

Thurles Baptist Child Protection Policy

Preface

Introduction: Five key Principles of Child Care

Does our Church need Guidelines?

Section 1 **Child Abuse and its Prevention**

1.1 Aim

1.2 Caring for Children

1.3 What is Child Abuse?

- Why do Adults Abuse Children?
- Domestic Abuse and Children
- Substance Abuse
- Media and Children

1.4 Key Principles to Help keep Children Safe

1.5 What to do if you are Concerned About a Child:

- Dealing with Accidents
- Dealing with General Complaints
- Dealing with Suspected Abuse: The Referral Procedure
- Contacts

1.6 Confidentiality

- The Role of the Church Authorities

1.7 The Designated Person

- General Guidance on Dealing with Concerns

Section 2 **Good Standards of Practice**

2.1 Aim

2.2 Good Team Work and Recommended Ratios

- Responsibilities of the Organisation Leader
- Children with Special Needs

2.3 Code of Conduct for Young People

2.4 Discipline

- The question of appropriate physical contact
- 2.5 Recruitment and Selection of Leaders/Helpers
 - Procedure for making Appointments of Leaders
 - Obtaining Police Record checks
 - Review of Child Protection Policy by the Minister
- 2.6 General Safety
- 2.7 Transport
- 2.8 Parental Consent Forms
- 2.9 Residential Programmes
- 2.10 Training and Resources
- 2.11 Legal / Insurance Matters
 - Relevant Legislation (Republic of Ireland)
 - Insurance
 - Data Protection

Section 3

Sample Forms

TBC 10	Sample Congregational Policy
TBC 2 10	Application Form for Leaders/Helpers in Youth and Children's Work
TBC 3 10	Reference Request Form
TBC 4 10	Multi-Purpose Parental Consent Form
TBC 5 10	Consent Form for Special Outings/Activities
TBC 6 10	Accident/Incident Form
TBC 7 10	Report of Concern about a Child Form
TBC 8 10	Acknowledgement by a Designated Person of a Report of concern about a Child
TBC 9 10	Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns
TBC 10 10	Checklist for Developing Safe Practices in a Group or Organisation
TBC 11 10	Register of Youth Leaders/Helpers

TBC 12 10

Residential/Day Outing Contact Numbers

Section 3

Information and Factsheets

TBC/FSI 10

Leaders Factsheet

TBC/FS2 10

Resources/Select Bibliography

TBC/FS3 10

Church Insurance Factsheet

Introduction

Children and young people attend organisations for enjoyment, social contact, and personal and spiritual developments.

Adults selected and appointed to work with children and young people should enjoy providing this service, secure in the knowledge of clear guidelines. They should also have access to good support and advice.

This manual provides guidance to all youth leaders, Sunday School teachers and all who work with children, to help ensure that children and young people enjoy their activities with optimum physical safety and are free from the threat of personal abuse. It will also alert leaders to signs of distress and symptoms which may indicate that a child has been mistreated.

The protection and well-being of children is not only a Biblical imperative, it is a national and international requirement. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child upholds the best interests of children. It 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”.

The Five Key Principles of Child care

The Child Care Act 1991 emphasise the following key principles:

Paramountcy – 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.

Treating children and young people with dignity and respect and upholding their best interests is also in the best interest of the organisation or club. It is therefore important for parents to have information about the organisation their child attends, its aims and methods of operation, its policies and procedures, how to share comments, concerns and, if necessary, to make complaints.

Clarification of Terms

For the purposes of these Guidelines, a leader/helper is anyone who is engaged in work or voluntary activity which involves regular contact with children or young persons.

Where either children or young people are mentioned in the Guidelines, both are intended. **A child/young person is a person under 18 years of age, unless married.**

Child protection Policy

The Child Protection Policy should relate to all children and youth organisations within the Church. A sample policy is found in Section 3.

1.1 Aim

This section aims to make you aware of what child abuse is and what to do if you are concerned about a child.

