award, need to be apprised of the context in which they are working.

They must be provided with an appropriate form of training to cope with basic areas, such as bullying, shouting, physical contact, emergency procedures and first-aid policy. Such training must also include the need to safeguard themselves in situations where their actions may be misconstrued without undergoing the full training required of core leadership. Such individuals should never be placed in a situation where they are expected to take responsibility for children.

The parish panel should ensure such training is provided and the leadership of the group should ensure compliance with these standards. Permission of the panel must be sought by the senior worker in charge before any young person or adult is involved in such a role. It is essential that such young people and adults work at all times under workers who have been trained to implement *Safeguarding Trust*.





Contents:

Part 4: Management of paid and volunteer workers

- 4.1 Procedures for effective management of paid and volunteer workers
- 4.2 Complaints and grievances



Part 4: Management of paid and volunteer workers

4.1 Procedures for effective management of paid and volunteer workers

Good management of workers will contribute to safe activities for children. Good management will also create an atmosphere where workers feel valued, are listened to, and where issues can be dealt with quickly by systems already in place.

Once workers are recruited they should be informed about *Safeguarding Trust* and be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision.

Effective management for all staff should include:

Induction

New workers should be provided with parts 5-8 of *Safeguarding Trust*, and given introductory training that includes basic awareness and understanding of child protection issues. The training to explain the procedures and guidelines should include an introduction to the activities and ethos of the group they have joined. It is the practice of some organisations to develop an induction pack which is given to workers following appointment.

Training in *Safeguarding Trust* should be provided by diocesan trainers, the child protection officer or a representative of the Board of Education.

Workers should be made aware of what is expected and required of them and the boundaries or limits within which they must operate. They should sign a contract of employment/volunteer agreement accepting inter alia a duty of care to children. Workers should be asked to acknowledge that they have been introduced to *Safeguarding Trust*, that they understand the guidelines and agree to uphold them - **see 9.2.5**.

Probationary period (staff) / trial period (volunteers)

All appointments should be conditional on a satisfactory period of work. Every new post should be reviewed within an agreed period of time - usually six months. It is good practice to set up a supervision system for workers, which means arranging to see workers at regular intervals whether on their own or in small groups. This provides support for workers and an opportunity to talk through any questions or difficulties they may have. It also gives the supervisor the opportunity to assess progress and whether any additional training should be provided. The supervisor should be the leader in charge of the organisation.

Annual appraisal

The purpose of this is to assess the general performance and also to give the opportunity to review any relevant changes in the role of the worker. The appraisal also provides the opportunity to highlight any future support or skills training. Parishes should aim to provide access to at least one training opportunity per year for each worker. This could be training arranged by the parish, a group of parishes, the diocesan support team or by contacting the Board of Education.

A suggested annual appraisal and declaration of background information form is found in **9.2.6**.

For a summary of responsibilities for workers with children see **6.1**.

4.2 Complaints and grievances

Everyone has the right to complain or report a grievance. Children, parents and workers should be facilitated in passing on a concern or complaint. Written complaint and grievance procedures should be in place and communicated to all associated with each organisation, e.g. a complaints form, an anonymous comments box or a meeting with the leader in charge.

Everyone also has the right to appeal a decision made regarding a complaint or grievance. Parishes should consider how to facilitate this, e.g. a subcommittee of the select vestry. Further advice is available from the secretary of the Board of Education. In certain circumstances select vestries may need to seek legal advice.

It is important that a complaint or grievance, which does not relate to abuse, can be dealt with in a separate procedure.

A grievance procedure should be included within the contract of employment of all paid staff. For templates for complaints see **9.3.4** and grievance procedures **9.3.5**.





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Part 5: An introduction to child protection

- 5.1 Preventing abuse
- 5.2 An introduction to the nature of child abuse
- 5.3 What is child abuse?
- 5.4 Signs and indicators of possible abuse
- 5.5 Why do adults abuse children?
- 5.6 Peer (child to child) abuse
- 5.7 Age of consent
- 5.8 Supporting adults abused in childhood (historic abuse)
- 5.9 Procedures for workers who have a concern that abuse is occurring
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Part 5: An introduction to child protection

5.1 Preventing abuse

Safeguarding Trust is in place to enable parishes, dioceses, bishops and other Church workers to safeguard the welfare of children with whom they work. It is possible to be lulled into a false sense of security believing that those who work with children in the Church will never be guilty of abuse because they are part of the Christian community. The Church must take all reasonable steps to:

- exclude known abusers
- report to the statutory authorities any suspicious person or known offender attempting to make contact with children
- report to the appropriate HSE child and family services area when there is disclosure, concern or allegation of abuse arising from activities within the Church.

It is, however, not safe to assume that all others are automatically safe to be with children, given particular circumstances. For this reason any procedures set in place to protect children must apply to all workers in close contact with them. This is not to treat each person who interacts with children as being under suspicion. These procedures are to ensure that sensible measures to protect children and those caring for them are recognised by everyone. This will involve thought and planning within each parish so that any risk is minimised.

In the event of the occurrence of child abuse in the course of parish activities, it is reasonable to assume that litigation may follow and that the incumbent and the select vestry, or others, may be sued for damages. The best defence that the incumbent and select vestry and others can have is that of showing that they took 'reasonable care in all the circumstances' to ensure that the work of the parish in this area was managed and supervised in accordance with the principles set out in *Safeguarding Trust*.

Where any occurrence of alleged child abuse is brought to the attention of the incumbent/ select vestry, legal advice may be sought to facilitate the correct and speedy implementation of *Safeguarding Trust* procedures by the parochial authorities.

All allegations, concerns or disclosures of abuse must be taken seriously and responded to according to the procedures outlined in *Safeguarding Trust* having regard to the need to protect children and to safeguard those who work with children from the consequences of unfounded accusations.

5.2 An introduction to the nature of child abuse

Abuse and serious neglect occur in all sectors of our society: affluent and poor; urban and rural; Christian and non-Christian. No matter how much we would wish it to be the case, there is no such thing as an 'abuse-free' community. In our churches and communities there are children who are being abused, adults who have been deeply scarred by childhood abuse and people who are currently abusing, or have abused, children. In the church we are called to do all we can to ensure the protection of children and young people from abuse and neglect and to continue to develop a safe, loving church for all people.

Recognising, responding to and reporting abuse

Those working with children should be aware of the range of abuse - sexual, emotional, physical and neglect - to which some children may be subject. These workers should be assisted to recognise how such abuse may show itself in the actions and reactions of children. Most abuse is committed by close relatives, friends or those in positions of authority or trust. It often takes place in the home of the child or young person concerned.

The workers should know what steps to take in response to a situation where they have reason to suspect that abuse may be occurring or where a child alleges that abuse is occurring.

The one option that is not available is to do nothing.

5.3 What is child abuse?

There are four main kinds of child abuse. The following list includes a definition for each and some of the signs and symptoms. Additional information may be found in Appendix 1 of *Children First*.

PHYSICAL ABUSE is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical injury include the following:

- (i) shaking
- (ii) use of excessive force in handling
- (iii) deliberate poisoning
- (iv) suffocation
- (v) Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy*
- (vi) allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

* *This is a condition where parents, usually mothers, fabricate stories of illness about their children or cause physical signs of illness.*

Symptoms may include:

- unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- self-destructive tendencies
- fear of physical contact, a shrinking back if touched.

NEGLECT can be defined in terms of an omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of health or development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults or medical care.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs met for supervision and safety. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.

Symptoms may include:

- constant hunger
- inadequate clothing
- constant tiredness
- poor personal hygiene.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is normally to be found in the relationship between a care giver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Examples of emotional abuse of children include:

- (i) the imposition of negative attributes on children, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- (ii) conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviour or actions
- (iii) emotional unavailability by the child's parent/carer
- (iv) unresponsiveness, inconsistent or having inappropriate expectations of the child
- (v) premature imposition of responsibility on a child
- (vi) unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself in a certain way
- (vii) under- or over-protection of the child
- (viii) failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development

- (ix) use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- (x) exposure to domestic violence.

Symptoms may include:

- delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- continual belittling of oneself
- over-reaction to mistakes
- extreme fear of any new situation
- inappropriate response to pain
- neurotic behaviour.

SEXUAL ABUSE occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- (i) exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- (ii) intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- (iii) sexual intercourse with a child
- (iv) sexual exploitation of a child
- (v) consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, that age of consent is 17 years. This means, for example, that sexual intercourse between a 16 year-old girl and her 17 year-old boyfriend is illegal, although it might not be regarded as constituting child sexual abuse.

Symptoms may include:

- detailed or age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour, including drawing sexually explicit pictures, sexual play with peers or toys or use of sexually explicit language
- being overly affectionate in a sexual way towards peers, older children or adults
- excessive fear of adults or displaying apprehension or withdrawn behaviour or conversely very aggressive behaviour
- regression to younger behaviour patterns, e.g. thumb sucking, or displaying disturbed patterns of behaviour, e.g. onset of nightmares, bedwetting, loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- unusual reluctance to join in normal activities involving the removal of clothing, e.g. swimming
- self-mutilation, eating disorders, suicide attempts, running away.

Additional information on sexual abuse

It has been a commonly held view that sexual abuse is perpetrated by strangers, people unknown to children. Sadly, most sexual abuse is perpetrated by people who have built trusting relationships with a child, often over a period of time (a family member or relative). Sexual abuse therefore commonly occurs in the home or in a place well known to a child.

There is no such thing as a stereotypical abuser. We cannot spot abusers by their manner of dress, looks, accent or social status. An abuser may appear needy and disadvantaged or successful and well-off. In the past, the church, along with many organisations, has dismissed too lightly the allegations made by children who have implicated 'well respected' members of the church or community. Today, we are getting better at listening to children. If a child alleges abuse, our task is to take seriously what we are told and to take action to protect from further harm.

Abusers often seek out children to befriend and 'groom' for sexual activity. Grooming of children occurs over a period of time and normally involves the abuser working hard to be accepted and trusted by the child and his or her family. Eventually the offender will breach this trust by abusing the child, leaving the child feeling confused, fearful and deeply devastated by the betrayal of trust. Families too suffer deeply when this kind of abuse happens with parents and carers often feeling they have failed to protect their child.

INDIRECT ABUSE On occasion, a worker may become aware of 'indirect' abuse to children. This could occur if children have been photographed, videotaped or filmed for pornographic purposes. This is sexual exploitation of children. This information should be conveyed promptly to An Garda Síochána.

CHILD PROSTITUTION or TRAFFICKING Any concern or suspicion should be conveyed promptly to An Garda Síochána.

Remember

It is very important to recognise that many of the symptoms listed under each type of abuse could have explanations other than that of abuse. If, however, a child or teenager exhibits a number of the symptoms listed and/or if certain patterns of behaviour emerge, then there may be good reason for suspecting abuse. Where there is a suspicion, you should follow the guidelines contained in this document. Additional information is to be found in *Children First* Appendix 1 or from the duty social worker in the appropriate HSE Child and Family Services area.

- A child may be subjected to a combination of types of abuse
- Many of the types of behaviour described above can indicate several kinds of abuse
- It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

Diagnosing child abuse is not easy and should therefore be left to those with the necessary skills and training, i.e. HSE professionals. You should not attempt to investigate yourself. By doing so you could complicate an already sensitive situation and perhaps contaminate evidence, which could have negative consequences for any subsequent legal proceedings.

5.4 Signs and indicators of possible abuse

The following signs and indicators **may** mean that a child is being abused and/or neglected. They are included here simply to raise awareness of the types of behaviour which should be noted and, if they continue without valid explanation, reported. Before being too quick to 'seek out' signs of abuse, remember the following:

- We know that children can look tired and/or anxious because they are ill or distressed about something that has happened at home or school which is not abusive (e.g. the arrival of a new baby; a move to a new house or new school).
- We know that children with certain medical problems can sometimes show extensive bruising to their bodies.
- We also know that children displaying bizarre, aggressive behaviour may have an underlying medical or psychological difficulty that is not connected to abuse.

Some signs and indicators which may point to the possibility of sexual abuse

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Simulating sexual acts with other children (this behaviour should raise immediate concerns if it is seen in children who are five years or under)
- Using highly sexualised language to other children and adults

Some signs and indicators which may point to the possibility of physical abuse

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses for injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Fear of touch
- Self-destructive behaviour such as physical self-harm
- Aggression towards others

Some signs and indicators which may point to the possibility of emotional abuse

- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-deprecation
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia (e.g. hiding food)

Some signs and indicators which may point to the possibility of neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing and being inappropriately clothed for the weather
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems

Important points to note

- A child may be subjected to a combination of different types of abuse.
- Child abuse may be repetitive or serial or may be an isolated case.
- Many of the behaviours described above can indicate several different kinds of abuse.
- It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

5.5 Why do adults abuse children?

There are different reasons - stress, problems, unhappy circumstances, the feeling of having no power in adult relationships, and perhaps having been abused as a child.

Some adults may convince themselves that there is nothing wrong with their behaviour, or that it is for the child's own good. But whatever the reason abuse is always wrong and *it is never the child's fault*.

We should **never** presume that because a person has been abused they will go on to abuse others.

5.6 Peer (child to child) abuse

In some cases of child abuse, the alleged perpetrator will be a child. In these situations, the child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and alleged abuser, i.e. it should be considered a child protection issue for both children.

Work must be done to ensure that perpetrators of abuse, even when they are children themselves, take responsibility for their behaviour and acknowledge that the behaviour is unacceptable.

It is important that clarity exists in respect of which behaviours constitute peer abuse, particularly child sexual abuse. Consultation with the HSE should help to clarify the nature of any sexual behaviour by children which gives rise to concern.

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5.7 Age of consent

Your attention is drawn to the extract from the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006 - **see 9.4**.

Issues around 'age of consent'

Sexual activity involving a child who is capable of giving informed consent on the matter, while illegal, may not necessarily constitute sexual abuse as defined for the purposes of this guide. One example, which would fall into this category, is a sexual relationship between a 16 year old girl and her 18 year old boyfriend. The decision to initiate child protection action in such cases is a matter for professional judgement by the HSE and each case should be considered individually. The criminal aspects of the case will, of course, be dealt with by An Garda Síochána.

5.8 Supporting adults who were abused in childhood (historic abuse)

Support for adults who make an allegation of historical abuse

The best thing we can do when an adult makes an allegation of historical abuse is to attend and listen to them. Adults must be made aware that if they give information which indicates a possible risk to children, a referral to An Garda Síochána will be made.

Clergy and others working in a pastoral role in the church should be aware of their own limitations in terms of the help and expertise they can offer. Sometimes the most constructive support can be to encourage an approach to appropriately trained counsellors or therapists.

In the case of clergy or workers receiving information that abuse has occurred in the past, even when the alleged or suspected victims are now adults, this information should be passed to the HSE as there could continue to be a risk for other children and young people.

Self-disclosure

It may occur that an adult, young person or child within your organisation discloses information which indicates that they have perpetrated abuse. In the case of a child or young person this may be difficult to accept. However, this can happen. This information should also be passed to the HSE through the parish panel.

Support for adults who make an allegation of historical abuse - see 9.5

5.9 Procedures for workers who have a concern that abuse is occurring

Reporting concerns

Under *Safeguarding Trust* procedures, the parish panel is charged with the duty to report child protection concerns or disclosures notified by staff, volunteers or any parishioner, where there is a reasonable concern.

It is **not** the parish leader's responsibility to identify and investigate possible instances of abuse of children. This is the role of the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána. It is however a legal requirement to report any child protection concerns.

What might constitute a concern about a child or young person?

A concern relates to the possibility of a child suffering harm. Indicators of this might include:

- sudden, unexplained or worrying changes in behaviour
- physical signs or symptoms that may be indicative of abuse (emotional, sexual, physical or neglect)
- worrying remarks made by a child
- a situation where a child is exposed to potential risk of harm.

All concerns should be recorded and passed to the parish panel, no matter how insignificant they may seem, whether they relate to situations internal or external to the parish. For instance, concerns connected to a family or school situation should be noted as well as concerns related to your organisation.

What is a disclosure?

A **disclosure** is when a child tells a worker that they have been or are being harmed or abused in some way. This may be physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or bullying.

It is important to reassure the person who has made the disclosure and offer appropriate support. A disclosure may also be when a person discloses that he/she has perpetrated abuse and that person will also require appropriate support. All disclosures must be reported to the parish panel.

What is a concern or allegation about the behaviour of workers?

Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour or communication, favouritism or negligence are examples of what may constitute a **concern** about the conduct of a worker.

An **allegation** about a worker occurs when a child, parent or other worker reports specific unacceptable behaviour where a child has been harmed or abused in some way. Allegations against workers must be referred to the parish panel.

In the case of allegations against one of the panel members this should be reported to the bishop of the diocese. If a bishop is the subject this should be reported to an archbishop - **see 5.10**.

Record keeping

All concerns, disclosures and allegations should be recorded on pro formas provided by your organisation and passed to the parish panel - **see 9.2.11**.

