
Keady Baptist Church - "Safe in our Care" Guidelines

These "Safe in our Care" guidelines have been compiled by reference to "Our Duty to Care", "Getting It Right", "Children First", "Taking Care - Child Protection Guidelines for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland" and "Thirtyone:Eight."

They are provided for illustrative purposes only and as an aid in the process of thinking through the implications of the relevant legislation in the area of safeguarding.

The onus lies completely with a church to consider all the relevant legislation and guidelines when formulating the policies and procedures which will govern the administration of that church's children's work.

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1. WHY DOES A CHURCH NEED A SAFEGUARDING POLICY?

There are four main reasons a church needs to adopt safeguarding policies.

1.1 A LEGAL REQUIREMENT

Regarding Children:

The law rightly requires us to have a policy in place and says we have a duty of care to children and young people that we work with. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that "children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm. They must be given proper care by those looking after them".

Five Key Principles of Child Care

The Children (NI) Order 1995 and the Child Care Act (RoI) 1991 emphasize the following key principles:

- **Paramount Consideration** – It is a fundamental principle in child care law and practice that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him/her.
- **Parental Responsibility** – Parents have a responsibility to children rather than rights over them. There may be situations where other significant adults share this responsibility with one or both parents.
- **Prevention** – We should aim to prevent situations arising where children are separated from their families. The state should provide support and services to keep children within their families and communities, in order to promote their health and welfare.
- **Partnership** – The most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met is by working in partnership. The provision of services must therefore take into account the views of parents.
- **Protection** – Children should be safe and should be protected by intervention if they are in danger.

Regarding Adults:

Adult safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership highlights the European Convention on Human Rights and states "Everyone has a fundamental right to be safe. Whatever the cause, and wherever it occurs, harm caused to adults by abuse, exploitation or neglect is not acceptable."

1.2 BIBLICAL BASIS

As well as a legal imperative, there is also a biblical one. We have our own duty of care found in the Bible. All people are said to be created in God's image and, as a result, possess inherent value. With regards to children, Old Testament laws were enacted for their protection so that Israel would stand in stark contrast to the nations around it. Further, Jesus valued children and as servants of his it is our responsibility to ensure a safe and caring environment.

1.3 OUR OWN PROTECTION

A policy and guidelines document is not there only to protect children and adults at risk, but also leaders, staff and the organisations of the Church. Sometimes leaders may think that aspects of the guidelines are not necessary, however it should be remembered that it is for their own protection and they should not rely on their reputation to protect them.

1.4 THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

No church is immune from the problem of trusted adults misusing their position. This requires a response which is aimed at both prevention and care for those who may have been mistreated. We must not be naive to the fact that there are people in the world today who want to harm children or exploit adults at risk. Therefore, we must do all that we can to protect the vulnerable, promote good practice and prevent abuse.

2. ABUSE

There are many reasons why a person abuses another human. Whatever the reason, abuse is always wrong and it is never the victim's fault. It is very important that abuse is stopped as soon as it is discovered for the sake of both the victim and the abuser. The sooner action is taken the more likely it is that the abuse will stop and that the victim will recover from his or her experiences.

It is a fact that the majority of abusers are known to their victims. In the case of child abuse, it is not only adults who are the perpetrators. Teenage abuse is a growing concern; this is when older children abuse younger children or their peers.

2.1 ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Child abuse does not refer solely to sexual abuse; there are four main types of child abuse. The following definitions of abuse are taken from, 'Co-operating to Safeguard Young People in Northern Ireland'¹. We have included some of the signs which can act as clues to tell us that abuse has taken place. This list is by no means definitive or exhaustive nor does it mean that if a child shows one or more of the signs they have definitely been abused.

PHYSICAL ABUSE is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Signs 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 is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Signs may include:

- Constant hunger
- Inadequate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Poor personal hygiene

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

¹ Cooperating to Safeguard Children in Northern Ireland August 2017 (Department of Health)

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Signs 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 others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs may include:

- Sexual knowledge, including drawing sexually explicit pictures, or use of language inappropriate for the child's age
- Being overly affectionate in a sexual way that is inappropriate to the child's age
- Regression to younger behavioural patterns such as thumb sucking
- Self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdosing, anorexia
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating

EXPLOITATION is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature

2.2 BULLYING

All kinds of bullying are wrong and should not be tolerated. Our organisations should be a safe and welcoming place for all children. All organisations should develop a culture of openness where children and leaders feel able to say if they or their friends are being bullied.

What is bullying?

The government defines bullying as, "Deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated often over a period of time"². Bullying can happen anywhere to anyone; anyone has the potential to bully others.

What forms does it take?

Bullying can be name calling or teasing. Bullying is often physical; victims are pushed, punched, kicked and hit. Victims can be forced to do things they don't want to do or are left out of games or ignored by others. Cyber bullying is when bullies contact their victims via text messaging or the internet. This often intensifies the bullying as victims have little escape from their bullies.

Identifying Bullying

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

- reluctance to 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 alone, going different routes, asking to be driven)
- frequent loss of money or shortage of money with vague explanations
- having few friends
- changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)
- not eating
- attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

It must be remembered that there are other possible reasons for any of the above behaviour patterns.

Preventative Measures

An anti-bullying policy has been developed to create an atmosphere where bullying can be identified and appropriately dealt with (See appendix 2 – Anti-bullying policy).

All leaders should try to prevent bullying within their organisation. However, if it does happen, leaders must deal with it and not ignore it. Having friends is one of the best defenses against bullying. Leaders should always reward and acknowledge positive behaviour, especially young people who befriend others or prevent or stop bullying. Bullying should be discussed openly within the group and young people should be regularly encouraged to talk to the leaders about anything that is bothering them.

How to deal with bullying

- Talk to the victim(s) and find out what has happened. Reassure them that it is not their fault and they have made the right decision in telling you. Make sure they are supported throughout the process.
- Meet with those involved. It might be suitable to discuss the issue with all members of the group, not just those who are bullying. It is not necessary to mention the victim by name. Talk about how they would feel if they were being left out/called names etc.

² www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/WorriedAbout/DG_10015786

- Discuss how the situation could be improved - if bullying is happening how it can be stopped and how everyone can feel happier in the group. Make sure everyone within the group is adhering to the code of conduct or anti-bullying policy. Once everyone has agreed that bullying should not take place, agree what the consequences should be if it were to continue.
- If the bullying continues, make sure the agreed consequences are carried out.
- Report it to the Designated Person and to parents following advice from Designated Person.
- Leader in charge should record the details on an incident form.
- Ensure that adequate support is in place for the one who has been doing the bullying and all attempts have been made for them to be discouraged from repeating this behaviour.
- Keep the situation under constant review.

2.3 SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE

Increasingly people who work with children and young people are being faced with the issue of self-harm. In very basic terms it is 'the inflicting of physical pain to mask an emotional imbalance'. Anyone in this situation needs to be supported.

In 2004 the Royal College of Psychiatrists observed, 'Deliberate self-harm is a term used when someone injures or harms themselves on purpose. Common examples include "overdosing" (self-poisoning), hitting, cutting, or burning oneself, pulling hair, or picking skin, or self-strangulation. It can also include taking illegal drugs and excessive amounts of alcohol. Self-harm is always a sign of something being seriously wrong.'³ Disclosure of any self-harm should never be ignored; it is a clear sign that someone needs help and that self-esteem is low. Care should always be taken in how this problem is managed and advice should be sought at all times.

Suicide

Whilst self-harm does not always lead to suicide, nor do those who attempt suicide self-harm, suicide can at times be seen as the ultimate act of self-harm.

Leaders must be aware that if a child discloses that they are suicidal then the leaders have a duty to inform the designated person. As in the case of all other pastoral concerns, ensure that individuals of any age are safe and have a network of support.

Signs of suicide:

- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Signs of sadness, hopelessness and irritability
- Making negative remarks about themselves
- Talking or writing about suicide
- Putting their affairs in order
- Giving away personal items
- A sudden change from extreme depression to appearing to cope and being calm

³ Royal College of Psychiatrists Self Harm factsheet 26, 2004

These signs are not definitive but are possibly some of the signs displayed by someone who is suicidal. Others may show no sign of their pain at all. The only way to address our concern is to ask.

What to do if you think or know that a young person is suicidal?

- Listen to how they feel
- Take them seriously
- Offer your support
- Encourage them to seek further help i.e. a doctor, professional counsellor, family member or friend
- Follow the reporting process (See Section 3.2)
- If they appear acutely suicidal it may be necessary to seek immediate help through hospital casualty department.

3. RESPONDING, REPORTING AND RECORDING

3.1 RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS/ACCIDENTS/CONCERNS

Responding to incidents and accidents

Many issues that are brought to leaders' attention are not necessarily a concern about a child welfare or allegation of abuse but may be a minor problem, in other words, an incident or an accident. An example of an incident would be a male leader who takes a young girl home by himself without previous knowledge from or communication to parents/carers or other leaders. An example of an accident would be a teenager falling over in youth club and needing first aid treatment. It is important that leaders know how to handle problems, no matter how minor, and that they are able to respond to more serious concerns.