It includes the following topics:

- Caring for Children: Who is responsible? What every child needs?
- What is Child Abuse?
- Why do adults abuse Children
- Domestic Violence and Children
- Media and Children
- Key Principles to Help Keep Children Safe
- What to do if you are concerned about a child
- Suspected Abuse: The Referral Procedure
- Confidentiality: Who needs to know what?
- The Role of the Designated Person

1.1.1 Caring for Children

Who is Responsible?

While the primary responsibility for the care of children rests with the parents or guardians, the community as a whole has a responsibility for the well-being of children and for protecting them. This means that all church members should remain alert to circumstances in which children may be harmed. When they have knowledge or a suspicion that a child is being mistreated, they should refer their concern to the Designated Person within their church, who will consider with the Minister what should be done. This may involve seeking advice from the Health Boards, the Gardaí, or the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, or referring the matter to them for investigation/assessment.

What every Child Needs

- Respect** Children's ideas of what is important may be very different from yours. Try to remember this when a child wants to tell you something urgently, even if you are busy.
- Physical Care:** This includes warmth, adequate clothing, enough to eat and safety from hazards.
- Praise:** This will help children to grow up to be secure, confident adults.
- Attention:** Listen to children, not just to their words but to anything they might be trying to tell you by their behaviour.
- Trust:** Make sure that the children know that you trust them and that you will always take what they say seriously and seek to help them.
- Love:** This is the most vital need of all.

1.1.2 What is Child Abuse?

There are four main kinds of child abuse. The following list includes some of the signs and symptoms:

Physical Abuse occurs when an adult or other young person hurts, kicks, beats or punches a child. Symptoms may include:

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns;
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries;
- Self-destructive tendencies;
- Fear of physical contact, a shrinking back if touched.

Neglect occurs when an adult leaves a child alone, does not give them enough to eat or does not take them to the doctor when they are ill. Symptoms may include:

- Constant hunger;
- Inadequate clothing;
- Constant tiredness;
- Poor personal hygiene;
- Wilful neglect.

Emotional Abuse may occur when the adult with responsibility for caring for the child says nasty things to them and does not have appropriate physical contact with them. Symptoms may include:

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development;
- Continual belittling of oneself;
- Over-reaction to mistakes;
- Extreme fear of any new situation;
- Inappropriate response to pain;
- Neurotic behaviour.

Sexual Abuse occurs when an adult or other young person touches a child's private parts, in a way which makes the child feel worried or unhappy. Some adults or other young people, who sexually abuse children, also ask the child to touch parts of their body or try to show them pornographic pictures or videos. Symptoms may include:

- Sexual knowledge, including drawing sexually explicit pictures, or use of language inappropriate for the child's age;
- Being over 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.

Why Do Adults Abuse Children?

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

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

It is not only adults who abuse children, Teenage abuse is a growing concern, this is when older children abuse younger children or their peers. It is very important that this is stopped as soon as it is discovered for the sake of both the victim and the abuser, for whom it could become a dangerous habit. The sooner you take action, the more likely it is that the abuse will stop and that the child will recover from his or her experiences.

Domestic Abuse and Children

Violence against women and men in the home is a serious crime, which causes enormous health and social problems and emotional and psychological damage, not only to the victims, but also to the children. Children are often witnesses and are necessarily affected by the anxiety and personal threat to themselves. Domestic violence is the most common form of interpersonal crime and also the least reported.

Leaders should be aware that children may not only overhear or observe violence in the home, but may become direct victims, either accidentally or deliberately.

The social pressures to remain within a violent home and the disincentives which parents perceive in relation to living in refuges or temporary accommodation as single parents should not be underestimated. It is important for leaders of church organisations to be

aware that agencies such as Gardaí and Health Boards have developed policies to help in situations of domestic violence and that advice, support and help are available from the Women's Aid Federation. Men experiencing domestic violence may also have to seek refuge, accommodation may be available in the Simon Community.