Workers need to know

- what constitutes a 'concern', 'disclosure' and 'allegation'
- to whom to report i.e. the Panel and its contact details
- how to access and complete the pro formas used for reporting concerns, disclosures and allegations
- contact details for the HSE and An Garda Síochána in the event that panel members are not available in an emergency
- that the panel will support them through the reporting process and provide access to legal advice if the panel or the insurer decides this is advisable
- that the primary concern as the first person that suspects, or is told of, possible abuse is to report it to the panel and ensure the concern is taken seriously. The worker may also report directly to the HSE Child and Family Services area.

This information should be given to all workers at induction and relevant training provided as necessary.

Under no circumstances should any worker attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone.

What to do if you are concerned that abuse is occurring

Responding to incidents of alleged or suspected child abuse must be based upon clearly defined procedures. Use the objective indicators in **5.10** to guide you. Knowing what to do, who to contact, and who needs to know will make you feel better about sharing any concerns.

Dos and don'ts

If a child makes a disclosure or allegation or if you are concerned that a child or young person has been abused or is at risk of abuse there is one thing you must not do, that is NOTHING.

It is important that you take what the child says seriously and follow it up with action straight away. The sooner you take action, the more likely it is that the abuse will stop and the child will recover from his or her experiences.

If you know someone who you think may be abusing a child, or a child's words or behaviour indicate to you that it is likely that he or she is being abused, report it to the parish panel.

In the event that the panel decides not to convey a report of a disclosure, concern or allegation and you, a worker, are unhappy with the decision you should consult the child protection officer.

Dos:

- Stay calm
- Listen and hear
- Give time to the child to say what he or she wants
- Reassure the child that he or she has done the right thing in telling
- Record in writing, immediately after meeting the child, what was said
- Keep a note of your report, giving the date, time, name of the individual whom you have told and course of action agreed

Don'ts:

- Don't panic
- Don't display shock or disgust
- Don't make a child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Don't promise to keep secrets
- Don't enquire into details of abuse
- Don't communicate with the person against whom accusations have been made and don't attempt to deal with it alone
- Don't delay

Your primary responsibility is to report any suspected abuse and ensure that the concern is taken seriously.

It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that any person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the statutory authorities following a referral to them regarding a concern about a child. The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is, to act reasonably in forming an opinion and to report it to the panel and the statutory authorities.

Vital information - see 9.2.11

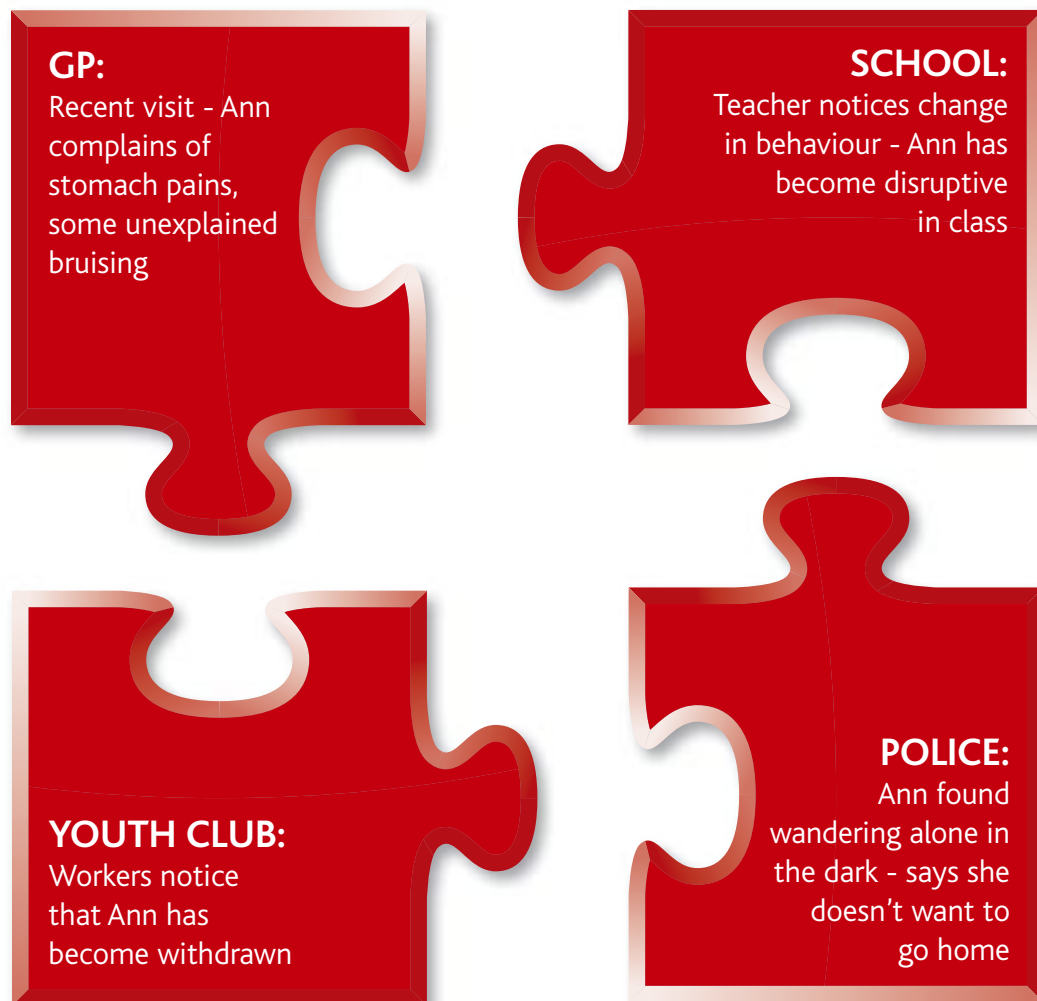
Try to have available:

- the name, address and age of any child you are concerned about
- the nature of any injury
- any need for medical attention
- your reason for suspicion of abuse

- details of what you have done already
- any practical information you may have, such as the name of the child's GP, school etc
- information as to whether or not the person against whom a suspicion, complaint or allegation exists, has any children of his/her own.

Abuse of children often goes undetected because people who have pieces of information are reluctant to share them. This is why contact with the HSE duty social worker is so important as your information may represent a significant piece in a jigsaw of reports.

Concerns cannot be dismissed outright - the sharing of information is one of the most important ways to prevent abuse of children. In many situations a number of individuals or agencies may each have a piece of information which in itself may seem unimportant but when put together with all of the other pieces could create quite a worrying picture. For example:



It is also important to note that some children are more vulnerable to abuse because of the circumstances of their life. This group would include the following:

- disabled children
- children in the criminal justice system
- children living with domestic violence
- separated children seeking asylum
- children who are carers.

Workers should be particularly vigilant for signs of abuse if they are working with children in any of these groups.

Parish panel - key role

The role of the panel is to make contact with the duty social worker in the appropriate HSE Child and Family Services area or, in emergency, to An Garda Síochána and to report any allegations against workers, disclosures or concerns (if appropriate).

If the parish panel has concerns about adults who are not involved in the parish organisations but may pose a risk to children in other organisations, advice should be gained from statutory agencies on how this information should be shared appropriately.

5.10 Procedures to be used following an allegation or suspicion of child abuse

Introduction

The panel, prior to making a report to the appropriate person, (the duty social worker or child care manager in the local HSE Child and Family Services area - see 9.5) is obliged to act reasonably and in good faith:

- in forming an opinion that abuse may have taken place
- in communicating that opinion to the appropriate person defined in the 1998 Act.

The panel's role is not to investigate but it may need to consider if there is a reasonable concern.

The panel may pose a hypothetical query to the duty social worker responsible for child protection concerns to clarify if reporting is appropriate. A hypothetical query is where a panel member or any person describes the scenario of concern to the duty social worker without disclosing names or location.

Guiding principles

- The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority.
- Reports should be made without delay to the HSE or in emergency to An Garda Síochána.
- While the basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible, children or parents should not be interviewed in detail about the suspected abuse.

Reasonable grounds for concern (the objective indicators)

- (i) Specific indication from the child that he/she was abused
- (ii) An account by the person who saw the child being abused
- (iii) Evidence, such as injury or behaviour, which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way
- (iv) An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a question of abuse (an example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour)
- (v) Consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

NB A suspicion which is not supported by some objective indication of abuse or neglect, such as those highlighted in the Code, may not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

Procedures

1. Once an individual becomes aware of or suspects child abuse, he/she shall immediately:
 - a) keep a factual, confidential record of relevant observations, discussions and actions. This record should be signed, dated and stored in a secure place and should be kept in or transferred to the standard report form. This should be provided to the panel and
 - b) refer the matter directly to an appropriate person as defined in the 1998 Act (the duty social worker or child care manager in the local HSE Child and Family Services area) **and** to a panel member without undertaking any independent investigation him/herself. Reporting directly to the appropriate person will give the individual the protection of the 1998 Act.

The consequences of failing to report a disclosure, allegation or concern could far outweigh the risk of being wrong and might have very serious consequences for the child concerned. It cannot be stressed enough that the welfare of the child must always be your first priority.

If the incumbent or any other member of the panel is the subject of allegations, complaints or suspicions these should be reported to an appropriate person as defined in the 1998 Act. They should then be referred directly to the bishop of the diocese, or in his absence, to his archdeacon or those appointed in accordance with Chapter VI of The Church of Ireland Constitution, who should communicate it to an appropriate person as defined in the 1998 Act. If the bishop of the diocese is the subject of allegations/concerns these should be reported directly to the appropriate person as defined in the 1998 Act. They should then be referred directly to one or other of the archbishops of the Church of Ireland who shall report to an appropriate person as defined in the 1998 Act.

2. On a disclosure, report of a concern or allegation being made, a panel member, bishop or archbishop or panel shall act without delay. He/she/they should:
 - (i) record the details of the concern, disclosure or allegation in writing, including dates, times, facts and observations using the standard form
 - (ii) record the name and address of both the individual making the disclosure and that of the alleged victim if different, and name of parent/guardian
 - (iii) report if they, the panel, can reasonably and in good faith form an opinion that abuse may have taken place

NB An allegation must be assessed promptly and in good faith.

- (iv) then, **WITHOUT DELAY, designate one panel member on behalf of the panel** to contact an appropriate person as defined in the 1998 Act and:
 - ask for the social worker on duty and report the matter to that person (in the event of an emergency the report may be notified to An Garda Síochána)
 - ask for and record the name of the person with whom he/she is speaking
 - disclose all details recorded at 2(i) above
 - request advice and record it
 - confirm that the bishop of the diocese or archbishop and the child protection officer will be advised of the matter
 - ask if anyone else should be informed and confirm that An Garda Síochána will be notified by the statutory authority.

NB If there is an element of doubt a hypothetical query might first be put to the duty social worker.

See **5.1** regarding the possible need for legal advice.

- (v) contact the child protection officer (and the bishop of the diocese or archbishop if he/she/they have not already been contacted) immediately thereafter, certainly within 24 hours or on the next working day, and advise them of the disclosure, allegation, concern and report (details and names should not be conveyed if the parish does not have a legal interest in the matter)
 - (vi) create a confidential file recording all notes, all conversations, the standard report form and advice from the statutory authorities
 - (vii) follow the advice given by the statutory authorities.
3. In a situation where an employee is the subject of an allegation the following should be remembered:
- (i) It is not possible in these guidelines to deal with every scenario as conditions of employment can vary greatly from employee to employee. **It is therefore advisable that legal advice be sought by the incumbent/select vestry, as quickly as possible, to ensure that employment law procedures and natural justice principles are correctly followed.**
 - (ii) Any individual under suspicion has a right to be notified of the cause of concern by an appropriate person. This is a matter which will need careful consideration and should **only** be undertaken in consultation with the statutory authority who will inform the panel member/bishop/archbishop of the actions to be taken.
- It is recommended that the same person should not have responsibilities for dealing with both the reporting and the employment issues.
- When an employer becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a paid worker during the execution of that worker's duties the employer should privately inform the employee of the following:
- a) the fact that an allegation has been made against him or her
 - b) the nature of the allegation (the employee should be afforded an opportunity to respond. The employer should note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report to the HSE Child and Family Services duty social worker or childcare manager)
- If the person is a paid employee and the statutory authority recommends suspension pending further investigation by the statutory authorities, such suspension should normally be on full pay.
- Any person whom the statutory authorities recommend be suspended should be advised to seek his/her own independent legal advice.
4. At this stage it is important to stress that the person against whom a suspicion, complaint or allegation has arisen, and his/her family, will require pastoral care, as will any alleged victims and their families. This should be undertaken after due consideration of the advice offered by the statutory authority.



5. The bishop of the diocese or the archbishop, in consultation with the panel, should take all necessary steps to ensure that parish activities can be carried on with a minimum of disruption.
6. In the event of the statutory authorities indicating that they have a substantive concern in this instance, the child protection officer and the bishop of the diocese or archbishop, should request a written summary report of the statutory authority's concern and its recommendation(s).
7. The child protection officer is available for advice and support and must be briefed regularly as any child protection issue develops.

For further information and contact details **see 2.8.**

5.11 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is key to this process. It must be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about child abuse. It is imperative that all information is treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know (e.g. panel member, bishop or archdeacon, and the appropriate person, *i.e. the duty social worker or community child care manager in the local HSE Child and Family Services area*). All written records should be filed securely.

You will find that statutory child protection procedures are child centred. This means that in all investigations the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.

A full guarantee cannot be given that information received in relation to a suspicion or concern of child abuse will be kept absolutely confidential. However, every effort will be made to preserve the identity of persons or organisations providing the information.

"The communication of information must be confined to those who have an obligation to receive it and third parties should not be privy to allegations unless it is necessary to involve them as matters unfold".

The Kilkenny Incest Investigation p. 103

It is usual for the HSE to keep an individual organisation advised in relation to the progress of such cases. Where such information is not forthcoming updates from them can be sought but there is no legal obligation on the HSE to provide such updates.

In summary information must only be conveyed on a need to know basis.

5.12 Summary of the reporting / referral procedure

(See 5.10 for detailed procedures.)

The panel member:

1. takes details of the allegation/disclosure/concern
2. if practicable, consults with the other panel members and if an opinion can be reasonably formed that abuse may have taken place the designated panel member, on behalf of the panel, reports to:-

The Duty Social Worker or the Child Care Manager
HSE Child & Family Services Office

HSE offices are normally open 9.00 am - 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.

See 9.5 for contact details.

OR, in an emergency where a child is believed to be at immediate risk:-

An Garda Síochána at the appropriate Garda station.

3. obtains the name of the individual to whom to describe the situation and subsequently uses form 9.2.11
4. follows the advice given by the appropriate authority listed above
5. as soon as possible notifies the bishop/archbishop and child protection officer

NB If there is any doubt or uncertainty, it is strongly recommended that you test your concerns with appropriate HSE Staff by the use of the hypothetical scenario.

Remember the important safeguard that the task of deciding whether or not abuse has occurred rests with the statutory authorities.

The existence of the method of referral / reporting adopted by the Church of Ireland does not preclude the individual worker making direct contact with the statutory authorities above if he/she so chooses.



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- 6.1 Responsibilities of an individual working with children and young people
- 6.2 Guidelines for individuals working with children and young people
- 6.3 Code of conduct and good practice for workers
- 6.4 Supervision of children and young people
- 6.5 Code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy for children and young people





Part 6: Guidelines for workers

6.1 Responsibilities of an individual working with children and young people

Anyone working with children in the Church of Ireland, whether in a temporary, paid or voluntary capacity should:

- a) undertake in writing to exercise a duty of care for children in his/her charge. This includes ensuring their safety and their protection from any form of abuse and/or exploitation
- b) ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that he/she is not left alone with a child
- c) not arrange to meet a child off church premises without a parent, guardian or other adult being present
- d) not allow a personal relationship to develop with an individual member
- e) endeavour as far as is reasonably practicable to have at least two adults present with a group
- f) ensure that a mixed group has leaders from both genders
- g) never permit as far as is reasonably practicable a group to be taken off church premises with fewer than two adults and without the written consent of their parents or guardian
- h) have a basic knowledge of the nature and signs of child abuse
- i) know how to respond should a child make a disclosure of abuse
- j) understand the implications and insurance requirements involved in day, weekend, or longer trips (residential or otherwise)
- k) report to the panel any suspicion or misgivings he/she may have concerning inappropriate behaviour or circumstances affecting children and cooperate in reporting the details to the appropriate statutory authorities. (In the event of the incumbent being implicated the report should also be made to the bishop.) See **5.9, 5.10**.

6.2 Guidelines for individuals working with children and young people

Private meetings with children and young people

- Workers should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual children. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place, but such interviews should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people.
- Where such conditions cannot apply workers are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. The use of engaged signs or lights is not advisable.
- Where possible another member or another adult should be present or nearby during the interview.
- Workers must not arrange to have private meetings with members off the parish premises as such meetings may be perceived as an abuse of authority or simply be misunderstood. (See also relationships and attitudes below.)