Youth organisations should have copies of the Accident/Incident Report form to record details of accidents and incidents. These forms should be used for the recording of accidents, incidents, injuries and any action taken. Each entry should be signed by the leader in charge. Parents/guardians should be informed in person or by phone of the accident/incident as soon as possible. See Appendix 10 for Accident/Incident Report form.

Responding to concerns

A concern about a child may refer to an instance when shown signs of abuse or there has been a disclosure of abuse by the child or another person. A concern may also refer to inappropriate or difficult behaviour that an adult has shown towards a child.

Responding to concerns must be based upon a clearly defined reporting process. Knowing what to do, who to contact and who needs to know will ensure that the concern is dealt with appropriately. The primary responsibility is to report any concern as soon as possible and ensure that the concern is taken seriously.

In the event of a concern that involves alleged or suspected child abuse a Report of Concern form (see Appendix 11) must be completed and passed to the Designated Person who should be made aware of the situation as soon as possible.

What to do and what not to do if a child discloses to you:

Do

- Stay calm
- Listen
- Give time for the child to say what they want
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling
- Write down what was said to you or what you observed as soon as possible
- Write down the exact words that the child used
- Use the Report of Concern form
- Ensure that the Designated Person is informed without delay

Don't

- panic
- make a child repeat the story unnecessarily

- promise to keep secrets
- investigate
- Under no circumstances should you attempt to deal with the problem alone

3.2 THE REPORTING PROCESS

1. The person who has the concern should tell the leader in charge.
2. A Reporting of concern form should be completed.
3. The leader-in-charge should inform the Designated Person.
4. If a child or adult at risk is in danger or a criminal offence is suspected, then PSNI or Social Services must be informed immediately. Do not delay this by having a meeting. Remember that the task of deciding whether or not abuse has occurred rests with the professional agencies. If there is disagreement on whether or not to refer a concern to a child protection agency, any individual, as a concerned citizen, can still make a referral.
5. The Designated Person should consult with a suitable member of the Office Bearers (trustees) as soon as possible and inform them that a referral has been made.
6. Consideration should be given by the Designated Person and Pastor to offering support to the leader or other person who made the initial report.
7. Information should be restricted to the Designated Person, Pastor and Office Bearers (trustees) as appropriate.

3.3 DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (This section is for Northern Ireland only)

It is a legal requirement that a church must inform the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if they remove a person from volunteering or working in regulated activity with children or adults at risk in Northern Ireland. According to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, a regulated activity provider must refer to the DBS when they have withdrawn permission for a person to engage in regulated activity because they think that the person meets the following criteria:

- The person has received a caution/conviction for a relevant offence. This would be a serious offence that automatically bars a person from working with children or vulnerable adults. For example, the rape of a child.
- The person is suspected of being engaged in relevant conduct. Examples include conduct which endangers a child or vulnerable adult or is likely to endanger them and conduct of a sexual nature involving a child. This conduct could be acts of omission or commission.
- When the harm test is satisfied. The harm test is where it is thought that a person may harm a child or adult at risk, cause them to be harmed, or where a person has put a child/adult at risk at risk of harm, attempted to harm a child/adult at risk or incited another to harm a child/adult at risk. For example, a volunteer confided in a minister that he had a sexual interest in children but had never acted upon this interest.

More information can be found on the Disclosure and Barring Service website:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/>

Similar legislation will apply in the Republic of Ireland in due course.

3.4 RECORDING

Child's words

It is very important that any words a child says are recorded accurately. If a child says something of concern to a leader, this should be recorded immediately on any piece of paper at hand and then the Report of Concern form written up at a later stage. Once completed, the Report of Concern form should be given to the Designated Person or minister and kept confidentially.

Report of Concern form

The person who has reported the concern should complete a Report of Concern form (See Appendix 11 for Reporting Concerns Form).

Try to have available the following information:

- The name and address of the child
- Age of the child
- The nature of any injury or complaint
- The need for medical attention (if any)
- What your concern actually is
- What course of action you have already taken (if any)
- Any other information you may have e.g. what school they attend, the name of their GP

Record of Meeting form

A record should be kept of any meetings held in relation to a child protection concern. It should be recorded what the concern was and whether or not the decision was taken to report to an outside agency. Such a record should be kept confidentially in a safe place as such records may be sought and examined if an investigation is carried out.

3.5 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WORKERS

Allegations of abuse against workers are comparatively rare but must be treated seriously and responded to immediately. The following guidance should be adopted prior to any such allegations.

- If the worker against whom the allegation is made has any contact with children, the person dealing with the allegation should seek the advice of Children's Social Services and/or the PSNI / An Garda Síochána before taking any action such as suspension of employment.
- Similarly, Adult Social Services or the PSNI / An Garda Síochána should be contacted where there are concerns about a worker's behaviour with adults.
- It is important to be aware that suspension is not always the best and most appropriate course of action, but serious consideration should be given to this where there is evidence to suggest that further harm may come to children or adults if they were not removed from duties (albeit temporarily).
- In either case, it may be better for the worker to be required to alter their responsibilities so that they are removed from the activities of the group whilst the allegation is investigated.
- However, the best course of action (suspension or change of duties) needs to be decided after consultation with the social work team and the PSNI / Garda Síochána
- During such situations, it will be necessary to supervise the worker as closely as possible without raising suspicion during the period between the matter coming to

your attention, the authorities being informed and the appropriate action being taken.

- It is important to be aware that there are on occasions allegations made which are malicious.
- It is also important to ensure that in acknowledging this fact, we do not take this as our sole basis for responding to all allegations.

3.6 MANAGING OFFENDERS

Within the context of grace and forgiveness, attendance at worship services should be open to everyone. At the same time the protection of our children must remain paramount at all times. A person who has cautions or convictions on their record may still be involved in the life and witness of the Church. However if a person has convictions of abuse against children then they should never be in a position of leadership with children. If the correct procedure of having all new leaders in regulated positions vetted then any convictions will be known through this process (for more information on vetting, see Section 6.2).

If it becomes known that a person who has been convicted of offences against children / adults at risk is wishing to attend church worship this may be facilitated through the development of a safeguarding plan drawn up in partnership with the PSNI/An Garda Síochána or Probation Services.

3.7 DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

If a young person or parent/carer has a general complaint about the running of an organisation, such complaints should be directed through the organisation leader to the Designated Person and in turn the Office Bearers (trustees). The complainant should be assured that the matter will be dealt with in a prompt and appropriate manner. They should be informed as soon as possible of the decisions and the action, if any, that will be taken.

3.8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Who needs to know what?

It is always important that child protection issues are treated confidentially, only those who need to know about an incident or concern should be informed. This will mean that where the Designated Person considers that a child is at risk of abuse, or that a criminal offence may have been committed, it should be reported to Social Services or PSNI /An Garda Síochána.

Informing Parents

Depending on what the incident or concern about a child is parents/carers may need to be informed. In certain circumstances PSNI /An Garda Síochána or Social Services will advise.

Alleged Perpetrator

If an allegation has been made against a leader, advice must be taken as to whether or not they should be informed.

3.9 REPORTING CONTACTS

Northern Ireland

Any abuse issues relating to children in Northern Ireland should be dealt with either by the PSNI or Social Services.

Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)

Within the PSNI, it is the Child Abuse Investigation Units (CAIU) that deals with issues relating to children. They are part of the overarching Public Protection Unit; there is one CAIU in each of the 8 policing districts. They are made up of male and female detectives who work in plain clothes and are specially trained to investigate all alleged and suspected cases of child abuse. Contact the central number **0845 600 8000** or in the event of an emergency phone **999**.

Health and Social Service Trusts

All reports of a child protection nature in Northern Ireland are dealt with by either PSNI or by a local Gateway Team located within the Health & Social Service Trusts, who provide integrated health and social care services across Northern Ireland. Contact details for Social Services located within each Trust can be found on the Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland website www.n-i.nhs.uk.

Republic of Ireland

Any abuse issues relating to children in the Republic of Ireland should be dealt with either by An Garda Síochána or by social workers.

An Garda Síochána

If a child is believed to be at immediate risk, contact An Garda Síochána at the appropriate Garda station, in case of emergency ring **999** or **112**.

Health Service Executive

Any abuse issues relating to children in the Republic of Ireland should be dealt with by An Garda Síochána or social workers. There is a Duty Social Worker located within the HSE Child and Family Services Office. Offices are normally open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Contact details for the 32 local health offices can be found on the HSE website www.hse.ie.

4. ADULTS AT RISK

For more information on Managing offenders, dealing with complaints and confidentiality, see section 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8 respectively

4.1 DEFINITION OF ADULT AT RISK

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland an adult at risk is defined in the government policy.

Adult Safeguarding – Prevention and Protection in Partnership defines an **adult at risk of harm** as a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal characteristics which may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socioeconomic factors and environmental living conditions.

An **adult in need of protection** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- Personal characteristics
- Life circumstances
- Inability to protect their own wellbeing, property, assets, rights or other interests.

Previous safeguarding policies focused on protection and the term "vulnerable adult". This policy moves away from the concept of "vulnerability" and towards establishing the concept of "risk of harm" in adulthood. It places the responsibility of harm caused with those who perpetrate it.

Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland the National Policy Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse (December 2014) states that a **vulnerable person** is "an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard him / her against harm, exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation". Restriction of capacity may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment. Vulnerability to abuse is influenced by both content and individual circumstances. In other words some can be vulnerable to abuse at some stage in their lives, depending on their age, disability or need for support.