The impact of domestic violence on children can lead to physical, psychological and behavioural disorders and may subsequently affect them when they become parents.

Substance Abuse

Young people attending church organisations are also at risk of being exposed to substance abuse. This can range from tobacco to experimenting with solvents and alcohol. It is important that leaders are aware of the danger signs and include awareness training in their programme planning for high risk groups.

Self Injury

Self injury or self harm is on the increase. Cutting can begin at a very young age and can range from scratching to deep cuts being self inflicted, often requiring medical treatment. Disclosure of any self injury should never be ignored, it is a clear sign that something serious is wrong 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.

Media and Children

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 video, computer, internet, text messaging and other media. While good use of such media can be beneficial we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to young people. So often in today's society the "Soaps" and celebrities are setting the agenda.

The Internet

Whilst the development of the internet has revolutionised communication systems throughout the world and if used in the right way 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 on-line safety in the same way they are taught road safety.

Do's and Don'ts

- When designing a website, make clear what is available for copying or downloading. Do not refer to other inappropriate sites.
- Parental permission must be obtained before using any picture of a child/group of children on the web site.
- Avoid using photos of individual children. In preference use a group photograph. However, do not use it if a child can be identified by their name or the location they are in. Names and addresses should not be given.
- Personal email or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers must not be divulged.
- Youth workers are increasingly communicating with children/young people using email and text messaging. It is advisable that there is a protocol for this type of 'one-to-one' communication, avoiding what is not appropriate.
- If web access is being provided for children or young people e.g. youth project providing a cyber café, then consider using filtering software (e.g. Netnanny, Cyberpatrol or Surfwatch) to prevent access to inappropriate web sites. Your internet Service Provider may also have filtering software.
- If you are providing web access e.g. cyber café ensure that parental permission has been obtained.

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. There are several issues to be aware of:

- 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.
- It should be made clear why that person's image is being used, what you will be using it for, 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 or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- Obtain a written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a website.

- Carefully consider the location and pose.
- Do not insist that the child participates.

Please note the sample consent form (CBC 4 10) now contains a parental consent for use of images of children for general church purposes.

Mobile Telephones

With the increased use of mobile telephones leaders and young people need to be aware of appropriate and inappropriate use of telephones whilst attending organisations.

Leaders should also be aware of issues surrounding mobile phones that can take photographs, the use of camcorders etc., and they may wish to use the guidelines in connection with the internet and photographs when formulating policy.

Computers

Computers are now common in churches and are used extensively to communicate with young people and leaders. It is important that guidelines are drawn up and a policy agreed.

- Place restrictions on their use.
- Promote their proper use.
- Supervise and monitor the use of printers.
- Cautious use of email addresses.
- Supervise the use of the internet.
- Be cautious at all times.

1.2 Key Principles to Help Keep Children Safe

There is a moral obligation on anyone accepting responsibility for children and young people to provide adequate care and to pass on information concerning suspected or actual abuse of a child. Any failure to do so may leave them legally liable.

In order to support and help children and their families, the organisation and its leaders/helpers need policies and procedures which protect both children and the organisation. In childcare law and practice the “welfare of the child is paramount”. Translating this legal principle into action means that each congregation and its organisations should ensure that they have:

1. **A Child protection Policy:** This may help to minimise risks for children, leaders and the church. It can act as a deterrent to potential abusers and will promote good standards of practice within your organisation. A child Protection Policy will:
 - Include clear statements about why and how the Church has a role and responsibility to protect children.
 - State clearly the standards that are expected.
 - Apply to everyone within the Congregation – Clergy, Committees, Leaders/Helpers, Young People and Parents.

Everyone involved in youth work in the Church should have a copy of the Policy. It should also be displayed in a prominent position in the church premises e.g. notice board.

A sample policy can be found in Section 3. This can be adapted to meet specific requirements. The Child Protection Policy should be reviewed at least every 3 years.