Physical contact with children

- a) As a general principle workers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children. This is particularly the case with children of secondary school age and maturing children of primary school age.
- b) Physical contact which may be misconstrued by the child, parent or other casual observer should be avoided. Such contact can include well intentioned informal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm which if repeated with an individual child, could be misconstrued, as well as more obvious and more intimate contact which should never occur. (See also Intimate Care Needs - **9.3.8.**)
- c) There may be occasions when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as a caring parent would give. Workers should use their discretion in such cases to ensure that what is, and what is seen by others present to be, normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact, particularly with the same child over a period of time and never when alone with a child.
- d) Some workers are likely to come into physical contact with children from time to time in the course of their activities, for example when showing a child how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during activities or sports. Workers should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted by the child.
- e) Workers who have to administer first-aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact in the circumstances should be misconstrued.

- f) Following any incident where a worker feels that his/her actions have been or may be misconstrued a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the person to whom he/she is accountable/reports. This would apply especially in a case where a worker had been obliged to restrain a child physically to prevent him/her from inflicting injury to others or self injury. The incident form **9.2.10** should always be completed in such situations.
- g) Workers should be particularly careful when supervising children in a residential setting, outdoor camp or extended visit away from home, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where workers may be in proximity to children in circumstances very different from their usual environment.

Choice and use of training materials

- a) Workers should avoid training materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b) When using training materials of a sensitive nature a worker should be aware of the danger that their application might be criticised after the event either by young people or parents. Workers and organisations should, as a matter of policy, consult parents and management committees when using materials such as HIV education for youth organisations and in connection with sex education programmes.

Relationships and attitudes

- a) Workers should ensure that their relationships with members are appropriate to the gender of the members, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to talk or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care, particularly when parish workers of either sex are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.
- b) Workers should not have an association with a young person for whom they have responsibility (including those over the age of consent) which could be construed as a personal relationship.
- c) When young people seek advice on an individual basis the primary role of a worker is to listen to the member and refer him/her to qualified and competent sources of advice/counselling. (See also Parts **5** and **6**.)

Transport

- a) Avoid transporting a child/young person on your own. Try to ensure another worker or other children/young people are in the vehicle with you. If a situation occurs when you have to transport a child alone, ensure other workers know this is happening, and that the child is in the rear seat.
- b) Do not overcrowd the car. This will invalidate the insurance. Private cars cannot be used for hire or carrying passengers for reward. Special conditions apply to minibuses. (For further information see **9.3.16**.)

Sanctions

It is noteworthy that codes of behaviour are ineffective without carefully thought out sanctions, which are clearly communicated to:

- staff - through a clearly written disciplinary procedure
- volunteers - through clearly written procedures for dealing with difficult situations which may be included in a volunteer agreement or a separate policy
- children - through clearly written information on sanctions such as challenging behaviour, time out from attending the organisation or participating in a specific activity.
(For a template for a members' code of behaviour, see **9.3.3**.)
- parents - through clearly written information on sanctions relating to workers and children.

6.3 Code of conduct and good practice for workers

Children matter

- They should be treated with respect and dignity.
- They should be valued.
- They should be listened to.
- They should have their rights respected.

Code of conduct for workers

- Be aware of the dangers arising from private meetings with children.
- Private meetings with children should be transparent and in the knowledge of another leader.
- Where possible another child or worker should be present at private meetings or within sight or hearing.
- Do not make unnecessary physical contact with children, e.g. engage in horseplay.
- Conduct which could be misconstrued should be avoided.
- Distressed children may need comforting - use your discretion and ensure that it will be seen by others to be normal and natural.
- Those giving first-aid should ensure that other children or another adult are present when they are administering help.
- Following an incident where a worker feels that his/her actions may be misconstrued, a report should be written and submitted immediately to the leader.
- Take great care in the setting of a residential or day trip where relationships tend to be less formal.

Good practice for workers

- All young people who attend the organisation should have a registration form filled in by parent or guardian giving: name, address, date of birth, special medical details, dietary needs, emergency telephone numbers, next of kin and parental consent to attend the organisation.
- An attendance register should be kept for each occasion of meeting and subsequently retained as part of panel records.
- An accident and incident log should be maintained.
- Authorisation / consent forms for all outings etc should be completed and retained.
- Adequate supervision should be ensured with no fewer than two adults present.

Workers should NEVER

- engage in sexually provocative games
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child
- strike a child or young person
- use offensive, abusive or generally inappropriate language
- leave young people unsupervised

Workers should make every effort NOT TO

- do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child away from others
- interview a child alone
- take a child alone on car journeys - unless with the full knowledge and consent of another leader or the child's parents
- arrange to meet a young person off parish premises or have a young person in their home.

6.4 Supervision of children and young people⁹

Making arrangements for the proper supervision of children and young people is one of the most effective ways of minimising opportunities for children to suffer harm of any kind whilst in your care.

Supervision of children - general principles

- Leaders must be satisfied that those workers and adults who accompany group parties are fully competent to do so.
- Children must be supervised at all times.
- Children must not be left unsupervised at any venue whether it be indoors or out of doors.
- Workers should know at all times where children are and what they are doing.
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant worker supervision.
- Children will be safer if supervised by two or more workers.
- Dangerous behaviour by children should not be allowed.
- Mixed groups must have both male and female leaders.

Supervision levels

Levels of supervision must be adequate whether at the organisation's venue or on a journey/visit. Therefore, when deciding how many adults are required to supervise, leaders must take into consideration a range of practical matters:

- the number of participants in the group
- the nature of site/venue
- the activities to be undertaken (If the activity is one of a hazardous nature, e.g. mountain climbing, then there are specific ratios of workers to children which must be adhered to and this can be verified by contacting relevant sporting bodies.)
- the responsibilities he/she is expected to bear (It is recommended that no journey/visit should be undertaken without a minimum of two adults in attendance, one of whom must be a worker. Bus drivers should not be considered as supervisors.)

It is for the leader to exercise his/her professional judgement in deciding the level of supervision taking into account the guidance as stated above.

See **9.3.14** for child supervision ratios.

⁹ *Our Duty to Care Action - Factsheet 6*

6.5 Code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy for children/young people - see also 9.3.3 and 9.3.6

It is good practice to have a code of behaviour for children and young people who are attending the group's activities. This should be developed in consultation with children and young people themselves and can be done, for example, in a workshop situation. In this way the children and young people within your club will know what is expected of them and will have a degree of ownership of the agreed code.

Anti-bullying guidelines - see 9.3.6

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children. It includes teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion, by one or more children or an adult, against a victim.

The effects of bullying are extremely serious for children and young people. Bullying can cause considerable distress to the extent that it affects health and development or, at the extreme, causes significant harm. It is therefore important that organisations do all in their power to tackle bullying. Developing an anti-bullying policy, which has an agreed definition of bullying and guidelines on how to respond, is important.





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Part 7:

Guidelines for sharing information

7.1 Information sharing

Good communication makes for good practice. If each church organisation puts in place good systems and provides opportunities for sharing information with children, parents, staff/volunteers, everyone will feel that their input is valued and that their ideas and concerns will be listened to. A sense of partnership between parents, workers and children will engender mutual trust.

It is important that general written information on policy and procedures is circulated to everyone connected with the organisation in a way that is understandable for all, for instance through an information session or by sending out information leaflets or news-sheets.

Information pack for new members

Consideration might be given to providing an information pack for all new members of parish organisations. The contents of such a pack might include:

- letter of welcome to parents, programme of activities
- details regarding the meeting times and arrangements for dropping off and picking up children
- contact details for all leaders
- the *Safeguarding Trust* policy statement/parish panel contact details
- form for submitting child's personal details/medical information/emergency contact numbers/consent authorisation
- photographic policy/consent authorisation
- how to share concerns/report a complaint.



Written information sought from parents

It is essential:

- to obtain consent and all relevant details about the child before membership is granted and to obtain consents for activities, day trips, residentials and emergency situations
- that consent is provided by those with parental responsibility¹⁰
- that each organisation informs those giving consent that they may only do so if in a position of parental responsibility e.g. by stating this on activity consent forms and health forms etc.

Parents should always be informed of the limits of confidentiality around their contact details and any information they provide to the organisation.

Confidentiality - see also 5.11

Some information should only be shared on a need to know basis. It is important to have a clear written statement on confidentiality, when information must be passed on, why and to whom.

A confidentiality policy should be written and include reference to:

- what information is required from parents
- storage of information
- access to information
- length of time information is kept
- procedure/guidelines for appropriate sharing of information.

¹⁰The natural father who is not the husband of the mother is not considered to be a guardian unless:

- he subsequently marries the aforementioned mother;
- he apÐ
- botÐ
Regulations 1998] which is signed in the presence of a Peace Commissioner or a Commissioner for Oaths.

Any other individual or body claiming guardianship of a child should have an appropriate court order.

If a leadeÐ
charge for clarification.

7.2 Record keeping

The following categories of records should be kept:

Workers

- All details provided at the time of recruitment (see checklist - **9.1.2**)
- Any record of complaints or incidents involving workers

Children

- Membership registration form including medical details, any special needs
- Emergency contact numbers or nearest relative or person with 'parental responsibility'

Organisation

- Attendance register - including attendances by each worker
- Accident / incident book
- Authorisation/consent forms

It is important that all workers are aware of and follow a written procedure for record keeping. There should also be an agreed procedure for lodging records for permanent filing in the *Safeguarding Trust* filing cabinet. Any record should be retained indefinitely.

7.3 Additional information on data protection, photos etc.

Summary of data protection principles - see also 9.1.2

Data protection

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 create obligations for those keeping personal information and gives individuals rights regarding information which concerns themselves.

Automated data means information that (a) is being processed by means of equipment operating automatically in response to instructions given for that purpose, or (b) is recorded with the intention that it should be processed by means of such equipment.

Manual data means information that is recorded as part of a relevant filing system or with the intention that it should form part of a relevant filing system.

Relevant filing system means any set of information relating to individuals to the extent that, although the information is not processed by means of equipment operating automatically in response to instructions given for that purpose, the set is structured, either by reference to individuals or by reference to criteria relating to individuals, in such a way that specific information relating to a particular individual is readily accessible.

Note that 'personal data' means any information about or relating to the individual.

Any group such as a parish panel or a parish organisation should, in regard to records:

- ensure that the basic principles of data protection are in place
- follow document procedures, for example with regard to accuracy, and have regular security reviews
- adhere to the 'need to know principle' - only personal data necessary for the purpose should be collected and staff should only be able to access the personal data that they need to carry out their functions
- have adequate access controls, firewalls and virus protection if material is stored in electronic form
- keep manual files in locked cabinets with restricted and recorded access.

Any organisation should provide:

- periodic audit checks and reviews
- a procedure for complaints handling
- plans for remedial steps if things go wrong
- privacy /data protection statements on forms and, if relevant, on websites.
- an Internet use policy if access is provided.

NB The careful handling of information should not inhibit the availability of necessary information about children.

Data protection clarification

The Data Protection Act 2003 extends the remit of data protection to manual searchable files, that is, information stored on paper, with effect from October 2007. Details are to be found on www.dataprotection.ie the site of the Data Commissioner.

The information provided in relation to vetting requests should be treated as sensitive information and kept under secure conditions.

7.4 Mobile phones / photography

Mobile phones - see 9.3.17

1. Mobile phone numbers for under 18 year olds in youth ministry programmes, ought to be held only as part of a wider data collection system that includes contact details and permission forms showing parents what information is stored and why. Best practice would include parents giving permission that mobile phone numbers may be stored.
2. In turn, the parish/project could do well in establishing data protection protocols for the storage and use of such material. Often, group block texting is done via the Internet, therefore it is assumed that normal data protection protocols are in place covering this information's usage as it is stored on a computer somewhere.
3. Youth leaders themselves need to exercise discretion and caution in what texts they receive and respond to. As young people communicate these days via texting, a youth leader needs to avoid inappropriate comments /innuendos etc. that a young person might take the wrong way. Jokes, too, via text might also be misconstrued. Training within the wider arena of child protection could include data protection.

Photographing children - see 9.3.18

Traditionally, people reading school newsletters, parish or diocesan magazines have been delighted to see pictures of children, especially those known to them, taking part in sports or drama, receiving a prize or pictured at a confirmation. Indeed such publication has been a matter of pride not only for parents but godparents, grandparents and the family circle.

Regrettably in recent years it has become clear that the identification of children in such pictures has a negative and indeed dangerous aspect. It has become increasingly clear that the publication of named children may be a child protection issue leading to their endangerment by creating opportunities for recognition. Individuals may use the identifying of the child and the link to a particular location as an opportunity to identify and meet the child for inappropriate purposes. A child may be easily misled by an adult who knows his or her name and something about them and claims an acquaintance.

The following points are strongly advised particularly in relation to children of primary school age or younger and those in junior classes in second-level schools - see also **9.3.18**.

- Do not identify children by name in photographs particularly when these are provided for publication. Parishes and schools may wish to make an informed judgement about what constitutes publication perhaps excluding traditional confirmation booklets, year books and similar items.
- If using the photograph of an individual child for a magazine or brochure obtain parental permission.

- Photographs of group activities should be taken in such a way as to prevent identification of individuals.
- Clergy, youth leaders and teachers would be advised not to take, store or display photographs of children without the permission of parents.
- The use of video and of cameras by parents at parish or school events needs to be carefully monitored and parents sensitively advised about the subsequent use of recordings if this is permitted.
- If you hold a parish event and have invited the press please ensure the photographer complies with what the parish feels is appropriate.

These points are of even greater significance for those parishes that maintain websites as images of children might be accessed, altered and put into circulation - see note on parish websites **9.3.9**.

These concerns also raise issues for the larger youth clubs that request a passport type photo with enrolment applications. Some parishes and diocesan events have adopted a policy of seeking signed parental permission for the use of photographs during the school year.

The issues emphasise the unsuitability of camera phone usage at particular events.





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Part 8: Guidelines for general safety and management

8.1 Responsibilities of the organisation leader

To ensure that the organisation responds in a correct and prompt manner to accidents, or suspected child abuse, the organisation leader should ensure that:

- there is an accident/incident book/forms on the premises, or with the leader
- he/she has immediate access to names, addresses and telephone numbers of the children/young people attending the organisation
- there is access to a telephone in the event of an emergency
- all workers are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an accident
- all workers are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an allegation of abuse
- he/she has a stock of report of concern forms - **see 9.2.11**
- he/she knows the name and telephone number of each member of the parish panel
- he/she is satisfied that all workers have a good understanding of the issues relating to confidentiality.

8.2 General safety

Select vestries will be aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to the Occupier's Liability and / or the Safety, Health and Welfare Acts and should have taken steps to ensure that premises are safe and any possible hazard has been identified and guarded.

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. This is not only the responsibility of the parish and of the leader in charge but of every worker. There should be available a health and safety statement for the premises which sets out the safety procedures and identifies any hazards. All workers are obliged to comply with the health and safety statement.

You should be aware of the following guidelines each time you use the premises.

- a) Always have a quick initial look around the premises you are about to use to identify any possible dangers, e.g. a stack of chairs which could topple, an electric cable which could trip etc.

- b) Be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that they are not obstructed. Regular fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all young people know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire. Know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located. In the event of a fire, evacuating the building and saving life is much more important than fighting a fire. The assembly point should be clearly identified.
- c) Know where the nearest accessible telephone is. A telephone should, where possible, be installed on the premises for safety purposes.
- d) If at all possible it is helpful to have someone with a first-aid qualification. Where possible workers should be aware of what medication children are currently taking and this should not be given without written consent from parents or doctors. Workers should also seek to obtain information concerning allergies and reaction to foods, e.g. peanuts. Medication should be clearly marked, out of reach of children, and securely locked away.
- e) Young people must be supervised by a worker while in the kitchen area.
- f) There should be adequate supervision by a worker of certain equipment, e.g. table tennis tables, snooker tables etc.
- g) During games or 'icebreakers' be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these.
- h) When using special equipment for your programme, e.g. for 'one off' activities such as trampolining, bouncy castle etc. ensure there is adequate supervision by trained workers. You may also require special insurance to cover these higher risk activities. Be aware of the physical environment and remove/avoid items which may cause injury.
- i) If the organisation is undertaking what is deemed to be high risk activities the leaders/helpers must seek written permission from parents/guardians in advance.
- j) Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used.
- k) Know where the first-aid provision is located.
- l) Know where the accident /incident report book is kept in which you should record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses/date. Records of accidents/incidents should be kept in the panel records system.

8.3 Support for families of children with special needs

Parenting a child with special needs can be overwhelming at times. Parents may sometimes feel anger, fear, grief and fatigue while struggling to help their child. Sadly, the church has in the past been a place of frustration instead of sanctuary for some parents because of a lack of understanding by church members of the difficulties faced by families.

Talk with the parents, who will know what the child's needs are

Not only will this demonstrate to the child's family that the church is welcoming to children with special needs, but you may also be able to offer the family support if required.

Some children with special needs may require one-to-one help in church or a children's group. In these circumstances, look at introducing a 'buddy scheme'. It is important to understand that some children prefer to deal with one or two people whom they know than a number of different people. So bear this in mind if you run any scheme on a rota basis.