4.2 ABUSE OF ADULTS AT RISK

Abuse is 'a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another individual or violates their human or civil rights'. Abuse is the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. It can involve direct and indirect contact and can include online abuse.

PHYSICAL ABUSE is the use of physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in actual physical injury. This may include hitting, pushing,

rough handling, exposure to heat or cold, force feeding, improper administration of medication, denial of treatment, misuse or illegal use of restraint and deprivation of liberty.

Signs may include:

- History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries.
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems left unattended.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Bruising and discolouration - particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Recurring injuries without plausible explanation
- Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite
- Person flinches at physical contact &/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather;
- Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE is any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted or takes place without consent or understanding. Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and may include non-contact sexual activities, such as indecent exposure, stalking, grooming, being made to look at or be involved in the production of sexually abusive material, or being made to watch sexual activities. It may involve physical contact, including but not limited to non-consensual penetrative sexual activities or non-penetrative sexual activities, such as intentional touching (known as groping). Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society, irrelevant of gender, age, ability, religion, race, ethnicity, personal circumstances, financial background or sexual orientation.

Signs may include:

- Pregnancy in a woman who lacks mental capacity or is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosures or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming
- Emotional distress
- Mood changes
- Disturbed sleep patterns

PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL ABUSE is behaviour that is psychologically harmful or inflicts mental distress by threat, humiliation or other verbal/non-verbal conduct. This may include threats, humiliation or ridicule, provoking fear of violence, shouting, yelling and swearing, blaming, controlling, intimidation and coercion.

Signs may include:

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia

- Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour, excessive fear or anxiety
- Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Helplessness or passivity
- Confusion or disorientation
- Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour
- Low self-esteem

FINANCIAL ABUSE is actual or attempted theft, fraud or burglary. It is the misappropriation or misuse of money, property, benefits, material goods or other asset transactions which the person did not or could not consent to, or which were invalidated by intimidation, coercion or deception. This may include exploitation, embezzlement, withholding pension or benefits or pressure exerted around wills, property or inheritance.

Signs may include:

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents or loss of money
- Sudden inability to pay bills, getting into debt
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property
- Missing personal belongings
- Inappropriate granting and / or use of Power of Attorney

INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE is the mistreatment or neglect of an adult by a regime or individuals in settings which adults who may be at risk reside in or use. This can occur in any organisation, within and outside the HSC sector. Institutional abuse may occur when the routines, systems and regimes result in poor standards of care, poor practice and behaviours, inflexible regimes and rigid routines which violate the dignity and human rights of the adults and place them at risk of harm.

Institutional abuse may occur within a culture that denies, restricts or curtails privacy, dignity, choice and independence. It involves the collective failure of a service provider or an organisation to provide safe and appropriate services, and includes a failure to ensure that the necessary preventative and/or protective measures are in place.

Signs may include:

- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves
- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users.
- Neglectful or poor professional practice.

NEGLECT occurs when a person deliberately withholds, or fails to provide, appropriate and adequate care and support which is required by another adult. It may be through a lack of

knowledge or awareness, or through a failure to take reasonable action given the information and facts available to them at the time. It may include physical neglect to the extent that health or well-being is impaired, administering too much or too little medication, failure to provide access to appropriate health or social care, withholding the necessities of life, such as adequate nutrition, heating or clothing, or failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others particularly when the person lacks the capacity to assess risk.

Signs may include:

- Deteriorating despite apparent care
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support.
- Lack of medication or medical intervention
- Hoarding inside or outside a property
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs
- Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene
- Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food
- Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment
- Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example not heating or lighting)
- Depression

EXPLOITATION Is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person; to take advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain from using them as a commodity. It may manifest itself in many forms including slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, domestic

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE is threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. Domestic violence and abuse is essentially a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another. It is usually frequent and persistent. It can include violence by a son, daughter, mother, father, husband, wife, life partner or any other person who has a close relationship with the victim. It occurs right across society, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic or religious group, sexual orientation, wealth, disability or geography.

Signs may include:

- Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars
- Coercive, controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation.
- Age range extended to 16 yrs.

4.3 THE REPORTING PROCESS

Where possible, concerns should be passed to the Designated Person (or deputy) but difficulty in contacting these individual(s) should not delay action being taken. If the

Safeguarding Co-coordinator (Adults) is concerned that an adult may have been or is in danger of being abused, they should contact Adult Social Services. If they are not sure whether an official referral is warranted but they nevertheless have legitimate concerns, they should still contact Adult Social Services to discuss their concerns.

In Northern Ireland, the Health and Social Care Trust are the lead agency with responsibility for adult protection. In Republic of Ireland, the same is true for the Health Service Executive. See 4.5 for their contact details.

In circumstances where a crime is alleged or suspected, a referral to the PSNI (or An Garda Síochána) should be made by telephoning 101 (Or 1800 25 00 25 in ROI), or in an emergency, 999. Both numbers are accessible on a 24 hour, 7 days per week basis. The PSNI or An Garda Síochána will be the lead criminal investigative agency and will progress a criminal investigation where required.

In Summary

1. The person who has the concern should tell the leader in charge.
2. A Reporting of concern form should be completed.
3. The leader-in-charge should inform the Designated Person.
4. If an adult is in danger or a criminal offence is suspected, then PSNI / Garda Síochána or Social Services must be informed immediately. Do not delay this by having a meeting. Remember that the task of deciding whether or not abuse has occurred rests with the professional agencies. If there is disagreement on whether or not to refer a concern to a child protection agency, any individual, as a concerned citizen, can still make a referral.
5. The Designated Person should consult with a suitable member of the Office Bearers (trustees) as soon as possible and inform them that a referral has been made.
6. Consideration should be given by the Designated Person and Pastor to offering support to the leader or other person who made the initial report.
7. Information should be restricted to the Designated Person, Pastor and Office Bearers (trustees) as appropriate.

4.4 APPOINTMENT AND VETTING REQUIREMENTS

Those appointed to work with adults at risk should follow the process of section 6 and the following Vetting requirements apply.

Northern Ireland

Access NI

Roles which require an Enhanced Disclosure Check (against the barred lists):

- Providing personal care, e.g. washing, toileting.
- Assistance with general household affairs, e.g. paying bills or shopping on their behalf.
- Transporting to a Health Care Appointment, e.g. taking an adult to and from their GP appointment on behalf of the church. Please note that if a friend takes their neighbour to a hospital appointment this would be a personal arrangement and therefore they would not need to be vetted.

Roles which require an Enhanced Disclosure Check (NOT barred lists):

Keady Baptist Church - "Safe in our Care" Guidelines

- Visiting adults at risk regularly, i.e. every week in their own home. :: Driving a church minibus on a regular basis where the majority of those on the bus are considered to be at risk.
- Taking a group on an overnight stay where the majority of those on the holiday are considered to be at risk.

*Roles which **DO NOT** require an Access NI check:*

- Elders visiting their congregation.
- Those delivering a hot meal to an individual (note the difference in delivering a meal and feeding the adult).
- A friend or neighbour taking someone to hospital for an outpatient appointment.
- Volunteers at a lunch club for older people.

Republic of Ireland

Garda Vetting

According to The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 & 2016, "Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable adults" needs to be vetted. This is a legal requirement.

4.5 IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Northern Ireland

Health and Social Care Trust Adult Safeguarding

Northern Trust - 028 9441 3659

Western Trust - 028 7161 1366

South Eastern Trust - 028 9250 1227

Belfast Trust - 028 9504 1744

Southern Trust - 028 3756 4423

Emergency Social Work (Evenings or weekends) - 028 9504 9999

Police Service of Northern Ireland - In an emergency call 999 to report your concerns call 101

Republic of Ireland

Health Service Executive Confidential Recipient LoCall - 1890 100 014

HSE Information Line (Mon-Sat 8am-8pm) -041 6850 300

An Garda Siochana - 999 or 112

5. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

5.1 THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH OFFICE BEARERS (TRUSTEES)

The office bearers (trustees) are responsible for the safeguarding within the church and its organisations.

An exception to this would be independent organisations or local community groups using church premises. In this instance an agreement should be put in place between the church and third party. (See Appendix 12 Working with Independent Organisations).

Appoint a Designated Person

The office bearers (trustees) are responsible for ensuring the appointment of at least one Designated Person whose role is to co-ordinate the area of safeguarding within the church. Once appointed, it is important that the Designated Person is supported in his or her role. In order to carry out his or her responsibilities thoroughly the Designated Person will need help from other leaders and the office bearers (trustees). Some may need more help than others depending on the size of the congregation and the level of youth and children's activities. The appointment of a deputy designated person should also be given consideration to act when the Designated Person is not available.

Oversee the process of the appointment of leaders

It is the responsibility of the office bearers (trustees) to oversee the recruitment process for volunteers and paid youth/children's workers and to formally appoint them in their role. Once appointed, all leaders need to be supported and should feel appreciated (see Section 6).

Adopt relevant safeguarding policies and review them regularly

It is the responsibility of the office bearers (trustees) to ensure the church formally adopts relevant safeguarding policies and to carry out a review of the policy every three years (e.g. Appendix 1 - Sample Child Protection Policy). The review should not be considered an inspection but more of a 'health check' to look at issues that have risen, how they have been dealt with and any further work which needs to be done.