2. A Designated Person or Persons (preferably not the Minister). Where possible there should be a male and female appointed by the Church who will receive child protection training and who will provide consultation and advice on contacting child protection agencies when necessary. (See Section 1.7 for more information on the position of the Designated Person and for information on dealing with concerns).

3. A leader in charge of each organisation who is fully conversant with the procedure to be used when concern is expressed about the welfare of a child. (See Section 1.5).

4. A good team procedure (see Section 2.2) and a **code of conduct** (see Section 2.3) for both leaders/helpers and members, which provides a means of preventing inappropriate discipline, avoids corporal punishment, counteracts bullying or scapegoating and lessens potential for abuse by adults or young people.

5. A Recruitment Policy which includes:

- Completion of an Application Form (TBC 2 10);

- Informal interview with organisational leader and/or the Minister/Elder;
- Two references;
- Appraisal and confirmation of the appointment by the Minister/Elder at the end of six months;

6. An annual review of work with children and young people. This provides an opportunity to recognise and affirm what has been achieved and to identify any areas that require attention. Both children/young people should be involved in this process. Specific times should be set aside for this e.g. end of June for uniformed organisations or September for summer schemes, camps etc;

7. Access to training programmes which help leaders/helpers develop best practices and be able to respond confidently to any expressions of concern about children's welfare.

8. A regular health and safety inspection of the church premises and procedures (see (CBC 10 10) in Section 3)

1.5 What to Do If You Are Concerned About A Child

Dealing With Accidents

Many incidents that are brought to the leaders attention involve accidents or more minor problems. 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.

It is good practice for a youth organisation to have an Accident/Incident Report Book/Forms to record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses. This book/form should be used for the recording of accidents, injuries and any action taken. Each entry should be signed by the leader in charge. It is good practice to inform the parents/guardian in person or by telephone of the accident and any action as soon as possible.

See Section 3 for a sample Accident/Incident report form (CBC 6 10). The accident report should be give a reference number. This in turn would be entered in an index book. These would be available for examination and inspection.

Dealing with General 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 Minister. 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 decision and the action, if any, that will be taken.

Suspected Abuse: The Referral Procedure

In the event that the incident involves alleged or suspected child abuse it is not appropriate to include an entry in the Accident/Incident Book. In this event the procedure outlined below should be followed:

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

If you are concerned that a child or young person may be abused, or is at risk of abuse, there is one thing you must not do, that is NOTHING.

It is important that you take what the child says seriously and follow it up as soon as possible. The primary responsibility is to report any concern and ensure that the concern is taken seriously.

DO'S

DON'TS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not panic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and hear • Give time to the child to say what they want • Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily • Do not promise to keep secrets • Do not enquire into details of the abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down what was said to you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under no circumstances should you attempt to deal with the problem alone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the leader in charge of the organisation or the minister 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a note of your report, giving the date, time, name of the individual who you have told and the course of action agreed. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation leader will report to the Designated Person 	

Procedure

1. The person who has the concern should tell the leader in charge;
2. The person who has the concern should complete the Report of Concern Form, which the Designated Person or the Leader will give you (See Section 3) Try to have available:

- The name and address of any child you are concerned about;
 - The nature of any injury or complaint;
 - The need for medical attention (if any);
 - Your reason for suspicion of abuse;
 - What you have done already;
 - Any other information you may have, such as the name of the child's GP, school etc.
3. The organisation leader gives the completed Report of Concern Form to the Designated Person or the Minister;

Child Protection Guidelines

Name of Designated Person/s

(1) _____ Tel: _____
(2) _____ Tel: _____

4. The Minister and Designated Person will consider all of the available information and decide what action to take (see Section 1.7 under general guidance on dealing with concerns).

If you have concerns about what to do it is strongly recommended that you test out these concerns, in confidence, with either the Gardaí or a child protection agency.

Remember that the task of deciding whether or not abuse has occurred rests with the professional agencies.