Buddy schemes

'Buddy' or befriending schemes usually operate with buddies being responsible for one or two children. The buddy always works with the same children which helps the child with consistency. The buddy also befriends and supports the parents of the child.

Action points

Dos and Don'ts - general advice for all children with special needs. It is best to read these in conjunction with specific advice about different types of special needs.

Do

- Include (not just by enrolling a child into your programme or activity, but by including them in every aspect of what you say or do)
- Treat a child with special needs as you would any other child
- Always speak directly to the child with special needs
- Always ask the child with special needs if you can help him/her in any way
- Integrate the child into the group
- Be aware that inclusion in your group may be a child's first experience of being in a mixed group - make it a positive experience
- Try to be aware of a child's hidden disability or condition, such as epilepsy, which may require assistance
- Use biblical teaching to show that we are all different yet all special to God
- When planning an event, ask advice from children with special needs and their parents or carers, and advertise accessibility
- Examine your use of derogatory language such as 'blind as a bat'
- Assume nothing - always ask! Talk to the parents or carers, and communicate with the child too!

Don't

- Exclude (this is demonstrated by your commitment to the child)
- Use negative terms such as 'crippled' or 'victim'
- Use language that promotes pity or charity

- Use emotionally loaded language such as 'suffers from', 'afflicted with', 'bound' or 'confined'
- Consider a parent or carer to be a conversational go-between
- Segregate
- Pretend that you know what children are saying when you cannot understand them - ask them to repeat themselves or try another method of communication
- Be embarrassed about using common expressions, for example saying 'see you later' when speaking to a child who is blind.

8.4 Taking children and young people on outings

It is good practice when organising journeys/visits/trips to adhere to, or remember, the following:

- The organisers of journeys/visits should plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities for the children who are involved in the project.
- Workers are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children for the whole time they are away from home.
- Young people should not be left to their own devices, e.g. in a town for the evening or on shopping expeditions.
- All children should be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times. Each supervising adult should have a list of the children he/she will have charge of.
- In circumstances when planned activities are disrupted, e.g. due to weather conditions, then workers should have a number of alternative activities planned.
- Organisers should obtain, in writing, parental consent to children joining an organised trip - see **9.2.9**.
- Parents should be given full information about a trip, including details of the programme of events, the activities in which the children will be engaged and the supervision ratios.
- Adequate transport arrangements must be organised - see **8.6**.

Outings - important issues to consider:

- How old are the children - are they in a narrow age band, e.g. 3-5, 11-13 or a mixed age band?
- Do any have 'special needs' to be taken into account?
- What kind of activities are being planned?
- Is there adequate and appropriate supervision? - see **6.4**
- Do any of the activities (e.g. outdoor activities, swimming) require leaders to have particular qualifications?

- How near will you be to other adult help?
- Will anyone else be in the building?
- What is the layout of your building?
- Do you mainly use one room or are the activities held in several at the same time?
- What is the experience and training of adults who will be in charge especially in first-aid?
- Do any of the adults have special conditions that need to be taken into account?
Adults who suffer from travel sickness are not the best leaders for coach parties!

8.5 Taking children and young people on a residential

More comprehensive training must be undertaken by the workers well in advance of an outing or residential. If you are planning a trip you must consult your parish panel to arrange this training. See **9.3.15** for further information.

8.6 Transport

Work with children and young people will involve transporting them at some stage, whether this is on a club night or to and from an outing or a residential programme. Workers should observe the guidelines at **9.3.16** which will help ensure protection for them and the young people.





Contents:

Part 9: Forms and resources

Section 1: Checklists and evaluation form

- 9.1.1 Checklist for select vestries
- 9.1.2 Checklist for panels - care of records
- 9.1.3 Checklist for leaders - safe premises
- 9.1.4 Checklist of safe practices
- 9.1.5 Checklist of first-aid box contents
- 9.1.6 Triennial evaluation form for use by diocesan support/training teams

Section 2: Notices and Forms

NB All completed forms must be retained in a secure filing system. All such completed documents may be subject to the Data Protection Acts.

- 9.2.1 Sample notice for parish premises
- 9.2.2 "If you wish to make a report"
- 9.2.3 Volunteer worker application form
- 9.2.4 Volunteer reference form
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- 9.3.14 Adult / child supervision ratio
- 9.3.15 Overnight stays and longer residentials
- 9.3.16 Transport
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- 9.3.18 Guidelines for photographing children
- 9.4 Extracts from relevant legislation
- 9.5 Contacts
- 9.6 Bibliography
- 9.7 Acknowledgements

9.1.1 Checklist for select vestries

A basic responsibility is to make sure that children and young people are safe. The checklist below may be of help to you:

- a) Is first-aid available during all activities? Yes No
- Is there an up-to-date first-aid kit available both on the premises and for activities away from the premises? Yes No
- Do workers know who the first-aider is and where he/she can be contacted? Yes No
- Are all accidents recorded? Yes No
- How?.....
- Do workers know where the nearest available phone is? Yes No
- b) Do regular fire drills take place? Yes No
- Are fire notices displayed informing people what to do in case of fire? Yes No
- Are fire appliances suitable and serviced regularly? Yes No
- Has the local fire officer visited the premises? Yes No
- c) Is there suitable access and provision made for disabled people? Yes No
- d) Is a register kept of all those in attendance? Yes No
- Has a parental consent form and health form been completed for each child/young person (particularly for day trips and residential activities)? Yes No
- e) Have those working with children/young people been subjects of a robust recruitment and selection procedure including a garda vetting check? Yes No
- Have workers been properly introduced to the work, adequately supported and offered training? Yes No
- Do workers in the church know what to do if a child/young person tells them of abuse? Yes No
- Are worker/child ratios appropriate for the group and for the activity? Yes No
- Are there male and female workers for mixed groups? Yes No
- Are the places where children/young people meet safe and secure from unwelcome people? Yes No
- Is it possible for children/young people to 'slip' outside without workers noticing? Yes No
- f) Are children/young people safe? Are the notices in 9.2.1 and 9.2.2 on display? Yes No
- g) Is the health and safety statement available and is it up to date? Yes No
- h) Is this checklist reviewed annually? Yes No



9.1.2 Checklist for panels - care of records

- a) Is there a register of all workers with children and youth in the parish? Yes No
- b) Have all workers signed declaration/application form regarding any previous convictions? Yes No
- c) Have all workers received the relevant sections of *Safeguarding Trust*? Yes No
- d) Have all workers signed the appropriate form acknowledging receipt of *Safeguarding Trust* documents and declaring that they will uphold the same? Yes No
- e) Are all personnel records systematically filed together with the surname and forenames of the leader, together with previous names? Yes No

Records must include:

- (i) worker declaration/application;
- (ii) references;
- (iii) acknowledgement of receipt /acceptance of *Safeguarding Trust*;
- (iv) any notes made by the parish panel at their interviews;
- (v) note verifying that a garda vetting check was completed and the person was suitable for appointment.

The date of commencement of responsibility must be shown.

- f) Are these records kept in a secure filing system to which only the parish panel has access? Yes No
- g) Is an alphabetic index system of workers maintained showing date of first appointment and subsequent appointments? The date of completion of service must be recorded in the register and on the personal file. Yes No
- h) Are files of individuals who have completed service retained indefinitely? (They can be filed by the year in which service is completed provided that is recorded in the system in (g) above.) Yes No

Attendance registers, consent forms for activities and completed accident books must also be kept.

9.1.3 Checklist for leaders - safe premises

The following are not in any particular order. Tick those where you are satisfied and rank the remainder in a sequence of items to be implemented or checked.

(In the case of those organising residential camps assume the questions apply to the venue you are using.)

- a) Has the hall or premises where your group meets got a health and safety statement? This is a legal requirement. Yes No
- b) Is there a fire certificate for the premises? Yes No
- c) Have you seen it and has it been reviewed on an annual basis? Yes No
- d) Are you satisfied that there are insurance arrangements in place for taking groups away? Have you to notify the insurer when this happens? Yes No
- e) Have you a strategy in place if a child falls ill, is injured or there is an emergency? Yes No
- f) Have you the completed parental consent forms and details of how to contact parents or guardians? Yes No
- g) Have you details of health problems, emergency contact numbers and addresses for members? Yes No
- h) Does your hall have fire extinguishers and are they serviced on a regular basis? Yes No
- i) Have you had a fire drill recently? It would be advisable for any group to set aside a time at the commencement of the annual programme to deal with safety issues, demonstrate fire alarm, indicate the assembly point(s) and ensure provision for roll call. Yes No
- j) Are you satisfied with the availability and content of the first-aid box? Yes No
- k) Is there an accident and incident book on the premises to record, date and sign details of any accident, incident or damage? Yes No
- l) Do precautions exist regarding access to the premises by strangers while a youth group is meeting? Has an intercom been installed? Yes No
- m) Have parents/guardians a formal note about opening and closing times? Yes No
- n) Is the ratio between workers and children and the gender balance appropriate? Yes No



- o) Have you distributed the relevant parts of *Safeguarding Trust* to each of your assistants? Yes No
- p) Have you planned in conjunction with your rector and the other panel members a training evening for your assistants? Yes No
- q) Do you have a budget for equipment and training for your role and that of your assistants? Yes No
- r) Have you acquired from the HSE child protection information and advice person copies of the summary of "Children First" and the "Our Duty To Care" pack and circulated them? Yes No

What immediate steps do you intend to take and what precautions will you request the select vestry to put in place within the next month?

1.....
.....

2.....
.....

3.....
.....

9.1.4 Checklist of safe practices

Use this as a regular checklist to keep your organisation and its members and workers safe.

Know the children

- Have defined criteria for membership of the organisation.
- Have a registration system for each child.
- Keep a record on each child, including medical details, any special needs and emergency contact telephone numbers.

Keep records of:

- attendance
- accidents - keep an incident book (accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to the panel)
- consents given for various activities
- any complaints or grievances.

Know the workers

- Follow thorough recruitment and selection procedures.
- Have a work schedule displayed so that everyone knows who is on duty.
- Respond to any allegations or complaints made about workers.
- Make sure there are always sufficient workers of either sex to supervise activities.

Pay attention to health and safety matters making sure that:

- any buildings being used are safe and meet required standards
- there is sufficient heating and ventilation
- toilets, shower areas and washing facilities are up to standard
- fire precautions are in place
- first-aid facilities and equipment are adequate
- there is access to a phone
- equipment is checked regularly
- insurance cover is adequate.

It is important to ensure that:

- children are not normally left unattended
- adequate numbers of workers of both sexes are available to supervise the activities
- workers know at all times where children are and what they are doing
- any activity using potentially dangerous equipment has constant adult supervision
- dangerous behaviour is not allowed.

If the activities involve staying away from home overnight, attention should also be paid to the following:

- safe methods of transport
- adequate insurance, to cover all aspects of the trip
- written parental consent
- any information about the children which may be relevant to staying away overnight, like allergies, medical problems or special needs
- appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements
- respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets.

Ensure discipline and be prepared to cope with challenging behaviour

Workers need to be trained and prepared for coping with disruptive behaviour. It is recommended that:

- more than one worker is present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with
- a record is kept in a report book describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, any injury to a person or to property and how the situation was resolved.

Provide training, including:

- induction training
- particular skills training, to fit in with the nature of the organisation;
- child protection training, to raise awareness and provide information about how to respond to suspicions or incidents of child abuse.

Supervise workers

- Focus on the work to be done always acknowledging the positive tasks that have already been carried out.
- Provide opportunities for discussing concerns and training needs.
- Hold a review at the end of the trial period to confirm whether the workers should remain in his/her post or have his/her services terminated.
- Have an annual review or 'staff appraisal' to assess general performance and review any changes that have happened or that you need to make.

Our Duty to Care

9.1.5 Checklist of first-aid box contents

**Use this as a checklist. Quantities should reflect the numbers using any premises.
Check the expiry date of items.**

The contents of a first-aid kit should be clearly marked and readily accessible. The kit must be kept in a dry atmosphere and checked and replenished regularly, so that the items you need are always ready to use. It would be wise to have a chart inside the lid of the box which states when the kit was last inspected and by whom.

Adhesive dressings or plasters: Use for minor wounds. The waterproof types are the best choice for wounds on the hands. A box of assorted with heel and finger plasters included should suffice.

Sterile eye pads: Two of these are required.

Sterile dressings: Available in a range of sizes. Two small, two medium and two large recommended.

Roller bandages: Used to give support to joints, secure dressings, maintain pressure on a dressing or limit swelling. At least two should be available, one medium and one large.

Triangular bandages: Used as slings. Also used to keep limbs immobile where breakages have occurred or where it is necessary to move a casualty, e.g. two around ankles, two around knees and two at top of thighs.

Finger bandages: Usually available as kit with applicator and bandage together.

A basic kit should also contain:

- disposable gloves, **these should be put on prior to treatment of any kind**
- scissors
- tweezers
- cotton wool
- cleansing wipes
- adhesive tape
- plastic face shield (recommended where artificial respiration is required to be administered)

Tablets or medicines must not be issued from a first-aid box.

- Burn ointments or sprays are not recommended where hospital treatment may be necessary.
- Where possible check a child's medical record, as supplied by parent, before administering first-aid.

Advise parents if a child receives first aid even for minor cuts and scrapes.



Church of Ireland Board of Education (RI)

9.1.6

A. Triennial evaluation form for use by diocesan support/training teams

Date..... Year

Diocese of..... Parish of.....

Incumbent/Priest in charge details:

Name

Address

.....

Tel Home Office Mobile

Fax Email

Attended Panel Training Yes No

Approximate Date and Venue.....

"Panel members should not be involved in any work with children or youth organisations at parish level. A panel member should not be the spouse or immediate relative of another panel member"

Safeguarding Trust - 2008, 2.4



Other panel members

Name

Address

.....

Tel Home

Tel Office

Mobile

Fax

Email

Attended Panel Training Yes No

Approximate Date and Venue

.....

Name

Address

.....

Tel Home

Tel Office

Mobile

Fax

Email

Attended Panel Training Yes No

Approximate Date and Venue

.....

Name

Address

.....

Tel Home

Tel Office

Mobile

Fax

Email

Attended Panel Training Yes No

Approximate Date and Venue

.....

Name

Address

.....

Tel Home

Tel Office

Mobile

Fax

Email

Attended Panel Training Yes No

Approximate Date and Venue

.....



Present at evaluation (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Parish Panel	Diocesan Support Team
1	
2	
3	
4	

Raising awareness of *Safeguarding Trust* in the parish

See *Safeguarding Trust* - 9.3.1 and 9.3.2

- Did the select vestry provide the annual diocesan declaration that *Safeguarding Trust* procedures are in place? Yes No
- How is the parish being informed about the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust*? (please tick)
 - Parish magazine How often?
 - Letter to parents How often?
 - Sermon/talks How often?
 - Other ways - please state:
 -
- Have the select vestry and panel members received the *Safeguarding Trust* newsletters? Yes No
- Did any action need to be taken arising from the newsletters?
 -
- How are young people being made aware of the role of panel members?
 -
- How are parishioners being made aware of the role of panel members?
 -



7. Have all workers:
- (a) received a copy of the relevant sections of *Safeguarding Trust*? Yes No
 - (b) received introductory training? Yes No
- Who carried out the training?
(e.g. panel member, person appointed by the panel, diocesan support team)
-
8. Have all workers received a copy of the laminated summary card? Yes No
9. What plans has the panel for the future to keep the ideas and requirements of *Safeguarding Trust*:
- (a) in the consciousness of the parish?
 - (b) in the ongoing training of workers?

B. Record Keeping

See *Safeguarding Trust* - 9.1.2

- 1. Is a filing system of records of workers with children/young people in place? Yes No
- 2. Is a record kept of the children and workers who attend the organisations? Yes No
- 3. Are attendance registers, consent forms and completed accident and incident books and documents related to recruitment kept securely? Yes No
- 4. Have all workers in post at present signed a declaration (see 9.2.5) regarding receipt of a copy of *Safeguarding Trust* and acknowledging a duty of care to the children attending their group? Yes No
- 5. Are these records kept securely? Yes No
- 6. Do all panel members have ready access to all such documentation? Yes No

NB All such records must be kept indefinitely.