Keep safeguarding on the agenda

The office bearers (trustees) have the responsibility to ensure all new leaders are appointed according to the appointment process. It is the responsibility of the office bearers (trustees) to be aware of safeguarding issues and concerns relevant to their church. That said, not all of the office bearers (trustees) need be made aware of every incident or issue because of confidentiality reasons, and in some cases they may simply be informed that there was an incident and no other specifics will be given. In order to ensure that the office bearers are kept up to date, safeguarding should be an item on each office bearers (trustees) meeting agenda. Even if there is nothing to report, it should be recorded that this is the case.

5.2 THE APPOINTMENT OF A DESIGNATED PERSON

The appointment of a Designated Person is very important and should be considered carefully. The people best suited for this task are those whose occupations, or lengthy

voluntary experience, have brought them into contact with children or adults at risk. Those who have already participated in foundation training in safeguarding e.g. nurses, doctors, teachers, social workers or probation officers may be particularly suitable. It is advisable that the Pastor does not take on the role of Designated Person. Furthermore, it should **NOT** be someone who is employed by the church as a youth/children's worker or a person already heavily involved in youth/children's work within the church. The office bearers (trustees) may wish to consider the appointment of two people to the role, particularly if the Church is dealing with large numbers of children, young people and volunteers.

5.3 THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED PERSON

The role of the Designated Person includes the following:

- 1.** The Designated Person must be consulted with if a safeguarding incident arises. If this were to occur the guidelines in Section 3 or section 4 should be followed for child protection or adults at risk matters.
- 2.** To organise regular training and refresher course for those with responsibility for children and young people.
- 3.** To oversee the appointment process for new leaders including coordinating the distribution of applications forms and making sure that leaders are vetted where appropriate and reference request forms are sent. Leaders in charge of organisations and administrative staff can help with this process.
- 4.** To report to the office bearers (trustees) on a regular basis about any safeguarding issues. This does not include specific details about a child protection incident (as this information may have to remain confidential) but for example, changes to the vetting system, information about a training session or concerns to do with leader compliance of the policy in one of the organisations.

6. RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS

6.1 THE RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS

It is necessary to have a recruitment and appointment policy in place to select leaders in order to provide a safe environment for children and young people. A proper appointment procedure is one of the most sensible and effective ways of assessing a person's suitability to work with children and young people, and may in itself act as a deterrent to potential abusers. This is often felt to be an unnecessary burden, particularly if the person is part-time, a volunteer or already known to the office bearers (trustees) or members of the church.

However, the more routine the procedure becomes, the less intimidating it will be to all concerned. By having good standards of practice in our organisations, people are more likely to want to join. Increasingly parents want evidence of good recruitment.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that anyone who may be unsuitable for working with young people is not given the opportunity to become a leader.

The Appointment of Leaders Process

Application Form: An application form must be completed by everyone applying to work with children and young people in regulated positions. The application form includes the vetting process according to legislation and good practice. Applicants will be asked to declare any past criminal convictions (see Appendix 6 for sample worker application form).

Interview: Representatives from the Office Bearers (trustees) should meet the person and ensure that they have the ability and commitment required for the role. At the interview the safeguarding guidelines should be provided and explained.

Referees: The names of two referees should be given by the applicant. The referees should **NOT** be family members, the Pastor, Designated Person or any of the interviewers. If the applicant is coming from a previous place of worship then a reference should be sought from their previous church. Otherwise, references should be from people who have had first-hand knowledge of their work with children/young people and have known the applicant for at least two years. (See appendix 7 for a sample reference request form)

Office Bearers (trustees) approval: All application forms must be signed by the Interviewers to say that as far as the Office Bearers (trustees) are aware, the applicant is suitable for the role for which they are applying.

Form presented to the Designated Person: It is at this stage that appropriate vetting will take place in line with current legislation and practice. The Designated Person will provide the applicant with an AccessNI or Garda Vetting form to be completed. When it is completed the Designated Person will check that it has been completed correctly.

Appointment Decision: On receipt of the pre-employment certificate the Designated Person will ratify the appointment based on the information contained therein. Church procedures

for appointment of an individual to a role will be carried out and the applicant will be informed of the decision.

6.2 VETTING

General vetting principles

In order to comply with the law and good practice, all leaders taking up a regulated position/relevant work to work with children and young people must be vetted. For positions including adults at risk, see section 4.4. The process of vetting leaders involves a criminal records check which will show if an applicant has any criminal convictions.

The vetting process does take time and because of this, churches are urged to recruit their leaders well in advance and allow for this time when planning events such as a Holiday Bible Club.

Please remember that vetting is only a part of the appointment process. Just because a person does not have a criminal record, does not mean that they are suitable to work with children. It simply means they have no criminal record.

A person who does have a criminal conviction will not necessarily be barred from working with children and young people within a church setting. Only convictions considered relevant should be taken into consideration when an appointment is made. A sample policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders is available on request from ABCI.

6.3 TRAINING

As well as being appointed properly, it is important that leaders have adequate training to do the job required of them. It is the responsibility of Office Bearers (trustees) not only to appoint leaders but to support them in their role; this includes providing appropriate opportunities for training.

6.4 REGISTER OF ALL LEADERS

A register of all leaders working with children within a church should be kept and reviewed on an annual basis. This register should be a record of all leaders and helpers in all organisations under the auspices of Office Bearers (trustees) including those on a rota basis or are under the age of 18 (see Appendix 9 for a sample register of leaders).

7. GOOD STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

7.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL LEADERS

To ensure that the organisation responds in a correct and prompt manner to concerns, accidents and incidents within an organisation, all leaders need to check that:

- There are accident/incident report forms on the premises and leaders are aware of the reporting procedure (see Appendix 10 for sample Accident / Incident reporting form).
- The leader in charge has immediate access to names, addresses and phone numbers of the children/young people attending.
- The leaders in charge should maintain a record of children attending each event.
- There is access to a phone in the event of an emergency.
- All leaders are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of a concern about a child (see Appendix 11 for a sample Reporting Concern Form).
- All leaders should know the name and phone number of the Designated Person(s).
- All leaders should have a good understanding of the need to keep personal details of young people and other leaders confidential.
- Leaders should be sensitive and where appropriate, exercise confidentiality to the backgrounds, medical history and family circumstances of all children.

7.2 TEAM WORK

1. Each leader and helper must be fully acquainted with the child protection policy, procedures and reporting process.
2. Within each organisation, a clearly defined line of accountability should be in place, whereby all leaders and helpers report to the appointed leader in charge. The leader in charge reports to the Office Bearers (trustees) with which ultimate responsibility lies.
3. At any given meeting, leaders and helpers should be informed of the specific programme, and be clear about one another's responsibilities.
4. Acquaint the team (especially new leaders and helpers) with useful advice on getting to know children i.e. trying to get to know the names of the children as quickly as possible; talking to the children about themselves, what they like, what they do during the rest of the week; talking to the children about yourself.
5. At the conclusion of the session/evening i.e. weekly meeting or at the end of June, there should be an evaluation of the programme, when leaders and helpers can share information about issues and any difficulties that may have arisen.

7.3 WORKING WITH PARENTS/CARERS

The responsibility of parents/carers

Parents/carers are primarily responsible for their children. They have a responsibility to return consent forms promptly within the agreed deadlines, to inform organisational leaders of any changes to their child's medication or circumstances and also encourage their child to abide by the rules of the organisation.

Parental consent forms

A parental consent form should be completed when a child enrolls in an organisation (see Appendix 8 for a sample multi-purpose consent form). If using a multipurpose consent form, copies should be circulated to all the organisations attended by the individual child.

If a day trip, special activity or residential is organised, a specific consent form covering this should be completed. It is important to have a parent/carer signature and information regarding medication and allergies etc. Parental consent forms should also be sought for specific means of communicating with children / young people. See section 7.13 for more information on this. The information on consent forms and sign in sheets should be kept confidential to the leaders of the organisation. The forms should be kept in a secure location on church premises e.g. a locked filing cabinet, but should be accessible when the group meets. If the group is on an outing or residential, the leader should ensure that he or she has the information contained on consent forms with him or her.

Sign-in sheet

For the purposes of a one-off event or drop in activity e.g. outreach night or youth club, a sign-in sheet may be used instead of parental consent forms. This can only be used for children aged eleven plus and only in situations where it isn't deemed possible to obtain parental consent forms. It is important that young people sign out as well as sign in so that leaders are aware of how many people are in the building at any one time. It is also important that young people are asked to give a contact number and medical information in case of an emergency.

Incidents and Concerns

Depending on what the incident or concern about a child is parents/carers may need to be informed. In certain circumstances PSNI /An Garda Síochána or Social Services will advise.

7.4 DISCIPLINE

Code of Conduct

In every aspect of life, organisations function best where there are clear guidelines and structures. It is important that all leaders know what the boundaries and rules of an organisation are and that these are explained to children and parents.

The best way of doing this is by having a code of conduct for children and young people when attending organisations, drawn up at the commencement of the year's activities. A code of conduct will help to create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children will feel that they can relate to the leaders and helpers. In some organisations it is the young people themselves who draw up the code of conduct with the help of the leaders. It can be easier to enforce the boundaries if the young people play a part in deciding what these should be, however it is not always appropriate and in some organisations it may be more suitable that the leaders decide on the boundaries and acceptable behaviour. Parents should be informed of the code of conduct once it is agreed upon.