If an allegation concerns a minister or someone in prominent spiritual leadership please see the companion document Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Complaints of Sexual Abuse.

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 Minister of Designated Person will follow the advice given by the appropriate agency below.

Health Boards offices are normally open 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

There is no out of hours Social Work Service in the Irish Republic.

Office Hours Telephone Number _____

Or

Gardaí Síochána Telephone Number _____

Or

ISPCC Telephone Number _____

6. The Minister keeps a record of the decision whether or not to refer in a secure place, the reasons for it and who will be responsible for any action to be taken;

1.6 Confidentiality

Who Needs to Know What?

Each organisation should have a clear statement about confidentiality and how this is to be respected. Everyone in your organisation, including children, must be aware that there are some situations in which confidentiality needs to be broken, specifically, if you are concerned that a person is in danger, either to themselves or from someone else, or you suspect that an offence may have been committed.

This will mean that where the Minister and Designated Person consider that a child is at risk of abuse, or that a criminal offence may have been committed, the following should be informed:

- A statutory child protection agency.
- The parents of the child (see below).
- The alleged perpetrator (see below).

Informing Parents

Informing the parents of the child about whom you are concerned will need to be dealt with in a sensitive way. The Minister or Designated Person will need to consult a statutory agency about whether to inform parents, what to say and who should inform them. In the Republic of Ireland there is a statutory obligation to inform parents

Alleged Perpetrator

Any individual under suspicion, whether or not he or she is a leader/helper within your organisation, has a right to be notified that a complaint has been made against them. This is another matter which will need careful consideration and should **only** be undertaken after consultation with Social Service and the Garda who will inform the Minister of what action should be taken.

Should a leader/helper or member of your congregation be accused of abuse they also should be shown appropriate Christian love and support. It is also important that the Minister or Designated Person liaises with the Child Protection Agency so that any action taken on behalf of the church does not impede the work of the statutory agencies. (Please see the document entitled Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Complaints of Sexual Abuse for more detailed guidance on handling pastoral care issues).

Statutory Agencies

You will find that statutory child protection procedures are child centred. This means that in all investigations the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. The official policy is that those receiving information should “discuss it only where the welfare of the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate need to know”. The details you give will only be passed on to the relevant people within those agencies, whose task it is to decide what action to take.

Never be put off making contact. You may even decide not to disclose your name. In such circumstances you may still contact any of the agencies for advice about how to deal with the situation.

If a referral is made to a child protection agency, church personnel may be interviewed in order to clarify the information they have reported. In some cases they may be asked to make a formal complaint.

What Happens Next?

Abuse is wrong, against the law and must be stopped. When there is a referral or complaint about abuse, there will be an investigation and a risk assessment by a statutory authority to find out if anything has happened. When there is sufficient cause for concern the Health Board will hold a case conference, where the child and parents have the opportunity to participate. The need for a plan to protect the child is considered.

1.7 The Designated Person

The following paragraphs provide information and guidance on the role of the Designated Person:

Function

The function of the Designated Person is primarily to provide consultation, advice and support to the Minister and organisation leaders and to act as a contact person with the statutory agencies. Designated Persons also have responsibility for holding a supply of blank Report of Concern Forms (TBC 7 10) and storing these forms in a secure place.

Some congregations have widened the role of the Designated Person to include responsibilities such as facilitating training, storage of completed Application and Consent Forms and active involvement in recruitment, supervision and appraisal of leaders.

It is for the Minister to decide whether a Designated Person should carry any responsibilities in addition to those suggested in the Guidelines. Some Designated Persons are able to do so, while others are not. It is important not to expect too much of the Designated Person. It would be entirely appropriate for a suitable elder (other than the Designated Person) to store completed Application Forms. This may ease the workload of the Minister or the Designated Person.

Suitability for Appointment

The people best suited for this task are those whose occupations, or lengthy voluntary experience, have brought them into contact with children. Those who have already participated in foundation training in child protection e.g. Nurse, Teachers, Social Workers, Probation Officers and Doctors may be particularly suitable.