C. New appointments

See *Safeguarding Trust* - 9.2.3, 9.2.4 and 9.2.5

1. In new appointments since the implementation of *Safeguarding Trust* in the parish:
 - (a) was there a job description? Yes No
 - (b) were application forms used? Yes No
 - (c) were applicants interviewed? Yes No
 - (d) were references requested for each applicant? Yes No
 - (e) was at least one reference checked by follow-up telephone calls? Yes No
 - (f) was any training offered and given to successful applicants? Yes No
 - (g) if yes, by whom?
 - (h) was each person given copies of sections 5-8 of *Safeguarding Trust*? Yes No
 - (i) was a written acknowledgement of its receipt received and filed? Yes No
 - (j) was a recognised probationary period agreed with the appointee? Yes No
 - (k) was garda vetting of applicants undertaken? Yes No

2. Has the panel encountered any difficulty in this area? Yes No

If yes, please indicate below:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



D. General welfare/safety

See *Safeguarding Trust* - 9.1.1, 9.1.3, 9.1.4 and 9.1.5

1. Is there a health and safety statement in place for the premises used by the children and young people? Yes No
2. Was it reviewed recently? Yes No
3. Who undertook the review?
4. Has an evacuation procedure been introduced? Yes No
Are there notices to make people aware of the procedure? Yes No
Are assembly point(s) marked? Yes No
5. Has a fire drill been held in the last year? Yes No
6. Is there a properly stocked first-aid kit on the premises? Yes No
7. If yes, who maintains it?
8. Is an accident report system in place? Yes No
Where is the accident/incident book kept?
9. Is there a procedure for advising the select vestry of recommendations from the parish panel? Yes No



E. Insurance

See *Safeguarding Trust* - 2.4.11

NB In the case of those parishes whose insurer is Ecclesiastical Insurance, the Representative Church Body has put in place a policy to provide those accused of an allegation of child abuse legal defence insurance in the event of a trial. Similar insurance should be arranged by those parishes whose cover is provided by other insurers.

The parish should also confirm that the parish’s insurer provides cover in the event of a civil claim against the parish, select vestry or any other party covered by the parish insurances being taken as a result of an allegation of child abuse or other misconduct against someone involved in parish activities.

1. Has your parish confirmed that the parish insurance has been extended to provide cover relating to child protection issues? Yes No
2. Who is the parish insurer?.....
3. If the answer to question 1 above is no, how will you be covered if a case is taken against the parish?
.....
4. Is there a formal agreement with any outside group using parish premises and having children in attendance? - see 9.3.12. Yes No

F. Implementing procedures

See *Safeguarding Trust* - 2.5 and 5.8

1. Have any panel members been contacted by adults or young people in connection with any form of abuse linked to child ministry in the parish? Yes No
2. a) If yes, has everything been recorded in writing and filed? Yes No
- b) Have the statutory authorities been informed? Yes No
- c) Has the bishop been informed? Yes No
- d) Has the child protection officer been informed? Yes No



G. Training requirements

See *Safeguarding Trust* - 2.5

1. Does the parish need additional panel members to be trained? Yes No

If yes, please indicate approximate numbers

2. Is there an area in which present panel members feel they need further training? Yes No

If so, please indicate

3. Is there an annual review of training needs for leaders? Yes No

4. What ongoing training for leaders is being provided by the parish?

.....
.....
.....
.....

H. Specific suggestions from the parish

In the event that further clarification is required, please give clearly the name, address and telephone number of a contact panel member. Use a separate sheet of paper if required.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....



Action plan for parish

	Action required	By whom	When
A. Raising awareness of <i>Safeguarding Trust</i> in the parish			
B. Record keeping			
C. New appointments			
D. General welfare/safety			
E. Insurance			
F. Implementing procedures			
G. Training requirements			
H. Specific suggestions from parish			



Action for the Church of Ireland Board of Education (RI)

Identify any action required by the board or by the visiting diocesan support team.

Action required	
By the Board of Education	By the diocesan support team

Visiting report completed by (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Signature

Date

Rector's signature

Date

Please photocopy or complete in writing a signed second copy of this evaluation form and file it with your parish records.

A copy of the completed form will be sent by the diocesan team to the diocesan secretary and filed as part of a diocesan record. A copy of the sheet headed Action for The Church of Ireland Board of Education (RI) should be provided to the child protection officer to Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6. The CPO may raise concerns directly with the parish or the bishop.



9.2.1 Sample notice for parish premises

Parish of.....

The incumbent, select vestry and parish leaders are committed to uphold good practice in the parish's ministry with children and young people.

Should you have a concern, suspicion or allegation regarding child welfare in the area of ministry to children in this parish please report directly to an appropriate person* and contact a member of the parish panel, listed below, who may also report directly to an appropriate person if the matter is within the panel's remit.

**appropriate person means an appropriate person as defined in the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 - a designated officer of the HSE (normally the duty social worker) or a member of An Garda Síochána.*

The duty social worker or the child care manager in the HSE Child and Family Services area are designated officers.

The members of the parish panel are:

- 1. Tel
- 2. Tel
- 3. Tel

The duty social worker or child care manager may be contacted at the local HSE Child and Family Services offices (local health office).

Address

Tel



9.2.2 If you wish to make a report

You may contact any of the following:

- The duty social worker in the Area HSE Child and Family Services offices - phone numbers are in the "Children First" summary booklet and in your area phone book
- The duty social worker or area child care manager - for phone number and address, see **9.5**
- HSE customer care 1 800 520520, for advice on whom to contact - duty social workers etc.

An Garda Síochána in the case of emergency.

Vital information in the event of a report

Try to have available:

- the name and address of any child you are concerned about
- the nature of any injury
- the need for medical attention (if any)
- your reason for suspicion of abuse
- details of what you have done already
- any practical information you may have, such as the name of the child's GP, school etc
- information as to whether or not the person against whom a suspicion, complaint or allegation exists, has any children of his/her own.

Abuse of children often goes undetected because people who have pieces of information are reluctant to share them. This is why contact with social services is so important.

Use the standard report form - 9.2.11

The following may be of assistance where an individual who has suffered abuse is seeking help:

Rape Crisis Centre Helpline: 1 800 778888 or see local phone directory.

Faoiseamh: 1 800 331234

Faoiseamh is a helpline for those who feel they have suffered abuse in certain institutions. They will also advise and direct general callers on issues in the area of abuse.

CARI: 1 890 924567

CARI is for children, families and groups affected by abuse.

The National Counselling Service offers a professional service to adults who have experienced abuse in childhood. Contact the HSE local health office during office hours or 1800 235 234.



9.2.3 Volunteer worker application form

Confidential

Surname.....

Forename(s).....

Address.....

.....

.....

Date of birth Tel Home

Tel Office Mobile

How long have you been at this address?.....

If less than two years, previous address

.....

.....

Name of parish/church you attend/have attended

Name and address of incumbent.....

.....

.....

Previous work experience:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Have you previously been involved in voluntary work?

Yes No

If yes, give details:

.....
.....
.....

Do you have any hobbies, interests or activities?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Any other relevant information?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Please provide names and addresses of two people whom we could contact for reference (not relatives).

Name Name

Address Address

.....

.....

Tel Tel



Declaration from all paid and volunteer workers proposing to work with children and young people.

(adapted from Our Duty to Care, Northern Ireland)

Surname Forename(s)

Date of Birth Place of Birth

Any other name previously known as

- 1. I consent to a Garda vetting check if the panel proposes to appoint me to the role for which I have applied.
- 2. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a caution or a bound-over order? Yes No

If yes, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

Nature of offence	Date
.....
.....

Signed..... Date



Date received by incumbent

Interviewed by panel:

- 1. Name
- 2. Name
- 3. Name

Date of Interview

Main reason for recommendation.....
.....

Recommendation: Approved / Not Approved / Deferred



9.2.4 Volunteer reference form

Confidential

..... has expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer worker with this club/organisation and has given your name as a referee.

This post involves substantial access to children and as an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children or young people?

Yes No

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all information contained on the form will remain confidential, and will only be shared with the applicant’s immediate supervisor, should they be offered a volunteer position. We would appreciate you being extremely candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known this person?.....

In what capacity?.....

What attributes does this person have which you would consider makes him/her a suitable worker with children and young people?

.....

How would you describe his/her personality?

.....

Please rate this person on the following (*Please tick*)

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self-motivation					
Motivation of others					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

Signed Date Occupation



9.2.5 Declaration of acceptance of *Safeguarding Trust* and a “Duty of Care”

Parish of

Declaration

I have attended a training event which has introduced me to the Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children and the recommended procedures to be followed when working with children have been explained to me.

I acknowledge receipt of the relevant sections of the Code of Good Practice and declare I will uphold the same in the position I have accepted with *(name of organisation)*.

I further state that I shall exercise a duty of care for any children in my charge.

Name *(print)*

Signed

Date.....

NB *This declaration is to be retained by the parish panel.*



9.2.6 Annual appraisal of paid and volunteer worker and declaration of background information

Confidential

Name of parish

(To be completed by each worker annually (September) and discussed with the supervising leader and forwarded to the parish panel)

We thank you for all you do for this parish organisation and hope that this exercise may be helpful as you reflect on your work.

The parish wishes to support you in your work with children. Are there any areas of your work in which we might provide training to assist your skills development?

.....
.....
.....

Have you suggestions for additional resources or other ideas to develop your work?

.....
.....
.....

Has there been any change in your personal circumstances which may affect your capacity to continue in this role?

Yes No

(If yes please give details)

.....
.....
.....

Have you any questions you wish to ask or further comments you wish to make?

.....
.....
.....



Confidential

Annual declaration

(To be completed by each worker and filed by the parish panel)

Have you any prosecutions pending? Yes No

(If yes please give details)

.....
.....
.....

In the past year have you been convicted at a court or cautioned by the police for any offence? Yes No

If yes please list below details of all convictions, cautions or bound-over orders.

.....
.....
.....

I further declare that nothing has changed in my background which would alter the circumstances in which I work with children.

Signature

Date

Name

Post / role

Supervising leader

FOR PARISH PANEL USE ONLY

Date received



9.2.7 Declaration by worker from abroad

Church of Ireland parish of

1. **Whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere**, have you ever been investigated in respect of or charged with or convicted of a criminal offence or have you ever been the subject of a court order binding you over to keep the peace or have you ever been subject to criminal proceedings in which the court has found the charge or charges against you to have been proved but in respect of which the Probation Act (or any foreign equivalent thereof) has been applied, or are you at present subject to any criminal charges or criminal investigation?

Yes No (If yes give details on separate sheet)

2. Have you ever committed any criminal act or been engaged in any criminal conduct for which you have not been prosecuted, whether in your present country of residence or elsewhere?

Yes No (If yes give details on separate sheet)

3. Has any court in your present or any other jurisdiction ever found you liable for a civil offence?

Yes No (If yes give details on separate sheet)

4. Have you been placed on a sex offenders' register **in your present or any other jurisdiction?**

Yes No (If yes give details on separate sheet)

I the undersigned, who have applied to work as:

.....

***write in this space the actual office/position for which you are applying*

do hereby certify and warrant that in completing this form and in furnishing all the information contained herein or attached hereto, I am doing so in good faith and I further certify and warrant that all such information is true and accurate and constitutes a full disclosure of all material facts known to me.

Signed

Full name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date.....



When completed and signed, return this form to:

9.2.8 Membership registration form

This form is only a SAMPLE and will need to be adapted to local requirements and practice.

Membership Registration Form

Organisation

Meeting on at in

Name

Address

Age Date of birth

Mother's name Father's name

Addresses - if different

Contact numbers Emergency contact number/s

I give permission to *[child's name]*..... to become a member of *[name of club/organisation]*..... meeting on the day and times specified above and to participate in all the activities of the organisation, and know of no medical reason why he/she should not do so (see below). It is my understanding that my specific consent will be sought for any additional activity outside the above days and times and venue.

Please indicate below if the above child suffers from any medical condition/allergies (specifying any medication he/she may be taking) and/or has any special dietary requirements about which the leaders of *[name of club/organisation]* should be informed.

Parent/guardian signature Date

I give permission for basic first-aid to be administered to *[child's name]*..... In the event of him/her being taken ill or injured during a meeting of *[name of club/organisation]* so that surgical operation or serum injection becomes necessary, I hereby authorise the leader in charge to sign on behalf any written consent forms required, provided the delay necessitated to obtain my signature might endanger his/her health or safety.

Parent/guardian signature Date

Consent must be provided by the person with parental responsibility



9.2.9 Activity consent form

Please complete this form and return it to
(organisation's name)

A signed consent form is a condition of participation in this activity for those under the age of 18 years.

Child's name

Age Date of Birth

GP name and telephone.....

Emergency contact

I am willing for (child's name)..... to participate in (activity)
and confirm that he/she is willing to participate as fully as possible.

Yes No

Furthermore, I permit (Child's name)..... to travel on transport that has been designated as official for the purpose of this event (e.g. minibus/coach/private vehicle).

Please tick one of the following

Yes No

(Child's name)..... has the following medical condition(s) and requires the following medication and/or special diet:

.....
.....

I confirm that I have given my consent for my son/daughter to attend [club & event title]
..... to be held on [date]..... In the event of him/her being taken ill or injured during the period of the [event/title] so that surgical operation or serum injection becomes necessary, I hereby authorise the leader in charge to sign on my behalf any written forms of consent required, provided that the delay necessitated to obtain my signature might endanger his/her health or safety.

Parent/guardian signature Date

Consent must be provided by the person with parental responsibility



9.2.10 Accident/incident report

Name of child

Date of birth

Address

.....

Telephone

Parent/guardian name

Event/meeting and location

Date of event/meeting

Details of accident/incident (please state in your own words what happened including details and status of those involved)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Names of witnesses

.....

.....

Action taken (details of first-aid, medical or police involvement)

.....

.....

Signed..... Date

Position

Counter-signed..... Date

Signature of parent (if subject of report is a child)

A copy of the completed form should be provided to the panel



9.2.11 Standard form for reporting child protection and/or welfare concerns

Suggested template for the reporting of child protection and welfare concerns to the Health Service Executive (HSE) Child and Family Services area. In cases of emergency, or outside HSE hours, reports should be made directly to An Garda Síochána. Always mark this report and any accompanying communication **'Privileged and Confidential'**.

To principal social worker/designate

1. Details of Child

Name Male Female

Address

.....

Age/Date of birth

School

(a) Name of mother

Address of mother if different from child

.....

Telephone

Name of father

Address of father if different from child

.....

Telephone

(b) Care and custody arrangements regarding child, if known

.....

.....



(c) Household composition:

Name	Relationship to child	Date of birth	Additional information e.g. school/occupation

Note: A separate report form must be completed in respect of each child being reported.

2. Details of concern(s), allegation(s) or incident(s) dates, times, who was present, description of any observed injuries, parent’s view(s), child’s view(s), if known

.....

.....

.....

3. Details of person(s) allegedly causing concern in relation to the child

Name..... Age..... Male Female

Address.....

.....

Relationship to child

Occupation



4. Name and address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child

Social workers.....

.....

School

.....

Public health nurse

.....

Gardaí

.....

G.P.....

.....

Pre-school/crèche/youth club.....

.....

Hospital.....

.....

Other, specify e.g. youth groups, after-school clubs

.....

5. Are parents/legal guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

Yes No

If yes, what is their attitude?

.....



6. Details of person reporting concerns

(Please see guidance notes on limitations of confidentiality below)

Name..... Occupation

Address

.....

Telephone.....

Nature of extent of contact with child/family.....

.....

7. Details of person completing form

Name..... Date

Occupation..... Signed

Guidance notes:

The Health Service Executive has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act 1991 to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. HSE areas or regions, therefore, have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

This reporting form is for use by:

- Health Service Executive personnel
- professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the HSE
- Child protection officer in a voluntary or community agency
- any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.



The HSE aims to work in partnership with parent(s). If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the HSE cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- a court could order that information be disclosed
- under the *Freedom of Information Act 1997* the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.

You should also note that, in making a 'bona fide' report, you are protected under the *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998*.

If you are unsure whether you should report your concerns, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her (as a hypothetical scenario).

9.3.1 Promoting the policy statement

Any parish, diocesan or parochial organisation can commit to the following and use it as a notice or print it in a magazine or handbook.

This parish or organisation accepts and recognises its responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm, and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them. As a community or organisation we are committed to reviewing our policy, procedures and practice at regular intervals, at least every three years.

We will endeavour to safeguard children by

- following carefully the procedures laid down for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- ensuring adherence to safety procedures
- reporting concerns to the appropriate statutory authority.

We will also safeguard our workers by

- the provision of effective training
- the provision of appropriate resources
- the safeguarding of those who work with children from the consequences of unfounded allegations.



9.3.2 What Is Safeguarding Trust?

At this stage is it necessary to ask the question?

The Church's child protection code has been in place for a decade. This means that the thousands of children using Church of Ireland premises for worship and other activities, such as Sunday schools, youth organisations and clubs, are protected from all kinds of abuse, and that parishes are consciously promoting their general safety and welfare.

Our children's ministry is also only possible because of the commitment of adults who are prepared to work with children and who have been selected, appointed and trained to feel confident that their practices are good and that they are protected from unfounded allegations.

Child protection is however an area of constant development. The church has moved to include it in its constitution and this has placed a requirement on bishops and dioceses to ensure that *Safeguarding Trust* shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the Church of Ireland as an integral part of the church's ministry with children.

Child protection officers have been put in place in each jurisdiction to advise on and provide training, to assist the work of the diocesan evaluation teams and to provide advice and direction in relation to any necessary report about a concern, suspicion or allegation.

In the Republic there have been significant changes in legislation which must be taken into account in training. Access to the Garda vetting service has now been provided to the Church as a voluntary body providing services to children and to the schools at both primary and post-primary levels. Each diocese is providing, on an ongoing basis, opportunities for training both those who work with children and panel members. A power point presentation and training materials are available to assist with such training.