Discipline Guidelines

If a young person breaks the code of conduct or agreed rules then sanctions need to be put in place and carried out to ensure a safe environment for all. When disciplining children of all ages the following guidelines need to be adhered to:

Never

Use force (smack, hit)
Discipline out of anger (but out of love)
Use a 'put-down' with children/young people
Humiliate a child or young person
Reject the child, just the behaviour
Allow some children to take all your time and energy
Compare children with each other

Always

Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding
Pray for and with the children
Work on each individual child's positive characteristics
Be a good role model and set a good example
Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention
Be consistent and work together as a team
Ensure other leaders know what you have said – this avoids manipulation.

7.5 PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact with children should be child initiated and appropriate to the age and gender of the child. If a child is in distress it may be perfectly acceptable (and sometimes necessary) to offer comfort and reassurance by placing a hand on their shoulder or taking their hand. This is a valid way of expressing concern and care for children and most children will feel comfortable with it. Making staff and volunteers frightened of any physical contact with children is not an effective way of reducing abuse.

Leaders should never be on their own with a child; if a child wishes to talk confidentially with them they should remain visible to other adults. Leaders must avoid physical contact which may be misconstrued by a young person or other observer.

Leaders should never:

- Spend an excessive amount of time alone with children away from others
- Take children to your home without the child's parents and the leader of the organisation or other responsible person knowing
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child, even in fun
- Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- Engage in rough or inappropriate behaviour
- Rely solely on their reputation to protect themselves

It may sometimes be necessary for leaders to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have disabilities. In such situations leaders need to be sensitive to the child and undertake personal care with the utmost discretion.

Using Restraint

Sometimes restraint may need to be applied to a child in order to protect him/her from harming themselves or others, or seriously damaging property. The priority at all times must be to protect all children from harm.

The proper use of restraint requires skill and judgement. Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied. Leaders should never try to restrain a young person on their own. Another leader may act as an assistant or as a witness. Remember that restraint should be an act of care, not punishment.

Following an incident when restraint has been used, a report should be inserted in an accident/incident report form and parents/carers should be notified.

7.6 RECOMMENDED RATIOS

All organisations must abide by the recommended ratios of children/young people to leaders. In determining the ratios of staff to children organisation leaders should bear in mind that there should be a minimum of at least 2 leaders/helpers present at all times.

Young leaders/helpers

Young leaders (16 and over and under 18) should not be left alone in a supervisory capacity with children. They may, however, be counted in the ratios as long as other adult leaders are present and in charge.

Ratios for indoor activities

Under 8 years

0 to 2 years = 1 leader to 3 children

2 to 3 years = 1 leader to 4 children

3 to 7 years = 1 leader to 8 children

8 years and over

8 years and over = 1 leader to 10 children/young people.

It is preferable to have a gender mix of leaders with a mixed gender group of children.

Ratios for outdoor activities

Under 8 years

0 to 2 years = 1 leader to 3 children

2 to 3 years = 1 leader to 4 children

3 to 7 years = 1 leader to 6 children

8 to 13 years

The recommended ratios for children after 8 to 13 years and over are 2 leaders to 15 children. One additional leader for every 8 extra children, or part thereof.

13 years and over

The recommended ratios for young people aged 13 and over are 2 leaders to 20 children (preferably one of each gender). One additional leader for every 10 young people, or part thereof.

7.7 TRANSPORT

Youth work may involve transporting young people at some stage. Whether this is by car, coach or minibus and whether it is to and from the church building or an organised outing or residential, safety must be considered a priority at all times.

Drivers

When planning an outing, leaders of organisations must exercise discretion as to who the drivers of the vehicles will be. A driver transporting other people's children must be aware of his/her responsibility towards the passengers and drive carefully within the national speed limit. A driver should know what to do in the event of a breakdown or accident and must ensure that they have adequate and up to date insurance cover. Greater consideration should be given to using 'R' (NI) drivers and recently qualified drivers (RoI) as nominated drivers on an outing or residential due to their lack of driving experience.

In addition leaders should observe the guidelines below which will help ensure protection for both them and the young people.

Minibus drivers

Northern Ireland

A Minibus is defined as a motor vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats, and is described as a category D1 vehicle. On 12 April 2018, The Department of Infrastructure (DFI) issued some significant changes regarding the driving of minibuses. In general, only those who possess a D1 license are legible to drive minibuses in Northern Ireland.

Drivers who passed their car driving test before the 1st of January 1997 will normally have a D1 minibus entitlement on their driving licence (until their licence expires). In this case, the vehicle must not be used for hire or reward.

Drivers who obtained their full car driving license on or after 1 January 1997 and, therefore, do not possess a D1 on their licensed can legally drive a minibus under the following conditions:

- you have held a full B (car) licence for at least two years
- you are aged over 21 years
- you receive no payment or consideration other than out of pocket expenses
- you are driving on a voluntary basis (i.e. the driver cannot be employed by the church)
- you are driving for social purposes
- The vehicle weighs less than 3,500kg
- No trailer is attached to the vehicle

Section 10B small bus permits are issued for use in Northern Ireland, these permits cannot be used to provide transport to members of the general public and organisations must

ensure that they are only carrying passengers that their organisation is set up to benefit. A permit allows an organisations, who own or have a minibus on a hire contract, to operate a minibus – a vehicle with up to 16 passenger seats, for 'Hire or Reward'.

Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland, a person driving a minibus must have a full category D driving licence for which they must sit a theory and practical test.

Private Cars

Leaders should avoid transporting a child or young person on their own. It is good practice to have another leader or other children in the car. However, if a situation does occur when a leader has to transport a child alone, they should ensure that other leaders know this is happening and that the child is in the back seat. Additionally, parents should be made aware that their child will be in the car on their own with a leader, affording them the opportunity to make alternative arrangements.

Drivers should declare in writing to their insurers that they carry children in their vehicles, and keep a copy of relevant paperwork with their insurance documents.

Seatbelts and child restraints

Organisations or individuals who carry other people's children in cars must make sure they use child restraints for each child carried, or adult seatbelts appropriately. Child restraints are rearward-facing baby seats, forward-facing child seats, booster seats and booster cushions. Seatbelts must be worn for any journey, no matter how short. In Northern Ireland it is legally the driver's responsibility to ensure that seatbelts are worn for all passengers under the age of 14 and in the Republic of Ireland it is the driver's responsibility that seatbelts are worn for all passengers under 17 years old.

Booster seats must be used when travelling by car in line with relevant legislation:

Northern Ireland

Children under 12 years old or less than 4' 5"/135cm in height must use a booster seat. The exceptions according to the law are:

- When travelling by a taxi
- When there are already two booster seats in the back and no room for a third
- Where there is an 'unforeseen circumstance' e.g. giving a child a lift home when their parents have not turned up.

Republic of Ireland

Children under 5'/150 cm in height and weighing less than 36 kilograms (generally children up to 11 or 12 years old) must use the correct child seat or booster cushion. The only exception to using a child seat, booster seat or booster cushion is if a child is travelling in a taxi.

Minibuses, buses and coaches

If driving the church's minibus, drivers must be named on the vehicle insurance policy. Accident/incident report forms and a breakdown logbook should be carried in church

minibuses and kept up to date. A first aid kit and fire extinguisher should also be on board and drivers should be familiar with their use. The law states that it is the driver's responsibility to make sure that each 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 road-worthiness of the vehicle. If in doubt, the vehicle should not be driven.

In minibuses, children over 3 years old must wear seatbelts or use child restraints if available. In the Republic of Ireland road traffic regulations require the fitting of seatbelts in all forward facing seats in minibuses.

On larger buses and coaches all seated passengers aged 14 years and above must wear seatbelts if they are fitted. The driver must notify passengers when they board that they have to wear their seatbelts and/or signs must be displayed at every seat.

When booking a minibus, bus or coach, make sure it has seatbelts and ask whether child restraints can be provided or whether you can use your own. But be aware that it may not be possible to fit them properly because the seats and seatbelts are different from cars.

Supervision while travelling

Leaders who accompany young people in minibuses/coaches/boats/trains etc. should, where possible, sit among the young people and be dispersed in the vehicle. For example, there should be at least one adult travelling in the back of a minibus and preferably near the exit points of the vehicle. The group members must be in the sight of a leader at all times.

7.8 RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMMES AND OUTINGS

Churches and organisations can offer a wide range of activities outside church premises. These may include day trips to the seaside, forest parks, theme parks, visits to the cinema, theatre, museums and shopping trips. As well as this, residential programmes often become the highlight of any church's youth programme, offering more opportunity to enhance friendships within the group. While recognising the tremendous impact these trips can have on a young person's emotional, physical and spiritual development, the leader in charge ought to note the following:

The Residential Centre

Check your location and accommodation. Ensure that it is adequate for your groups and activity. The centre must have adequate insurance cover for your group and the activities it hopes to engage in. Insurance should in particular cover high-risk activities e.g. canoeing, rock climbing etc. The centre should inform you of its rules and regulations. Make every effort to be aware of its timetable e.g. whether it has a lights-out time, meal times, what time it expects the group to arrive and to depart.