The Minister may want to appoint one male and one female Designated Person.

Difficulties in appointing a Designated Person

The Minister should avoid being the Designated Person.

One Designated Person can represent a joint charge.

When a small congregation is unable to appoint a suitable person to the position of Designated Person, the assistance of a neighbouring church, should be sought.

Reporting

Abuse of children often goes undetected because people who have pieces of information are reluctant to share them. Your organisation would benefit from developing links with other agencies and with parents, so that you are comfortable about taking action when you may have information which causes you concern. Sharing your information can help piece together the jigsaw.

The leader of an organisation should report any suspicion or concern to the Designated Person on Report of Concern Form (TBC 7 10). The Designated Person will send an acknowledgement to the leader who made the initial report (TC8 10). The Designated Person will then consult with the Minister (unless there is insufficient time, or where delay could be prejudicial to the interest of a child or other party).

It is essential that the nature of the concern, the discussion and the decision regarding referral are carefully recorded. Normally the Designated Person will prepare the record, though the Minister may do so. It is important, that if there is difficulty in making contact with the Designated Person or Minister, that any concern about the immediate safety of a child is referred directly to a child protection agency, i.e. Health Board or the Gardaí.

Accountability

Before appointment, the person selected as Designated Person must complete the Youth Leader's Application Form (and in due course must also attend training).

Both the support and oversight of the Designated Person rests with the Minister to whom he/she is accountable. The Minister should ensure that organisation leaders are informed of the name of the Designated Person(s).

Confidentiality

The Designated Person must maintain confidentiality at all times. Only those with a need to know in the interest of protecting a child, or other vulnerable person, should be given any information.

In the first instance, only the person who initiated the concern, the Designated Person and the Minister should receive information. It is for this group to decide how the matter should be handled – in particular whether, and by whom, the child's parents should be contacted, or whether a child protection agency should be contacted. All records relating to child protection matters must be securely stored.

Communication

The Designated Person should be familiar with the contact numbers of the Health Board Community Care Office or the Gardaí.

Health Board Duty Social Worker

Tel: _____ Contact Person _____

Gardaí Síochána

Tel: _____ Contact Person _____

Handling of Reports by Designated Persons

Designated Persons may be concerned about the extent of their legal liability in the referral or non-referral or cases brought to their attention. It would be unlikely that a Designated Person acting in good faith would be legally liable for decisions taken.

Also, rarely will the Designated Person be making any decision on his/her own. It will usually be a joint decision with the Minister and the leader in charge, after having met with the person who reported the concern in the first instance. In the Republic of Ireland leaders/workers are protected by the Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

An important safeguard is to make a full written record of what was reported, by whom and when, together with the reason for any subsequent action e.g. whether or not to involve parents, or a child protection agency.

If a Designated Person is making a report of a concern to the statutory authorities in the Republic of Ireland he/she should complete the authorised form TBC 8, a copy of which can be found in Section 3.

General Guidance on Dealing with Concerns Reported to a Designated Person

This information is provided to assist Designated Persons, Ministers and others, when they meet to consider an expression of concern about a child, or a complaint made by a child. Experience suggests that rarely will serious allegations of child abuse be voiced for the first time to church leaders. It is more likely that matters needing to be discussed will be of a less serious nature and that they will be resolved or clarified through discussion, often involving the child's own family.

It is, however, important that a brief written record is kept of any matter referred to the Designated Person and the Minister. This should include the decision reached and the reason for it.

The Minister and Designated Person should try and ensure that organisation leaders are aware who the Designated Person(s) is/are.