A new edition of the Code has been presented in a user-friendly loose-leaf folder to each parish. Parishes will be able to photocopy relevant sections including specific guidance to assist those undertaking particular activities.

Parishes have already received advice on topics including photographing children and the use of mobile phones and such briefings are included in the new edition.

Approximately every three years each parish undergoes an evaluation of how well it is implementing *Safeguarding Trust*. Here are a few of the questions which are asked of the parish panel and select vestry:

- Are notices displayed in church premises about *Safeguarding Trust* giving names of panel members?
- How are parishioners/young people being made aware of the role of panel members?
- Is a filing system of records of workers with children/young people in place?



- Are attendance registers, consent forms and completed accident and incident books and documents related to recruitment etc. kept securely?
- In new appointments of all workers in the parish, were the procedures of *Safeguarding Trust* followed?
- Was a Garda vetting check obtained for each new worker before commencing duties?
- When were the premises being used by young people last inspected on behalf of the select vestry with their safety and welfare in mind?
- Have you an evacuation procedure? Where is the accident/incident book kept?
- What ongoing training for leaders is being provided by the parish?

It is the responsibility of the panel and select vestry to ensure that the parish can answer these and other questions in a positive way. *Safeguarding Trust* helps us set high standards of care. Parents have a right to expect these standards as they entrust their children to the church. Children have the right to be protected from harm and leaders have a right to be secure in safe practice. The Republic has introduced legislation regarding *reckless endangerment* of children but Our Lord said it 2000 years ago in Matthew 18.6: *Whoever causes the downfall of one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea.* For all these reasons *Safeguarding Trust* is a vital part of our church's ministry.

Church of Ireland Board of Education

9.3.3 Guidelines for a code of behaviour

(see also 9.3.7)

In every aspect of life, organisations function best where there are clear guidelines and structures. The following suggested code of behaviour for children and young people recognises this basic fact. The code will require a structure that recognises the particular characteristics of individual groups.

It is recommended that at the commencement of the organisation's year a code of behaviour is drawn up with the members' participation. While it is recognised that discipline may seem at times to be restrictive to young people it is best enforced with their agreement. Such a code of conduct will help to create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children will feel that they can confide in the workers.

A sample group/club code of behaviour

As members of this group/club we will:

1. respect the role (authority) of the group/club leaders/workers
2. respect the views and feelings of other members of the group/club
3. respect the right of every group/club member to express his/her view/opinion
4. respect the right of every group/club member to be heard/listened to
5. respect both workers' and other group/club members' personal privacy and property
6. show due care and responsibility for equipment and property
7. deem unacceptable the following activities/behaviour:
 - (i) consumption of alcohol and smoking within the confines of the group/club building or during group/club activities
 - (ii) physical abuse of other group/club members and/or leaders/workers
 - (iii) verbal abuse including 'put downs' of other group/club members and leaders/workers
 - (iv) willful destruction or damage to property or equipment
 - (v) the misuse of any substance or stimulant.

9.3.4 Complaints procedure template

This information is for the workers, parents or adults with parental responsibility or members of the community. It is designed to deal with those issues which are not related to child protection.

It is the aim of any church organisation to maintain happy and harmonious relationships with all who are associated with it and ensure that experiences provided are positive. It is extremely important that everyone feels their views and opinions are valued.

It is also recognised that, on occasion, concerns may arise which require looking into and a response. It is expected that most of these will be dealt with quickly and effectively by the leader of an organisation. However, a complaint may arise that requires a more formal consideration and response. The following is an appropriate procedure for dealing with complaints fairly and in the best interests of everyone involved. It is designed to resolve any matter as quickly and simply as possible.

Be assured that all complaints will be looked into in strictest confidence and that a response will be offered within the agreed time frames.

Making a complaint

The leader in charge of the organisation is the first point of contact and you should first raise the concern orally. The leader will endeavour to answer the concern immediately.

If you feel that you do not want to discuss the matter with the leader, if he/she cannot answer your concern or if your query is more serious, a formal written complaint should be submitted to the rector/priest in charge or any member of the parish panel whose contact details should be made available to you. Please be assured that all complaints will be looked into in the strictest confidence and that a response will be offered within the agreed time frames.

If the nature of your complaint suggests that a child may be at risk of 'significant harm' in the context of parish activities, then a report will be made to the statutory authorities. It should be noted that the parish panel must follow the guidance of the statutory authority. Also, as the welfare of the child is paramount, the statutory authorities cannot give an undertaking that any information you provide will remain confidential. The official policy is that those receiving such information should 'only disclose it where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate need to know' - **see 5.11.**

The parish undertakes to acknowledge any formal complaints within three working days. It is our aim to resolve all complaints that lie within the competence of the panel, within four weeks but this may take longer depending on the nature of the complaint. In any event you will be kept informed of progress. Please understand that most leaders are volunteers and that it may take a while for them to reply in detail.

Should you feel unhappy with the initial response there are procedures through which to appeal against a decision regarding a complaint.

9.3.5 Grievance procedure

If you have any grievance which you consider to be genuine in respect of any aspect of your employment as a paid or volunteer worker, you have a right to a hearing by your immediate supervisor in the first instance. In the event that your grievance concerns your immediate supervisor, the grievance should be taken to that person's immediate supervisor. Failing satisfactory resolution of the grievance within a period of ten working days, you may then raise the matter with the panel who will arrange to hear the grievance as soon as possible and whose decision will be conveyed to you not later than ten working days from the date the grievance was heard. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the hearing, you may appeal to the bishop, whose decision will be final. You may be accompanied by a friend at this appeal hearing.

In the event that the grievance concerns another employee, the panel may request that the grievance be made in writing in order that the person whom the grievance concerns may have an opportunity fully and fairly to answer any such grievance.

9.3.6 Anti-bullying policy

This is adapted from the Scout Association of Ireland's Child Protection Policy and may provide a useful reference to organisations considering an anti-bullying policy.

What is bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children. It includes teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion by one or more children or an adult, against a victim.

Is bullying harmful?

Persistent bullying can have a devastating effect on a child's self-esteem. Children may feel the bullying is somehow their fault, or that there is something wrong with them. They may become withdrawn and insecure, more cautious and less willing to take any sort of risk.

Being victimised in this way can cause days of mental anguish and leave lifelong emotional scars. It has driven some young people to try to murder their tormentors and others to suicide. A child who has suffered bullying often needs professional counselling to let out his/her feelings and rebuild self-confidence. Bullying also affects any child who witnesses it.

What do children get bullied about?

Some of the factors involved in bullying include:

- puberty
- peer pressure
- gender differences
- stereotypes/prejudice
- structure of the group - hierarchy of dominance
- family background of victims and bullies.

Bullying can be distinguished from bossiness and boisterous play. A bossy child will boss whoever is around because of a lack of self-control or skills of negotiation or compromise. Boisterous play can be dangerous but it does not involve young people wilfully setting out to hurt or victimise. Young people often grow out of this kind of behaviour as they grow older. What distinguishes bullying from bossiness or boisterousness is that the bully always picks on someone less powerful and more vulnerable. Persistent 'slagging' has the same devastating effects as bullying and should not be ignored.

How would you know if a child was being bullied?

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.

The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied:

- reluctance to come to a centre or take part in activities
- physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)
- stress-caused illnesses - headaches and stomach aches which seem unexplained
- fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a youth meeting, taking different routes, asking to be driven)
- frequent loss of 'subs' or shortage of money with vague explanations
- having few friends
- changes in behaviour (becoming withdrawn, moody, irritable, upset, distressed, stammering)
- not eating
- attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

Of course, there are other possible reasons for many of the above.

What makes a person bully others?

Bullies are often making a plea for help through their violent behaviour which may reflect a sense of insignificance. Bullies whose activities go unaddressed often fail socially and academically in later life. They need to be taught all important negotiation and cooperation skills, working with others rather than competing.

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reportable to the health board or An Garda Siochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of the organisation where it is taking place.

How can bullying be prevented?

Modules on raising awareness and developing techniques for dealing with bullying should be included in training.

An **anti-bullying policy and code** should be drawn up and enforced and procedures should be clearly established to deal with any incidents. While it is important to have rules about bullying, a whole group policy is the best solution. This means not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group. Group discussion methods have a big advantage over punishment in that they do not drive the problem underground or escalate it by making the bully more excluded or more of a social failure. This is known as the '**no blame**' approach (see below).

What practical steps can be used to counter bullying?

- Use young people as a positive resource in countering bullying and to change the culture of the group to a 'permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right' one.
- Teach young people to negotiate, cooperate and help others, particularly new or different children.
- It is a good idea to run poster campaigns and have stories and role plays on how to deal with a bully included in ordinary group activities.
- Offer a victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation.
- Never tell young people to ignore bullying. They cannot ignore it - it hurts too much.
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into his/her own hands and beat the bully at their own game.
- Tell victims there is nothing wrong with them and the bullying is not their fault.

What is the 'no blame' approach?

Step 1 - Interview the victim

If you find out that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim?
- Was the bullying within his/her own peer group?

Assure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation and actively listen.

Step 2 - Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved, including some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have maximum of six to eight in the group to keep the number controllable.
- Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting.
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all.
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim.
- Play on the consciences of all by asking questions such as: How would you feel? Would you like this done to you?

Step 3 - Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident must be explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame/initiators is not discussed. Explain how it feels to be lonely, left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking these questions:

- Would they like it if this happened to them?
- What can we do to see it does not happen again?

Listen, watch out for reactions and pick up on any without isolating anyone.

Step 4 - Share the responsibility

Explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result.

Step 5 - Ask the group for ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways which would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases such as 'if it were you' to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

Step 6 - Leave it to the group

Now the problem has been identified and solutions suggested, the problem is handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week's time. Pass responsibility to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

Step 7 - Meet the group again

With each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and whether there have been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the 'team' looking after one another to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

ANTI-BULLYING CODE

(Personal Safety Statement)

- We provide a place where every member can feel secure
- We provide a place where it is known that bullying is not acceptable behaviour
- We provide a place where name calling is not tolerated
- We provide a place where no one suffers abuse of any nature
- We provide a place where no one is victimised
- We provide a place where each member is supported and listened to
- We provide a place where it is each member's responsibility to ensure that all are treated equal
- We provide a place where solutions to problems are the concern of all

To personalise this code for the different sections/age groups replace 'we provide' and adapt the language/terminology to suit.

9.3.7 Child protection issues for special needs children¹¹

Children with special needs can be subjected to abuse. Indeed studies have shown that children with disabilities are at the greatest risk of sexual abuse. There is therefore a need to be extra vigilant in order to protect these children, but there are difficulties:

- It can be hard to know if a child with special needs has been abused because of communication problems.
- Special needs children may have difficulty in understanding what is said to them, or in expressing themselves in ways that others understand.
- Possible indicators of abuse or significant harm may prove difficult to disentangle from the effects of a child's impairment. Similarly, a child's behaviour might be put down to his/her disability when, in other children, such behaviour would cause concern as a sign of abuse.
- People communicating with a special needs child may not have the appropriate personal communication skills themselves (such as using appropriate spoken and non-verbal communication, or using particular forms of communication such as Makaton signs and symbols, sign language, etc.)

There are a number of reasons why children with special needs are abused:

- Children with special needs tend to have more physical contact than those without disabilities (with therapists, care workers and so on) and may be dependent on other people for personal care.
- Physical abuse can be more common because parents or carers may find it hard to cope with the child's disabilities.
- Attitudes can play a part - for example, the belief that children with disabilities cannot be sexually abused because they are seen as asexual. Children can have very low self-esteem, and feel negative about themselves. Children with special needs may be more vulnerable to abuse because of their lack of communication skills which may make them 'soft targets'.

The church has a pivotal role in enabling children with special needs by teaching them personal safety skills. Children can learn to take some control of their own bodies. The church can provide teaching about feelings, help children to learn that some parts of their bodies are private, and also help them to learn to differentiate between good and bad touching.

Training helpers

Those who want to work with children with special needs may have valuable experience either as parents or carers or professionally, for example, as teachers. However, all workers will still require assistance and training.

¹¹ Adapted from *Special Children Special Needs*, author Simon Bass, used with the permission of the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service

Provide a training programme and ensure that you provide regular opportunities for all your workers to discuss any issues, such as difficulties with members' disruptive behaviour.

Policies on behaviour and discipline - see also 9.3.3

All children misbehave occasionally. Sometimes children can become upset and disruptive and be assessed as possibly dangerous to themselves or others. Talking to parents or carers about a child's behaviour before the child joins the group is crucial. If it is known that a child has behaviour problems, the introduction of a 'buddy' may help minimize difficulties in your group (see 'Buddy schemes' in **8.3**). Find out how such behaviour is handled at home, in school and in other environments.

If a child displays disruptive behaviour, consider the following guidelines:

- Keep rules to a minimum. Some children may struggle if you overload them with lots of rules and regulations.
- Request, in private, that the behaviour stops.
- Speak with the child in private to find out the cause of the upset.
- Give the child responsibility for modifying behaviour. Use reward systems if appropriate.
- Have a sanction ready should a child misbehave, for example that they have to sit away from the group for five minutes (be aware some children have difficulty with the concept of time).
- Warn the child before administering the sanction.
- If a child is harming himself or herself or another person or property, other children should be escorted out of the area where the disruption is occurring.
- Talk with the child (you should have another worker present). Stay with the child until he/she has calmed down. Praise him/her when they have.
- Record all incidents in an activity logbook, including what might have caused the disruptive behaviour, what the child was doing, what you said and how you responded, and the names of others present who might have witnessed the event. If appropriate, record any accidents in the accident book.
- Inform the parents or carers.
- Inform the parish panel.

9.3.8 Intimate care needs

Children and young people who are unable to meet their own intimate care needs (perhaps because of age or disability) may need help from an adult worker. Intimate care most commonly involves meeting toileting and medication needs. The intimate care needs of a child should always be discussed with his/her parents/carers where these needs require to be met during church activities. Most parents/carers prefer to look after the needs of their own child although some may be more than happy to nominate another responsible adult to do this.

In cases where a disabled child may need specialised medical attention it is important that parents understand that responsibility rests with them and that children's workers do not, except in an emergency, administer medication during regular church based activities. Regrettably, therefore, there may be cases where responsibility cannot be taken for certain children. That said, it is important that the church is seen to take all reasonable steps to accommodate a child or young person with intimate care needs. Medical needs should be recorded using the activity consent form - **see 9.2.9.**

Toileting children

Children's workers must respect a young person's right to personal privacy. Children who are able to toilet themselves should be left to do so. Children who are able to toilet themselves at home and school are left to look after themselves and care for their own bodies. This is an essential part of growing up. In loving homes children are shown that their bodies belong to them and that they deserve privacy and respect. Where a child does require help with toileting (perhaps because of age or health reasons) one adult should support the child and only undertake those tasks which the child is clearly unable to do. If two adults are required to toilet a child (perhaps because of complex physical care needs) then this should have been agreed with the parents and, whenever possible, the child or young person. Where toilet facilities are used by a number of groups, an agreed procedure should be developed and applied to ensure everyone's safety. Agreed standards of hygiene should also be included.

9.3.9 Child protection and parish websites

Background

This paper is intended to inform parishes about the issues surrounding developing parish websites, particularly (though not exclusively) those related to child protection.

Child protection and the Internet

The main dangers posed to children by the Internet are:

1. children accessing pornographic or other unsuitable websites while online
2. children being contacted by predators by email or through blogs and being harassed or 'groomed' online
3. children receiving spam or other junk mail which either contains or provides links to pornographic or other unsuitable material
4. predators making contact with children or learning information about children through websites that they can then use to harass or groom the child
5. predators or paedophiles making use of photos available online to digitally alter them to create pornographic images

Dealing with each point in turn, the following recommendations to minimise risk are put forward.

Point one is of most concern to parishes that allow or plan to allow Internet access to children. One assumes a parish website will have neither pornographic nor offensive material on it nor any link to any site that might! Nevertheless, a disclaimer should be put on any external links.

Recommendation 1: A disclaimer should be put with any links to any external website saying that the parish accepts no responsibility for the content of external websites. Parishes that allow or plan to allow Internet access to children (or anyone else for that matter) should examine the issue of how to prevent further access to inappropriate sites. Parish websites should also be regularly monitored for signs of hacking (unauthorised addition of material - often inappropriate material). Any sites showing signs of hacking should be taken down immediately.

Point two is of concern and relevance to us when it comes to encouraging the development of parish websites.

Recommendation 2: Parish websites should not have blogs or 'guestbook' facilities which might enable use of the website by predators.

Recommendation 3: Email addresses used for SPAM email are normally obtained through their appearance on websites. Specially programmed 'search robots' collect these email addresses for addition to SPAM emailing lists. Accordingly, care should be taken with placing any email address on a website as it becomes vulnerable to being harvested by the robots for SPAM, much of which is of a pornographic or otherwise inappropriate content. Under no circumstances should a parish website have the email addresses of any children on it. Indeed while a parish website address (e.g. delgany@glendalough.anglican.org) is appropriate, clergy should be careful not to put their own (or anyone else's) personal email addresses on the website. Aliases can be put in (churchwarden@taneyparish.ie) instead.