The centre should provide access to first aid/GP in the event of an emergency. The centre should also provide separate sleeping accommodation for males/females.

Parental Consent

Parents/carers consent must be obtained when taking any young person away for a residential or outing. A consent form for special outings /activities /residential programmes should be used.

Before taking a group away, ensure that parents/carers are aware of the following:

- The programme/activities their child is encouraged/expected to participate in, especially high-risk activities e.g. bouldering, canoeing etc.
- Whether there will be shopping trips or other free time in town areas and, if so, the level of supervision during such trips.
- The names of leaders/helpers accompanying the group and a contact number (where possible it is advisable to arrange a pre-residential briefing for the parents, giving information and allowing parents an opportunity to meet the leaders/helpers).
- The centre telephone number and address.
- The group's 'contract' i.e. what rules the young people will be asked to abide by, and possible consequences if these are broken.
- What clothes and other items the young people might be expected to need.
- How much pocket money might be sufficient (it is advisable to set a limit on this)?
- That the names and contact details of all young people and leaders attending a residential/camp etc. will be left with a nominated person in the church.

Young people

Young people must have parental/carer consent to participate in the residential programme and its named activities. They should be fully informed of the nature of the residential programme, i.e. what is expected of them. They should never be coerced or forced into any activity with which they are uncomfortable. They should be involved in the drawing up of rules and a contract for behaviour and be made aware of sanctions should they fail to comply.

Checklist

- What is the best time to go – time of year, time of week?
- How will you get there?
- How much will it cost?
- Is the place you are visiting suitable for the age range you are taking?
- Is the proposed outing age appropriate, e.g. is the film, or the theatre show suitable?
- Can the venue cater for any children who have special needs?
- What food will be provided and will this be appropriate for children who have allergies?
- Are there enough leaders?
- Is there a good gender mix of leaders (if appropriate)?
- Does the outing warrant additional insurance?
- Has consent been given by parents/carers?
- Has consideration been given to places to stop for refreshments/toilets?
- Is there an alternative plan if the venue is weather dependent?

Remember to inform a nominated person from the church of your exact location, contact mobile phone number and home contact numbers in case of emergency for all children, young people and leaders.

7.9 CHURCH SLEEPOVERS

Youth groups are increasingly using church halls as overnight accommodation.

Before such a venture is considered, organisers should think through security and safety issues.

The following checklist should be used to ensure the accommodation is suitable:

- Parental consent must be sought.
- Only ground floor accommodation is considered suitable for sleeping.
- There should be appropriate male/female segregation and supervision.
- Sleeping accommodation for leaders/helpers and young people, where possible, should be separate, but the young people's accommodation ought to be easily accessible.
- Leaders/helpers must always avoid staying on their own with a young person. There must always be other leaders/helpers or young people present.
- There should be at least one nominated first aider and a complete first aid box.
- The accommodation should be suitable for any child attending who has special needs.
- There should be adequate mobile phone reception or a landline.
- There should be at least two separate routes leading from the sleeping accommodation and out of the building.
- Fire extinguishers should be positioned in appropriate and accessible locations.
- Doors should be checked for ease of opening in an emergency.
- Exits should be clearly marked and unblocked.
- Clear instructions in the event of an evacuation should be given to both young people and leaders/helpers.
- Portable heating appliances should not impede exits and should be turned off during sleeping hours.
- Leaders/helpers should have torches in case of power failure.
- There should be a no smoking, no alcohol, drug free rule applied to the premises.
- A record of sleeping arrangements should be kept detailing the names of children and leaders who stayed over and where they slept.

Once these issues have been considered organisers should only proceed if they are confident that the facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the group.

7.10 PHOTOGRAPHS

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches must be very careful if they use photographs, videos and webcams of clearly identifiable people.

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Permission (verbal or written) should be obtained of all the people (children and adults) who will appear in a photograph, video or webcam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded. See section 7.13
- It should be made clear why that person's image is being used, what use you will make of it, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- Children and young people should not be identified by name or other personal details. These details include email, phone or postal addresses.

- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- Carefully consider location and pose.
- Do not insist that a child participates.
- **Obtain written consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a website.**

Please note that the sample consent form contains a parental consent for use of images of children for general church purposes.

Young people taking photographs of each other

Leaders should encourage young people to be sensible when taking photos or videoing each other, especially if they are to be posted on the internet. Young people should be encouraged to let their friends know if their intention is to post photographs online, giving them the opportunity to object. Young people may need to be reminded that once photographs are on the internet they have no control over where they end up. Organisation leaders may want to include this issue in their code of conduct.

7.11 WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

The church should be a place where all children and their families are welcome.

Be informed!

Talk with the parents or carers to find out what a child's specific needs are and how they are normally met at home or at school. Assume nothing and don't be afraid to ask! Some children with special needs may require one-to-one help in a group or organisation; perhaps an extra leader will be needed for this responsibility.

Personal care

Children and young people who have a disability can be at greater risk of abuse. They will often require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility etc., or may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age appropriate way.

If a child needs help with toileting or more intimate care it is important to make sure their dignity is preserved. It is good practice that the same leader as far as possible and the same gender as the child is involved in helping them.

A personal care plan can be drawn up by parents/carers to advise leaders on how to best meet the needs of the child. Leaders can complete a personal care log to record how the needs of the child were met each time they attend the organisation.

Be inclusive!

As far as possible, try to make sure that all children can participate in the activities that you have organised. Try not to rely on one particular method of teaching. For example, a word search is not a suitable activity for a child who is dyslexic; other children may struggle with running or ball games due to poor mobility skills. Biblical teaching can be used to show that we are all different and yet we are all special to God.

7.12 TECHNOLOGY

In an increasingly complex world the opportunities for child abuse are growing. Those who care for children need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of the internet, text messaging, video and other media. While good use of such media can be beneficial we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and the consequent harm to young people that can result.

Using computers

If there is a computer being used within the programme of your organisation, it is important that guidelines are drawn up in order to ensure that it is used for its correct purpose and that it is looked after properly. The leaders could agree on a contract which would be given to and possibly signed by all children, parents and leaders.

Leaders need to be agreed upon the primary purpose of using computers as part of their programme. For example, is it primarily used for the purposes of research in a homework club or recreational games as part of the youth club? Leaders need to agree which websites are suitable and which websites are unsuitable for the age group of children that they are working with. Computers need to be secure with up to date virus checkers and appropriate parental controls. When young people are using computers on church premises they should be well supervised.

Children and the Internet

Whilst the development of the internet has revolutionised communication systems throughout the world and appropriately used is an excellent resource, care in its application needs to be exercised so that the safety of a child is not compromised. Children need to be aware of online safety in the same way they are taught road safety.

As well as the prevalence of online grooming, children can often be the victims of cyber bullying. Bullying through the use of social media can be more intense and more difficult to escape than bullying children experience within the playground or school.

Church and ministry websites

When designing or developing a church or youth website or an internet page please remember the following:

Parental permission must be obtained before using any pictures of a child/group of children on a website.

- Avoid using photographs of individual children which can be easily copied on to other websites, it is preferable to use a group photograph.
- Names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses should not be given.
- Leaders should be aware that by advertising dates and times of events online, there is the possibility that other people, who would not have otherwise heard of an event, may target the event and turn up without warning.
- It should be made very clear to young people that the website should not be used to make arrangements to meet up with each other casually, e.g. going out for coffee. They need to be reminded that they don't know who is reading their conversation.
- A 'closed' page or password protected site can help to limit who can view the site.

DVD and live stream ministry

Many churches now film services for home ministry purposes or broadcast via internet live stream. Children can be recorded in a group setting, for example, a wide view taken at the children's talk but they should not be identified. The congregation should be fully aware and if possible given prior notice that the service is being recorded or broadcast live.

7.13 COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Whilst it is important to recognise that, in a 21st century world, online communication is necessary to connect with young people, we must also be aware of the risks it carries. As a result, these guidelines seek to keep young people and leaders safe from harm.

Parental Consent

A parental consent form should be completed when a child enrolls in an organisation. Regarding communication with young people, specific consent should be granted with regards to:

- Young people's photograph being taken (stating the purposes for which it was taken, i.e. posting on church website, social media etc.)
- Receiving and storing a young person's contact details (email address / phone number etc.)
- Contacting young people via online messaging / text / phone calls (only for purposes of 'communication not conversation,' as outlined below).

General Principles for All Communication

- Communication with young people via phone or online should only take place on the basis of parental consent being granted
- Communication with young people will take place within 'reasonable hours' (e.g. not past 10pm)
- Upon engaging in a conversation with young people, whether face-to-face or online, youth leaders should not promise confidentiality.
- Online communication with young people should be carried out, where possible, on church/youth group devices or accounts (e.g. youth group Facebook page, email, phone). If this is not possible, parental consent forms should be specific about who exactly is being permitted to contact a young person (e.g. small group leader, mentor, youth pastor etc.).
- In all online interactions, youth leaders should seek 'communication and not conversation.' Contact can be made about dates, times and information relating to the organisation. However, extended dialogue should be carried out in a public forum.

Emails

- Staff and volunteers may hold email addresses for young people in their care subject to parental consent principles listed above.
- Emails should be short and concise
- Emails should be kept on file in accordance with Keady Baptist Church's data protection policy
- If any young person raises any child protection concerns via email, the church's designated person should be informed.