These recommendations also reduce the likelihood (although they do not eliminate it) that a child's email address will be 'picked up' by search robots which is the concern related to point 3.

Points four and five are the major concern. Generally, groups advising on child protection issues make the following suggestions to minimise the likelihood of this arising:

1. Children's names should not be captioned on photos online.
2. No other identifying details (place, address, personal details of child/children) should appear on any photos of a child or children on the website.
3. Group photos of children, e.g. 'the basketball team', would be better.

However, these recommendations are normally put forward on the basis of a US-based corporate website where the chances of finding a child based on an uncaptioned photo is almost nil. A parish website, by contrast, covers a small geographical area and a Church of Ireland parish community tends to be a small pool of people and therefore a more stringent recommendation is required.

Recommendation 4: Accordingly, unless a parish has the written permission of a parent or guardian, no pictures of any child whatsoever should be allowed on a parish website. The website editor, acting as an agent for the select vestry, is responsible for ensuring that he/she has the necessary written permission from a parent or guardian before putting any picture of a child online.

Under no circumstances (even if a parent or guardian is agreeable) should a child's name be captioned on any photos that are put on a website with parental permission.

Even with such permission photos of children on websites should be restricted to groups of children, not individuals.

Other matters

Text on websites:

It is normal that the rector's letter, as used in the diocesan and/or parish magazine, would also be published on the parish website firstly, to minimise the workload for parishes and secondly, to afford an opportunity for them to regularly update their websites. However, it should be borne in mind that what appears on a website is potentially being exposed to millions. Accordingly there may be subjects that a rector might feel entirely appropriate to acknowledge in a parish newsletter or even a diocesan magazine that should be re-examined in the context of a website.

1. First among these concerns again should be child safety. Names of children are probably reasonably safe to use as long as these are not accompanied by identifying details. Accordingly, if a child's name appears in the Church Review notes and the intention is also to put the details on the website (for example, he or she has won an award) the report should be edited so no details are given as to their class, teacher, club or school, e.g. *"Fred Jones who won an award for football. Congratulations also to his teacher and coach."* Care should be taken that if such a line is used in the text, an accompanying photo does not enable someone to match the name with the person.
2. Along the same lines, care should be taken when flagging events in advance on the parish website involving large numbers of children. The full details, i.e. date, venue and time, should not be put on the website.
3. Equally, diocesan magazine notes regularly refer to the death of someone in the parish. While this might be fine for the diocesan magazine or the parish newsletter, such reference should be removed from website notes.
4. Parishes should be aware of copyright issues in relation to text published on websites.

This item has been kindly provided by the Dublin and Glendalough Communications Officer

9.3.10 Child protection and music lessons

A parish music group or junior choir clearly comes under the normal child protection procedures set out in *Safeguarding Trust* and does not require any additional guidelines. It is the norm that although the choir is under the direction of one adult there will be other adults (accompanist and parent) present. This replicates the pattern for a youth group that at least two leaders would be present and where the group is composed of boys and girls that there would also be gender balance among leaders. It is however quite common that a parish organist, possibly as part of a written or oral contract, is allowed to use church premises for individual music lessons (organ, piano or singing). The relationship between the music teacher (organist) and the parent of the child is a matter of private contract and the parent pays the music teacher directly. The parish merely allows the lessons to take place and will do no more than advise that such a facility is available.

The query arises as to what responsibilities the parish has in relation to child protection arising from these private music lessons. The responsibility appears to be the same as that which arises from the use of parish premises by an external organisation.

1. The music teacher must receive a copy of the parish health and safety statement relating to the premises and equipment being used.
2. The parish should receive a copy of the teacher's insurance policy including a statement from the insurer that the parish is indemnified in terms of public liability.
3. The parish should also be advised as to what child protection procedures are being put in place by the teacher. The difficulty that arises here is that there do not seem to be model guidelines available for music lessons and furthermore there has been a tradition and continuing tacit acceptance that one to one teaching without the presence of another adult is acceptable. Parishes would be advised to direct anyone using their premises for music lessons to ensure, when teaching a child**, that another adult is present. Churches by their nature do not have people passing through and do not have a high visibility element. This lack of activity and interruption would leave the teacher as well as the child unprotected from false accusation, potential grooming or even assault.

** *Child is defined as someone who is under 18 years of age.*

9.3.11 Safeguarding vulnerable adults

The legislative position regarding adults who may be in need of protection is currently being considered by the Law Reform Commission 2006. If an individual has a concern about someone who they feel may be at risk of abuse they should contact the elder abuse social worker in the HSE local health office to discuss the matter. At present there are no state guidelines. The *Domestic Violence Act 1996* would apply to the protection of persons in a domestic relationship because of the conduct of another person in the domestic relationship concerned.

If an individual believes a vulnerable adult is suffering abuse then the matter should be reported to the elder abuse officer in the HSE or to An Garda Síochána.

9.3.12 Inter-Church Child Protection Group

(The Church of Ireland, The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, The Methodist Church in Ireland)

A common protocol for churches relating to independent organisations working with children and young people.

Introduction

The context

The Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland (hereafter referred to as the Churches) each has their own child protection guidelines. It is considered helpful if these guidelines substantially agree with one another in respect of minimum standards of good practice in dealing with children and young people. As each set of church guidelines is based upon *Children First and Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector* (RI), we believe that they do substantially agree in their policy and procedures while allowing for flexibility of practice depending on the individual church's structure of government and administration.

It is recognised that it would also be helpful if the Churches agreed a common protocol for dealing with external organisations which regularly use church premises. This document seeks to clarify the expectations and responsibilities of both the Churches and the independent organisations, especially in the areas of child protection policy, appointment of leaders, information sharing and reporting of concerns that may arise within an organisation.

Definitions

An independent organisation is a group that, while not operated by the church, nonetheless uses church premises. Such organisations may be specifically youth organisations, or organisations which occasionally work with children, e.g. St John Ambulance.

The organisation may have an outside headquarters and a separate method for the appointment of leaders e.g. Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Crusaders. Although some of the leaders may attend the local host church they are not appointed by the church and are not directly responsible to the church.

1. General guiding principles

- 1.1 In all our practice the Churches and organisations agree that the welfare and safety of children is the paramount consideration.
- 1.2 It is recognised that churches and organisations are interdependent and it is therefore vital that constructive working relationships are developed and maintained.



- 1.3 If an organisation using church premises is operated independently of the local church, while the church will not be responsible for the appointment of leaders or general running of the organisation, it is recognised that the church still has some interest in the organisation being run to an acceptable standard. The church has a responsibility for what happens on church property and the church will give formal permission for the organisation / unit to use the premises. It is recognised that even if an organisation is independent of the church, the public's perception may be that it is still a church organisation.
- 1.4 If a church has concerns that certain practices breach child protection guidelines, such concerns should be raised with the organisation leader and/or the headquarters of the organisation. If the concerns are not satisfactorily dealt with the host church may withdraw permission for use of the premises by that organisation.
- 1.5 While the church is not to be responsible for the appointment of leaders to an independent organisation it is good practice for the Kirk Session / Parish Panel / Church Council to be informed annually (September) of the names of the leaders in writing.
- 1.6 This protocol should be reviewed on an annual basis at a meeting of the Inter-Church Child Protection Group and representatives of independent organisations, in the light of any revision of church or organisation policies.

2. ***Agreed criteria***

The Churches suggest that the following criteria be agreed with independent organisations using church premises, e.g. Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Crusaders, Christian Endeavour and other groups.

It is the duty of the organisation to ensure that the premises are suitable and appropriate for planned activities. The organisation shall also seek to ensure that activities shall be carried out safely. Any safety concerns regarding the premises shall be notified by the organisation leader to the appropriate person within the church as soon as possible.

- 2.1 The organisation shall confirm to the local church that it has adopted and consistently implements a child protection policy which accords with the standard of *Children First and Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector (RI)*. A copy of the organisation's policy shall be supplied to the Kirk Session / Parish Panel / Church Council or written verification that the policy is accepted by the church at central level.
- 2.2 The local church shall supply to the organisation leader the names and contact details of the church officials responsible for the premises. The organisation shall supply to the Kirk Session / Parish Panel / Church Council the names and contact details of all the leaders immediately following appointment. The organisation shall confirm that new appointees have been vetted where possible; that no information was received which debarred their appointment; and, that they have been found suitable to work with children and young people.
- 2.3 The organisation shall ensure that leaders and helpers in the organisation receive appropriate child protection training and are aware of the organisation's reporting procedures.



- 2.4 If a report has been made by the organisation of a child protection concern, suspicion or allegation through its procedures, the person(s) responsible for child protection in the local church should be informed in confidence that a report has been made.
- 2.5 The organisation shall supply written confirmation from the insurer that adequate insurance cover is in place for the organisation's activities or written verification that the insurance policy of the organisation is accepted by the Church at central level.
- 2.6 A form of approval (sample overleaf) shall be signed by the leader of the organisation / unit and a church representative confirming that the conditions have been met. It is appropriate for this to be completed annually or at least every three years depending upon church requirements.



Sample form of approval for independent organisations wishing to use church premises

Name of church.....

Name of organisation.....

Name of person in charge of organisation..... Tel

Time and place of organisation’s meeting.....

Conditions

1. The organisation confirms that it has adopted and implements a child protection policy which accords with the standard of *Children First and Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector (RI)*. A copy of the organisation’s policy is now produced or written verification that the policy is accepted by the church at central level.
2. The local church shall supply to the organisation leader the names and contact details of the church officials responsible for the premises and for child protection. The organisation shall supply annually (September) to the Kirk Session / Parish Panel / Church Council the names and contact details of all leaders immediately following appointment. The organisation shall confirm that new appointees have been vetted where possible; that no information was received which debarred their appointment and that they have been found suitable to work with children and young people.
3. The organisation shall ensure that leaders/helpers in the organisation shall receive appropriate child protection training and are aware of the reporting procedures.
4. If a report of a child protection concern is made by the organisation through its procedures, the person responsible for child protection in the local church should be informed in confidence that a report has been made.
5. The organisation confirms that adequate insurance cover is in place for its activities (copy of policy attached), or written verification that the insurance policy is accepted by the church at central level.

The organisation shall seek to ensure that activities shall be carried out safely. Any safety concerns regarding the premises shall be notified by the organisation leader to the appropriate person within the church as soon as possible.

We confirm that the church and the organisation agree to the above conditions.

Signed..... (Organisation Leader)

Date.....



PLEASE TICK AS APPLICABLE:

The church grants the above organisation use of the premises.

OR

The church grants the above organisation use of the premises
in accordance with the attached agreement.

Signed

(Clerk of session / secretary of the select vestry / secretary of the church council)

Date

9.3.13 Sample interview questions

Beware of 'closed' questions which make it possible to answer either 'yes' or 'no'.
Ask questions like "What do you think about?/What are your views on...?"

Put the candidate at ease - ask first about his/her interests or hobbies.

Discuss the candidate's career objectives and why he/she applied for this particular post.

Ensure the questions relate directly to the needs of the job.

If any offences were declared by the candidate the interview should provide an opportunity for an open and measured discussion.

Ideas for questions to ask

You will probably need to choose only one question from each category. The question you choose will depend on the requirements of the job.

1. Relating to experience, qualifications, training

What have been your roles and responsibilities in working with children?

Why are you volunteering for this role?

What skills/qualities would you bring to the role?

What is your understanding of the importance of child protection for volunteers / workers?

2. Relating to children's learning and development

How would you plan to provide an appropriate programme?

How do you think the group can meet the needs of the children?

What type of activities do you think the group should offer the children?

3. Relating to attitudes

How would you settle new children into the group?

What are your views on establishing and maintaining rules and codes of behaviour in the group?

What would you do if you found a child being bullied and treated unfairly by other children?

How would you deal with a disruptive child?

What are your views on disciplining children?

4. Relating to working with parents

How do you see the role of the parent in the group?

How do you think parents can help you in working with children?

How would you encourage parents to become involved in the group?

5. Relating to working in a team

What do you see as your role in the team?

What skills and qualities can you bring to the team?

How do you feel about working as part of a team?

What is your previous experience of working in a team?

How do you feel about working in a Christian environment?

6. Relating to ongoing personal development

How do you intend to keep up to date with any technical information needed for the job?

What are your feelings about undertaking training?

Is there any area in which you would like further training/development?

What difficulties have you had in attending training in the past?

What training would you need to undertake this role?

Source: Church of Scotland Handbook for Child Protection

9.3.14 Adult/child supervision ratios

Where a party consists of children of both sexes, both male and female supervision should be provided.

- Children 0-4 years: minimum of two adults and a ratio 1:3
- Children 5-12 years: minimum of two leaders and a ratio 1:8
- Children 12 and above: minimum of two leaders and a ratio 1:10. There should be one additional adult leader for every 10 extra children / young people.

Where an activity involves swimming and the children are under eight years of age then the ratio must be one adult to one child.

The ratio of workers to children with disabilities is dependent on the needs of the individual child - see 6.2 and 9.3.16.

Service	Age	Adult/child ratio
Full day care	0-1 year	1:3
	1-3 years	1:6
	3-6 years	1:8
Sessional	0-6 years	1:10
Drop-in centre	under 12 months	1:3
	1-6 years	1:8

9.3.15 Overnight stays and longer residentials

Overnight stays and residential activities can be good fun for everybody, even the workers, but they require careful resourcing and planning.

- It is helpful to make sure that at least one adult is in charge of each specific aspect of the residential, e.g. catering and accommodation routines. These jobs will vary, taking into consideration building, type of programme etc.
- Check the insurance cover of any building you will be sleeping in. There is usually a limit on the number it accommodates. If you exceed these limits insurances can be invalidated.
- Check the building and know where water, electricity etc. can be turned off. Know the fire drill for the building and make sure you have a fire drill as soon as possible after entering the premises. Know where the fire extinguishers are.
- Church halls and rooms used for sleeping larger numbers of people MUST have TWO means of exit.

- Know where the nearest hospital and doctor are and inform the local doctor if you are sleeping there. It is also a good idea to notify the local Garda station. This applies if you are sleeping in any building, even if only for one night, and even if it is your own church. Also it is helpful to inform the fire brigade.
- Written permission of the parents of members to participate is essential.
- Ensure that parents/guardians have returned a health form stating any special dietary requirements and current medication, e.g. asthma, diabetes, allergies. Forms should also give the name and telephone number of the child's doctor. Residential activities must have safety rules and boundaries, such as letting adults know where you are; not entering the kitchen without asking the cook. It is not permissible for a member of staff/leader/worker to sleep in the same room as children or young people. Make sure the children have correct clothing for whatever activity they are taking part in. It is useful to issue a 'kit' list for residential activities.

Sleeping on church premises

This article is concerned with the safety of people who sleep on church premises, for example during a weekend celebration or short break.

- Only ground floor accommodation is considered suitable for sleeping accommodation.
- There should be at least two separate routes leading from the sleeping accommodation and out of the building. A room with two exit doors leading into a corridor from which the only exit could be impeded with smoke and fire would not be considered acceptable.
- External doors should be left unlocked. If for security purposes this is impracticable, the fastening should be a simple tower bolt type. Check exit doors for ease of opening.
- Exit routes and doors should be clearly indicated.
- In order to minimise the spread of smoke and fire should an outbreak occur, all doors should be kept closed, particularly during the night hours.
- Portable heating appliances should if possible be avoided but if used should be sited in positions in which they would not impede exit doors and routes should they catch fire. Always turn them off during sleeping hours.
- An outbreak of fire often causes a power failure. It is therefore necessary for supervisory staff (workers) to have hand lamps.
- Smoking should be forbidden in the sleeping accommodation.
- A nominal roll of occupants should be prepared and hung just within the main exit door. Occupants should be instructed to meet at a pre-determined assembly point in the event of an outbreak of fire and a roll call should be taken.
- Anyone discovering a fire should raise the alarm by shouting 'FIRE'.
- The supervisory staff (workers) should be aware of the nearest telephone. The fire service should be called to all fires, using the '999' facility.

- Do not park cars where they would obstruct exit routes or access for fire appliances.
- Supervisory staff (workers) should know the exact location of the fire fighting equipment and how to operate it. Only carry out fire fighting when it is obvious that it is safe to do so.
- Participants should be informed of the allocated designated muster points to use in the event of fire where the nominal roll will be taken.

9.3.16 Transport

Work with children and young people will involve transporting them at some stage, whether this is on a club night or to and from a residential programme. Workers should observe the guidelines below which will help ensure protection for them and the young people.

Private Cars

1. Drivers should be aware of the limitations of third party insurance for transporting young people. Private cars can be used so long as they are not used for hire or for carrying passengers for reward.
2. Drivers must check with their insurance company regarding the adequacy of passenger liability.
3. Avoid transporting a child or young person on your own. Try to ensure another worker or other children/young people are with you in the vehicle. If a situation occurs when you have to transport a child alone, ensure other workers know this is happening, and that the child is in the rear seat.
4. Overcrowding must be avoided at all costs. This will invalidate any insurance cover provided. New EU Child Safety Protection Laws have come into force making it compulsory for all children to travel in the correct child seat, booster seat or booster cushion. Where safety belts have been fitted they must be worn.
5. Children under three years of age must not travel in a car or goods vehicle (other than a taxi) unless restrained in the correct child seat. Children aged three years or over who are under 150cm in height and weighing less than 36kg (i.e. generally children up to 11/12 years old) must use the correct child seat, booster seat or booster cushion when travelling in cars or goods vehicles.
6. Drivers have a legal responsibility to ensure passengers aged under 17 years use the correct seat, booster seat, booster cushion and / or seatbelt.

Minibuses

7. All drivers for minibuses must have an appropriate licence.
8. If driving the parish minibus(es), drivers must be named on the parish insurance policy.
9. The law states that it is the driver's responsibility to make sure that the vehicle is in a road-worthy condition before use. Failure to do so may result in the driver being legally liable in the event of any accident. Therefore, each driver must carry out a range of checks to ensure the roadworthiness of the vehicle. IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT DRIVE THE VEHICLE.
10. When hiring a minibus or larger bus, it is the responsibility of the user group to verify the legality and insurance cover of the operator prior to the use of the transport. If in doubt, ask to see a copy of the operator's insurance cover and licence.
11. It is now general policy that children should not sit three to a seat and that appropriate seat belts or restraints should be provided with the seats facing forward. Where seat belts are provided the ratio is one child per seat belt. Seat belts must be worn for any journey, no matter how short, and again it is the driver's/leader's responsibility to enforce this.
12. Workers who accompany young people in minibuses should, where possible, sit amongst them. Preferably, one worker should sit near any exit points.
13. An accident report book/breakdown log book should be carried in church minibuses and kept up to date.
14. Carry a first-aid kit and fire extinguisher and familiarise yourself with their use.

9.3.17 Guidelines for mobile phones and emails

Our Duty to Care - extract based on Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)
- Use of electronic communication - Briefing paper 03/06 (Issued May 2006)

It is important to give workers guidelines on what is appropriate in terms of mobile phone and email contact with the children/young people they are working with - **see 7.4.**

- Anything which compromises the leader's ability to maintain a safe environment and give his/her full attention to the supervision of children, such as using a mobile phone, should be actively discouraged. A blanket ban is not necessary as mobiles may obviously be useful in emergency situations.
- Contacting children and young people by phone, text or email should never be undertaken without parental knowledge or consent.
- Leaders should not be emailing children and young people directly as individuals but may do so as part of a disclosed list (having received prior permission to disclose in group email) where they are disseminating information in relation to events. Disclosed lists should be used for sending organisation information via a designated and suitably trained adult (because of his/her position this person should also have been subject to appropriate selection and vetting processes). Group emails should also give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as: "If you wish to be removed from this email list, please contact the administrator".
- Leaders should not contact young people through chat rooms and social networking sites such as Bebo, MSN.*

Our Duty to Care (NI) 07

* While government guidelines state that social networking sites should not be used for private communication, we recognise that parishes and youth groups may have a group site on social networking sites such as *Bebo*. In this scenario, the normal protections must apply and the leader/group administrator must set clear guidelines for access and content and act promptly in the event of any misuse. It is not appropriate to communicate with young people through an individual's private site.

9.3.18 Guidelines for photographing children

Our Duty to Care - extract based on Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) - Briefing paper 2/01 (Issued 16 July 2001)

First steps and things to think about

Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the organisation for the web and other media - **see also 7.4.**

Think about the level of consideration you give to the use of images of young people in other publications, for example, the processes involved in choosing appropriate images for the newsletter or magazine. Apply an increased level of consideration to the images of children and young people used on the website.

Rules to remember are:

- If the young person is named, avoid using his/her photograph
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the young person
- Ask for the young person's permission to use his/her image, through, for example, a consent form
- Ask for parental consent to use an image of a young person, through, for example, a parental consent form
- Only use images of young people in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.

There are clearly some sports activities - swimming, gymnastics and athletics, for example - when the risk of potential misuse is much greater than with others. With these, the content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots. So, for example, shots of children in a pool would be appropriate or, if poolside, waist or shoulder up.

Create a recognised procedure for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to young people. Follow your child protection procedures, ensuring the panel, the police and/or the duty social worker are informed.

Guidelines for use of photographic filming equipment

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times.
- Inform young people and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to young people or one to one photo sessions at events.



- Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a young person’s home.
- If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware of your expectations.
- Adults should be asked to register at an event if they wish to use photographic equipment.
- Young people and parents should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to the leader.
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or leader and recorded in the same manner as any other child protection concern.

Sample consent form for the use of photographs or video

(Club or organisation) recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all young people. In accordance with our child protection policy we will not permit photographs, video or other images of young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children.

(Club or organisation) will follow the guidance for the use of photographs, a copy of which is available from (name).

(Club or organisation) will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately, you should inform (club or organisation) immediately.

I **(parent/carer)** consent to **(club/organisation)** photographing or videoing **(name of child)**

Signed.....

Date.....

I **(insert name of child)** consent to **(club or organisation)** photographing or videoing my involvement in **(activity)**

Signed.....

Date.....

Our Duty to Care (NI) 07

9.4 Extracts from relevant legislation

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

CHAPTER XVI MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN

1. *Safeguarding Trust: The Church of Ireland Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children*, approved by the Standing Committee of the General Synod and reported to the General Synod, hereinafter referred to as *Safeguarding Trust* shall be implemented and adhered to throughout the Church of Ireland in the Church's ministry with children.
2. Each bishop and diocesan council shall ensure that *Safeguarding Trust* be implemented and adhered to by all parishes, clergy and diocesan bodies within the diocese and in any diocesan activity.

The following references are not the precise or complete wording of the legislation.

The Protections for persons reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 (The 1998 Act)

The above Act advises that a person shall not be liable in damages who **in good faith and acting reasonably** reports in writing or otherwise to an appropriate person* an opinion that:

(a) a child has been or is being assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused

or

(b) a child's health, development or welfare has been or is being avoidably impaired or neglected.

A person who reports **in bad faith**, knowing that statement to be false, shall be subject to criminal sanction being a fine or imprisonment or both.

***appropriate person means an appropriate person as defined in the 1998 Act - a designated officer of a health board* (normally the social worker on duty or the child care manager) or a member of An Garda Síochána.**

* The Health Services Executive (HSE) has now replaced the health boards

Sex Offenders Act 2001

The centrepiece of the Act is the introduction of a sex offender register. It obliges convicted sex offenders to notify An Garda Síochána of their names and addresses at the time of conviction or release from custody, as appropriate, and any subsequent changes to those details. This system applies even when sex offenders travel abroad and it similarly applies to persons convicted of sex offences in other jurisdictions when they enter this country.

It is an offence for a sex offender to seek or accept work or a voluntary position that would give that person unsupervised access to a child or children or to a mentally impaired person or persons, without informing the would-be employer of the fact of the conviction. Under this new procedure the parent or guardian of a child is regarded as an employer when offering someone a job to, for example, tutor or train their child in some sporting or other activity.

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006 keeps the age of sexual consent at 17 years, with stricter punishments for those who engage, or attempt to engage, in sexual acts with a child under the age of 15 years.

Any person who engages in a sexual act with a child who is under the age of 15 years shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for life or a lesser term of imprisonment.

Any person who engages in a sexual act with a child who is under the age of 17 years shall be guilty of an offence and shall, subject to *subsection (3)*, be liable on conviction on indictment -

- (a) to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years, or
- (b) if he or she is a **person in authority**, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

[A worker or volunteer would constitute a "person in authority".]

Any person who attempts to engage in a sexual act with a child who is under the age of 15 years shall be guilty of an offence.

A female child under the age of 17 years shall not be guilty of an offence under this Act by reason only of her engaging in an act of sexual intercourse.

Criminal Justice Act, 2006

This Act has introduced a crime of reckless endangerment punishable by imprisonment for up to ten years where a person having authority or control over a child, or an abuser who fails to take reasonable steps to protect a child from the risk of serious harm or sexual abuse, may be guilty of an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment. See section 176 of the Act.

Garda Vetting

The Garda Central Vetting Unit will undertake a check of convictions and current investigations in respect of an individual who is proposed for appointment as a worker or volunteer with access to children. The vetting process is accessed through the Authorised Signatory attached to the Church of Ireland Board of Education and details of how to arrange a vetting request are in **3.3**.

No appointee should take up duty until an acceptable request has been received.

9.5 Contacts

HSE Child Protection and Welfare Services

Carlow, St. Dymphna’s Hospital, Athy Road.	Tel: 059 913 6587
Cavan, Drumalee Cross.	Tel: 049 437 7305/306
Clare, River House, Gort Road, Ennis.	Tel: 065 686 3907
Cork City, Georges Quay.	Tel: 021 496 5511
Cork, North Goulds Hill Hse, Mallow.	Tel: 022 21484
Cork, North Lee Social Work Department, Blackpool.	Tel: 021 492 7000
Cork, South Lee, St. Finbarr’s Hospital.	Tel: 021 492 3001
Cork, West Cork, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen.	Tel: 028 40447
Donegal East, Links Business Centre, Buncrana.	Tel: 074 932 0420
Donegal West, Killybegs Road, Donegal Town.	Tel: 074 972 3540
Donegal, Pearse Road, Letterkenny.	Tel: 074 912 3672/3770
Dublin North Central, 22 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1.	Tel: 01 855 6871
Dublin North Central, Ballymun Health Centre.	Tel: 01 842 0011
Dublin North West, Rathdown Road.	Tel: 01 882 5000
Dublin North West, Wellmount Park, Finglas.	Tel: 856 7704
Dublin North, Cromcastle Road, Coolock.	Tel: 01 816 4200/44
Dublin South City, Carnegie Ctr, 21 Lord Edward St.	Tel: 01 648 6555
Dublin South East, Vergemount Hall, Clonskeagh.	Tel: 01 268 0320
Dublin South West, Millbrook Lawn.	Tel: 01 452 0666
Dublin West, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot.	Tel: 01 620 6387
Dun Laoghaire, 102 Patrick Street.	Tel: 01 236 5120
Dun Laoghaire, Tivoli Road.	Tel: 01 284 3579
Galway City, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway.	Tel: 091 546366/370/325369
Galway, Brackernagh, Ballinasloe.	Tel: 090 964 6200
Galway, Health Centre, Loughrea.	Tel: 091 847 820
Galway, Health Centre, Oughterard.	Tel: 091 552 200
Galway, Health Centre, Vicar Street, Tuam.	Tel: 093 24492
Kerry, 28 Moyderwell, Tralee.	Tel: 066 718 4500
Kerry, St. Margaret’s Road, Killarney.	Tel: 064 36030
Kildare West Wicklow, Fairgreen Street, Naas.	Tel: 045 882 400
Kilkenny, 11 Patrick Street, Kilkenny.	Tel: 056 778 4782
Laois, Child and Family Centre, Portlaoise.	Tel: 057 869 2567
Leitrim, Leitrim Road, Carrick-on-Shannon.	Tel: 071 965 0324
Limerick, Ballynanty Health Centre.	Tel: 061 457 100

Limerick, Kilmallock Health Centre.	Tel: 063 98192
Limerick, Newcastle West Health Centre.	Tel: 069 66653
Limerick, Roxtown Health Centre.	Tel: 061 48301
Limerick, South Hill Health Centre.	Tel: 061 209 985
Limerick, St. Camillus Hospital.	Tel: 061 483 711/996
Longford, Tivoli House, Dublin Road.	Tel: 043 50584
Louth, Wilton House, Stapleton Place, Dundalk.	Tel: 042 939 2200
Mayo, Aras Attracta, Swinford.	Tel: 094 905 0133
Mayo, Ballina Health Centre, Mercy Road, Ballina.	Tel: 096 21511
Mayo, Mountain View, Castlebar.	Tel: 094 904 2283
Meath, 25 Bruce Hill, Navan.	Tel: 046 903 0616
Meath, Commons Road, Navan.	Tel: 046 907 3178
Meath, Dunshaughlin Health Care Unit.	Tel: 01 802 4102
Meath, Enterprise Centre, Navan.	Tel: 046 909 7817
Monaghan, Rooskey.	Tel: 047 30426 or 30427
Offaly, O'Carroll Street, Tullamore.	Tel: 057 932 2488
Roscommon, Abbey Street, Roscommon.	Tel: 090 663 7014
Roscommon, Health Centre, Boyle.	Tel: 071 966 2087
Roscommon, Knockroe, Castlerea.	Tel: 090 663 7843
Roscommon, Lanesboro Road, Roscommon.	Tel: 090 663 7528
Sligo, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo.	Tel: 071 915 5133
Sligo, Teach Laighne, Humbert Street, Tubbercurry.	Tel: 071 912 0062
Tipperary North, Annbrook, Nenagh.	Tel: 067 41934
Tipperary North, Parnell Street, Thurles.	Tel: 0504 23211
Tipperary South, Western Road, Clonmel.	Tel: 052 77303
Waterford, Cork Road, Waterford.	Tel: 051 842 827
Waterford, St. Joseph's Hospital, Dungarvan.	Tel: 058 20918/20/21
Westmeath, Athlone Health Centre, Coosan Road.	Tel: 09064 83106
Westmeath, St. Loman's, Mullingar.	Tel: 044 93 84450
Wexford, Ely House, Ferrybank.	Tel: 053 912 3522 Ext. 201
Wexford, Gorey Health Centre, Gorey.	Tel: 053 943 0100
Wexford, Hospital Grounds, New Ross.	Tel: 051 421 445
Wexford, Millpark Road, Enniscorthy.	Tel: 053 923 3465
Wicklow, Delgany Health Centre, Delgany.	Tel: 01 287 1482
Wicklow, Seafront, Wicklow Town.	Tel: 0404 68400
Wicklow, The Civic Centre, Bray.	Tel: 01 274 4100/4180
Wicklow, West Wicklow, Fairgreen Street, Naas.	Tel: 045 882 400



Helpful organisations

HSE infoline Provides information on all HSE services, including services for children and families.
Lo-call: 1850 24 1850 www.hse.ie

Parentline A national confidential helpline for parents, guardians and carers in need of support.
Lo-call: 1890 927 277 www.parentline.ie

Childline Gives support to young people through a freephone 24 hour listening service and through its website. Children can call Childline for a chat or to talk about problems, and all calls are free of charge and confidential. Freephone: 1800 666 666 www.childline.ie

ISPCC The Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children provides the Childline service, which children can call with any worries and concerns. ISPCC also provides a range of services to support parents. Tel: 01 676 7960 www.ispcc.ie

Barnardos Provides services to respond to the needs of children and families, and also works to develop policy and service provision. Callsave: 1850 222 300 www.barnardos.ie

HSE National Counselling Service A professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service available free of charge for adults who experienced abuse as children. For more information or to make an appointment contact: Tel: 1800 235 234 www.hse-ncs.ie

Evening Telephone Counselling Service and Helpline

Wed and Thurs 6pm-10pm and Fri, Sat, Sun, 8pm-12 midnight. Freephone: 1800 235 235

Citizens Information Service For information about all public services in Ireland.
Lo-call: 1890 777 121 www.citizensinformation.ie

Support and Services for One Parent Families

Treoir, Lo-call: 1890 252 084 www.treoir.ie

One Family. Lo-call: 1890 66 22 12 www.oneparent.ie

Samaritans Available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide.
Call save: 1850 60 90 90 www.samaritans.org

General Synod Board of Education

Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

Telephone: Dublin 4978422 or 4125609 Fax: Dublin 4978821 Email: boe@rcbdub.org

Child Protection Officer 01 - 4978422 or 01 - 4125662 Email: cpori@ireland.anglican.org



9.6 Bibliography

The SAVI Report, McGee et al, 2002, Liffey Press
The End of Innocence, K Lalor, 2001, Oaktree Press

The Kilkenny Incest Investigation	}		
The Western Farmer Case	}	Reports	Government Publications
Kelly - A Child is Dead	}		
The Ferns Report	}		

Resisting Daughter’s Child Sexual Abuse Disclosure, By McCarthy & Byrne
in Understanding Children Vol 2.
Stolen Childhood, I O’Doherty, 1998, Poolbeg.

Various documents published by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

9.7 Acknowledgements

This handbook draws on the following materials:

- "Children First" National Guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Children
- "Our Duty to Care" issued by the Department of Health and Children and NI edition issued by the Volunteer Development Agency
- "Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector" published by the Department of Education and Science

The Board of Education and the Standing Committee are extremely grateful to Dr Helen Buckley who reviewed the draft of sections 1-8 and to the trainers whose comments have helped inform this manual.

This handbook was first published by The Board of Education of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland in May 1997 having been approved by the Standing Committee in November 1996. This fourth edition, for use in the Republic of Ireland only, published in 2008, was approved by the Standing Committee in September 2007.