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- When a volunteer steps down as a youth leader, they should remove any young person's email addresses from their record.
- Where possible, staff members should use church email addresses as opposed to personal accounts

Phone Calls / Text Messaging

- Staff and volunteers may hold phone numbers for young people in their care subject to parental consent principles listed above.
- Text communication should be short and concise
- Staff and volunteers should use an appropriate tone; friendly, but not over-familiar or personal. While communications should be warm and friendly, they should not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Staff and volunteers can have phone calls with young people, but these should be short.
- If any young person raises any child protection concerns via email, the church's designated person should be informed.
- When a volunteer steps down as a youth leader, they should remove any young person's email addresses from their record

WhatsApp, Signal or similar

- Staff and volunteers may hold phone numbers for young people in their care subject to parental consent principles listed above.
- WhatsApp communication should be short and concise
- Staff and volunteers should use an appropriate tone; friendly, but not over-familiar or personal. While communications should be warm and friendly, they should not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- If any young person raises any child protection concerns via email, the church's designated person should be informed.
- Staff and volunteers should only engage with young people on WhatsApp who are 16+ in accordance with WhatsApp's own terms of service. The terms of service of other messaging platforms should also be consulted for age of use.
- WhatsApp or chat groups should be made in consultation with the church's data protection policy

Facebook

- Volunteers and staff cannot be friends on Facebook with an under 18 where their contact has been established through their role as a staff member or volunteer
- When a young person turns 18 and has left the youth group, it is the volunteer or staff member's choice whether or not they wish to befriend them on Facebook.
- Any church Facebook pages should possess at least 2 administrators and be monitored regularly.
- Young people should only be encouraged to interact with the church Facebook page if they are 13 years or over
- Once permission is given, photos of events and young people can be posted on the page. Young people can post photos but the settings should be such that all posts must be approved by an administrator before they appear on the page

- Privacy settings on photographs should be set to ensure that only members of the group see them.

Instagram, Tiktok or similar

- Volunteers and staff cannot follow an under 18 on Instagram or TikTok where their contact has been established through their role as a staff member or volunteer
- When a young person turns 18 and has left the youth group, it is the volunteer or staff member's choice whether or not they wish to follow them on Instagram
- Staff members and volunteers should make their profiles private so young people cannot follow them
- Young people should only be encouraged to interact with the church Instagram or TikTok page if they are 13 years or over
- Any church Instagram or TikTok pages should possess at least 2 administrators and be monitored regularly.
- Once permission is given, photos of events and young people can be posted on the page

Snapchat

- Volunteers and staff should not connect with young people on Snapchat

Video Calls (e.g. Skype / Zoom / FaceTime etc.)

Video calls are becoming increasingly normative in online communication. There are certain principles that leaders ought to be aware of when communicating with young people or vulnerable adults.

- **Avoid one to one calls** – Chatting with a young person one to one in a video call is the equivalent of meeting a young person in a room on your own with no one around. Where a one to one video call is required, it is better practice to have an additional leader in the room. In addition, ask if a parent can be in the home of the young person at the same time.
- **Consent** – parental consent to meet with young people online is good practice and provides accountability.
- **Code of Conduct** – where a church possesses a Code of Conduct groups who meet, translate those into what they would look like when participating in online groups or interactions. For example, respectful modes of behaviour and speech, appropriate physical presentation such as clothing, venue, environment.
- **Records** – ensure a record of all video calls held and the content covered in that call. Do not record the video calls themselves.
- **Have at least two leaders present** - Regardless of how few young people take part in a video call, at least two leaders should be present at all times. The call administrator should ensure that young people are not able to join the call (e.g. have young people remain in the waiting room) until at least one other leader is virtually present.
- **Call administrator** – ensure the call organiser has the ability to mute/block participants in the event they are displaying/sharing anything unsuitable or illegal.
- **Age-appropriate apps** – Respect the minimum age requirements for video chat enabled platforms and consider a minimum age limit for any one to one chat (e.g. Skype and google hangout generally 13 years old)

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- **Use Church profiles and devices where possible** – If the church possesses an account for the relevant software (e.g. Zoom), leaders should utilise them as opposed to personal accounts
- **Regular review** - ensure you periodically review these arrangements to identify any poor practice or any challenges to positive and safe engagement.

Online Conduct

Leaders are recommended to evaluate photos of themselves that are posted on these sites and consider deleting or 'untagging' any photos in which they are depicted in what could possibly be construed as compromising situations, thus preventing the photograph or other material being used inappropriately.

Comments made on the internet should be considered the same as if they were made in a public place. If a child discloses something to a leader via a social networking site, a chat room or any other public domain publishing method, then the disclosure must be dealt with by following the normal reporting process (see Section 3). If a leader is concerned about something that a young person communicates to him or her via the internet, he or she should encourage the child to talk to a suitable adult about it or arrange to meet with the child (within the usual child protection parameters). While communication via the internet can be highly effective, all such communication with children and young people should, as far as possible, be within an open forum, in order to protect both young people and leaders.

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

8.1 GENERAL SAFETY

Safety is of prime importance during any activity and Keady Baptist Church has adopted a policy on health and safety (Appendix 4). The office-bearers (trustees) will appoint a Premises Safety Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy. Additionally, the Premises Safety Coordinator will carry out inspections and perform health and safety surveillance as required.

However, safety is not only the responsibility of the coordinator but of the staff, all office-bearers and volunteers. Before every use of the premises, a check should be undertaken by the leader in charge to highlight any obvious hazards or potential risks. Do your best to have anything removed that should not be there and may cause a significant risk to the members of the group. Adequate supervision should be provided at all times and extra care should be taken when using sports equipment. Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used and must be screened off.

Organisation leaders are asked to help maintain a healthy and safe work and worship environment by reporting hazards, accidents and dangerous occurrences to the Premises Safety Coordinator. Staff and volunteers are asked to look after the safety equipment and to follow safety instructions and signs.

Office-bearers (trustees) or the leader in charge should have:

- Access to a phone in case of emergency (make sure there is adequate mobile phone reception if there is no landline on church premises)
- Accident report forms readily available
- Contact details for all children and young people
- Knowledge of how many people are present at each event (in case of an evacuation).

8.2 RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment should be completed as is deemed necessary or required (e.g. for insurance purposes or high risk activities). It is the role of the office-bearers (trustees) in conjunction with the premises safety coordinator and leaders of each organisation to complete a risk assessment where deemed necessary.

Each organisation leader will be required to demonstrate in the event of an insurance claim that 'reasonable care' was taken to protect the children and adults attending their organisations.

8.3 INSURANCE

The three main areas of insurance protection relate to; offsetting legal expenses in the event of a claim, public liability cover relating to claims for inadequate supervision, negligence, etc., and management indemnity to cover errors, omissions, negligent advice or a wrongful act. It is advisable to discuss these areas at each renewal with the insurance broker for more detailed and up to date information on insurances.

8.4 HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES

Some activities such as trampolining and bouncy castles are described as 'high risk' by insurance companies. These activities require a little extra thought and sometimes extra supervision perhaps by trained people. Specific parental consent may need to be obtained depending on what the activity is. Additional insurance is often needed to cover these higher risk activities; on occasion cover may not be available. Please always plan ahead and check with your insurance broker in advance of the event.

8.5 FIRE

Under current fire safety legislation employers and premises owners are required to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment. The assessment must establish and record the fire hazards and risks within your premises and how these can affect employees or other people, enabling you to make the necessary arrangements and ensure that adequate controls are implemented to effectively combat the risk of fire.

The office-bearers (trustees) must:

- carry out a fire risk assessment identifying any possible dangers and risks
- consider who may be especially at risk
- get rid of or reduce the risk from fire as far as is reasonable possible
- provide general fire precautions to deal with any possible risk left
- take measures to make sure there is protection if flammable materials are used or stored
- create a plan to deal with any emergency
- review findings where necessary

The above legislative duty also requires employers and premises owners to ensure a fire evacuation plan is written and implemented, detailing the action employees and others should take in the event of fire and areas covered within the fire plan should include:

- Fire escape routes.
- Means of raising the alarm.
- Evacuation procedures.
- Assembly and roll call arrangements.
- Firefighting equipment use and limitations.
- Fire wardens (if applicable) and their role.
- Signage and emergency lighting.

Fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all members know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire.

A church may wish to engage the services of a fire safety specialist to perform the risk assessment and provide advice on fire safety.

8.6 FIRST AID

The Church should have at least one person appointed as responsible for first aid for each of the events that take place within the church. It is advisable to have an appropriately trained first aider present when numbers reach 50 for "lower risk activities" and 20 for "medium risk activities". All leaders should be aware who the first aiders are and alert them in the event of an injury or accident. Once first aid has been administered, an accident form

should be completed, and leaders should make every effort to communicate with parents/carers what has happened and any treatment that has been given.

Leaders should be aware of any medical conditions or allergies that children have and any medication they are currently taking. This information should be provided on parental consent forms. Medication should never be given without written consent from parents or doctors; it should be clearly marked and be kept out of reach of children.

If a child needs taken to the hospital, leaders should make every effort to contact parents/carers as soon as possible. A first aid kit should be available on church premises and at planned events away from the church. It is important that the first aid kit is stocked with all the appropriate in-date items and equipment and that a person has responsibility for replacing items especially if it is used by various organisations.

8.7 ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORTING

Organisations are required to report specific health and safety incidents to the relevant Enforcing Authority (local district council).

All accidents, injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences involving employees, volunteers or contractors and visitors on church premises or arising as a result of any of its activities, should be reported immediately to the premises safety coordinator. The circumstances of the accident / incident should be assessed to ensure that the potential risk of further injury has been removed.

If the accident / incident is deemed reportable (death, injury requiring hospitalisation, injury to employee requiring 3 days absence from work), you should ensure that the relevant Enforcing Authority is contacted.

If immediate reporting is not necessary, you may still have to report the incident. This will depend on whether the injured party, if your employee, has had more than three days off work as a result of the accident / incident or has been prevented from carrying out normal work duties. These three days include the weekend but do not include the day of the incident. Organisations have ten days from the day of the accident in which to report the accident to the Authorities.

Accidents should be recorded on the Incident reporting form (Appendix 10) and filed in the Completed Accident Reports Folder to comply with the data protection legislation.

In the event of a civil claim arising (compensation claim) you may be asked by the claimant's legal representation for a copy of the completed report form. It is important in the event of anyone sustaining an injury that all the relevant documentation is securely filed. This documentation must be kept for a minimum of three years from the date of the accident. Any letter of claim must be copied at once to your insurance broker. Do not enter into any correspondence with the claimant or their solicitor.

8.8 CLEANING

To maintain safe and healthy standards all facilities require regular cleaning to be undertaken. This will ensure that situations do not arise that may threaten the health and safety of those who may come into contact with unhygienic and dirty conditions.

Under current health and safety legislation organisations should:

- Ensure that all work premises are maintained and kept clean.
- Ensure all surfaces, fixtures and fittings are capable of being kept clean.
- Provide training for employees / volunteers who use work equipment and use or handle hazardous substances.
- Assess the substances used during cleaning and disinfection of the premises and adopt appropriate control measures and safe working methods.
- Develop safe systems of work.

Cleaning activities can result in injury or ill-health due to the following:

- Contact with hazardous substances (e.g. bleach and cleaning products, pesticides.)
- Contact with high temperature liquids or steam used during cleaning.
- Falls from height due to inappropriate access systems.
- Injury due to the manual handling of cleaning equipment.
- Falls on wet or slippery surfaces which are being or have just been cleaned.
- Trips as a result of trailing electrical cables or incorrect storage of cleaning equipment or materials.

Training, information and instruction should cover the hygiene standard required, the correct usage and maintenance of materials and equipment, the cleaning method and solution to be used and any safety precautions required (e.g. warning signs, the use of protective equipment). Records of cleaning activities should be maintained.

8.9 ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Employers and owners of premises are required under current electricity at work legislation to ensure that the integrity of the supply and equipment is adequately installed and maintained to the recognised standard.

An electrical installation, inclusive of all electrical wiring, fittings and switches should be inspected upon completion of initial installation and subsequently over recommended periods. Most organisations should have their systems inspected on a five-yearly basis.

All wiring and electrical component work should be carried out by a competent person. The competent person, eligible to carry out inspections on a periodic basis, should be suitably qualified and have the necessary experience. If an electrical contractor's services are required to undertake necessary inspections, the organisation should be registered with a trade association.

All portable electrical equipment should be subject to at least a visual inspection before being used. All organisation-owned portable apparatus, including extension leads, should be given an identification number and logged. A risk assessment will identify how often each item should be monitored and routinely inspected. The frequency of the monitoring will depend on the type and use of the apparatus. Guidelines suggest intervals range from six

monthly to five yearly but are not legal requirements. Your own experience of operating the maintenance system, together with information on faults found, should be used to review the frequency of inspection.

As soon as staff and volunteers become aware of any defect, they should stop using the equipment and isolate it from the power source, if it is safe to do so and report the issue immediately to the premises safety coordinator.

8.10 WORKING AT HEIGHT

Falls from height remain the single biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injury. Any fall from a height may cause serious injury or a fatality in a worst-case situation.

If work at height can be avoided, carry out the work from the ground. Where work at height cannot be avoided, steps should be taken to prevent falls either by working from a safe place of work (scaffold, mobile access work platform etc.) or, if this is not available, selecting the most suitable equipment for work at height. Consideration should be given to the duration of the work, the environment (weather, slope of the site etc.). If there is any risk of a fall, steps should be taken to minimise the effect, e.g. by the use of fall arrest equipment. A full risk assessment regarding work at height should be undertaken. Following the assessment, you should select the most appropriate method for the work to take place. The overriding principle is to prevent, as far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. You should ensure that:

- All work at height is properly planned and organised.
- All work at height takes account of weather conditions that could endanger health and safety.
- Those involved in work at height are trained and competent.
- The place where work at height is carried out is safe.
- Equipment for work at height is appropriately inspected.
- The risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled.
- The risks from falling objects are properly controlled.

8.11 FOOD HYGIENE

Churches are advised to contact their local Environmental Health Department for advice on food hygiene regulations. Most local authorities are able to offer relevant guidance leaflets and can also highlight appropriate training courses.

Food hygiene law requires the registration of those operations or activities where food is supplied - whether given away free or sold for some form of monetary or other return – which are deemed to be: "...undertakings, the concept of which implies a certain continuity of activities and a certain degree of organisation". It is not always clear whether community and charity food supply, which is often occasional or small-scale in nature, requires registration. Guidance from environmental health will help to determine this.

You do not need a food hygiene certificate to make and sell food for charity events. However, you need to make sure that you handle food safely. It is advisable that churches put in place appropriate measures to ensure all individuals handling food and using kitchens

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do so in a safe manner. However, churches may opt for arranging food hygiene training for individuals responsible for overseeing catering as an additional safeguard.

9. LEGAL MATTERS

9.1 RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The main relevant legislation relating to child protection in Northern Ireland includes:

- The Criminal Law Act 1967
- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Sex Offenders Act 1997
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998
- The Criminal Justice (Children) (NI) Order 1998
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

9.2 RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Within the Republic of Ireland the main legislation governing the care and protection of children is:

- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The Child Care Acts 1991
- The Domestic Violence Acts 1996
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Children First Guidelines 1999
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children's Act 2001
- Children Trafficking and Prostitution/Sex Offender Act 2001
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006
- Criminal Justice Act 2006
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

9.3 DATA PROTECTION

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a European regulation that took effect across Europe from 25 May 2018. As a result it replaces the existing law on data protection in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and gives individuals more rights and protection in how their personal data is used by organisations. GDPR therefore simply builds on what we are already required to do in respect of data protection, but recognises the extraordinary developments over the past 20 years in technology and social media, and the need for greater transparency and accountability from organisations in respect of how personal data is processed.

The law is complex, but there are a number of underlying principles, including that personal data:

- Will be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently.
- Is only used for a specific processing purpose that the data subject has been made aware of and no other, without further consent.

- Collected on a data subject should be "adequate, relevant and limited." i.e. only the minimum amount of data should be kept for specific processing.
- must be "accurate and where necessary kept up to date"
- Should not be stored for longer than is necessary, and that storage is safe and secure.

Churches are required to comply with the obligations of GDPR. There are no significant charity exemptions in the GDPR. The adoption of a GDPR policy will assist the church in ensuring compliance with GDPR.

Further Information

NI - Information Commissioner Office, www.ico.org.uk

ROI - Data Protection Commissioner, www.dataprotection.ie

9.3 DATA PROTECTION

Under the Data Protection Act (1998) (**FOR ROI** Data protection (Amendment) Act 2003) registered organisations should be aware that they must be careful when handling personal data belonging to children and leaders e.g. names, phone numbers, addresses and medical information. Organisations must only hold data which is adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is held. They must ensure that personal data is accurate and where necessary, kept up to date. Organisations must do what they can to prevent unauthorised or accidental access to personal data and must hold data for no longer than necessary. Therefore the following principles should be followed for all organisations in answer to the questions below:

Where should forms be kept?

- All consent forms, accident forms, or any information on children or leaders should be kept in a confidential but accessible location. A locked filing cabinet on church premises is a good example.
- All consent forms, accident forms, or any information on children or leaders should not be kept in a person's own home for long periods of time.
- Leaders must ensure that they have easy access to relevant data such as children's contact details and medical information when the organisation is meeting.
- Incident/accident forms should also be held securely on church premises.

Who should have access to information on children and leaders?

- Information about children and leaders should be on a need-to-know basis.
- The exception to this is medical information where it is important that all leaders in a supervisory role are aware of conditions that children have.
- Information about leaders and children should not be given to any external party but only used for the purpose for which it was given.

What about data kept on computers?

- The same rules apply for data kept on computers; data is confidential and should be kept on church premises. In order to keep the data protected, it should be held on a dedicated password protected file.

How long should records on children and leaders be kept?

- Consent forms (basic information such as name, date of birth and address) should be kept for up to six years after the child has left the organisation. Thereafter, it should either be destroyed (i.e. shredded or burnt) or given back to the child or parent.
- The same applies to information on leaders – i.e. it is retained for up to six years after they have left their position.
- Incident/accident forms and the register of all leaders should be kept indefinitely.