The following steps are for your guidance and may need to be adapted according to particular circumstances:

1. A meeting should be convened by the Designated Person as soon as practicable, unless a child is in imminent danger or at risk of abuse. In all events a meeting should take place within 72 hours of being informed of the concern.
2. Those invited to attend should include only those who need to know about the incident or concern. Confidentiality must be preserved. Those invited will include the Minister and the person who has passed the information to the Designated Person.
3. The purpose of the meeting is to consider the available information and decide what to do.
4. If the child is considered to be in any form of imminent danger, a child protection agency or the Gardaí Station should be contacted immediately by the Designated Person or the Minister. When there is any doubt or uncertainty about what to do, it is thoroughly recommended that you test out concerns, in confidence with either the Gardaí or a Child Protection Agency.
5. A clear record should be made of the meeting and it may be helpful to use the following headings:
 - Names of those attending the meeting.
 - Details of the concern or complaint that has been expressed. Be very clear about what is fact and what is opinion.
 - Record as accurately as possible what the child has said, if a child had made the complaint.
 - Record the decision reached, and why. For example: -

Take no further action –

Why

Or –

Talk to the child's parents –

Why, and who should do it?

Or

- Arrange a preliminary discussion with the child protection agency.

- Why, and who should do it?

Or

- Make a formal report to the child protection agency or the Gardaí.

- Why, and who should do it?

6. The record of this meeting and the report that has been given to the Designated Person must be held together in a sealed envelope, in a secure place, perhaps in the church safe.

7. If it is decided to have preliminary discussion with the child protection agency or the Gardaí, it is not necessary, at this stage, to give them any written report.

8. If it is decided to make a formal referral to either the child protection agency or the Gardaí, it will be helpful to make available to them a copy of the report, if any, that was given to the Designated Person, and the record of the meeting convened to discuss the matter. These should be sent under cover of a letter signed by the Designated Person or the Minister. In the Republic of Ireland if a Designated Person is making a formal referral to the Social Services the standard form (TBC 9 10) should be completed (see Section 3).

9. If an allegation involves a minister or a person in prominent spiritual leadership the procedures outlined in Policy and Procedures for Dealing with complaints of Sexual Abuse should be followed.

10. The purpose of this guidance is to promote good practice and to protect both church personnel and children. While it is true that people today are more prone to complain, sensible precautions and wise counsel will usually result in a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.

Section 2 Good Standards of Practice

2.1 AIM

This section aims to provide more detailed advice on good practise for organisations working with children and young people.

It includes the following topics:

- Good Team Work
- Recommended Ratios
- Responsibilities of the Organisation Leader
- Code of Conduct for Young People
- Discipline and the Question of Appropriate Physical Contact
- Recruitment and Selection of Leaders
- General Safety
- Obtaining Police Record Checks
- Review of Policy
- Transport
- Parental Consent Forms
- Residential Programmes
- Training Leaders/Helpers

2.2 Good Team Work

1. It is advisable that each organisation, on a yearly basis, draws up clearly defined aims and objectives for its overall running.
2. Within each organisation, a clearly defined line of accountability should be in place, whereby all leaders/helpers report to the appointed leader in charge. The leader reports to the Minister with whom ultimate responsibility lies. It is advisable that the Minister provides support, pastoral oversight, and a yearly appraisal for all the work among children and young people.
3. At any given meeting, leaders/helpers must be informed of the specific programme, and be clear about one another's responsibilities.
4. Acquaint the team (especially new leaders/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. They will be interested in all sorts of things
5. Parents should be supplied with the name and telephone number of the leader in charge of the organisation and what the organisation provides.
6. Each organisation leader/helper must be fully acquainted with the Child Protection Policy and referral procedure.
7. Each leader/helper must be acquainted with, and be in full support of, the discipline procedure for the organisation.
8. 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/helpers can share information about issues and any difficulties which may have arisen.
9. Every organisation should aim to have a trained first aider. This is particularly important where high risk activities are involved. Leaders/helpers should have up-to-date contact numbers for parents/guardians. A trained first aider will have completed a recognised first aid course delivered by St John's Ambulance, Red Cross, Order of Malta or other recognised organisations.
10. A consent form should be completed by parents/guardians at the beginning of each year. Special consent forms should be completed for trips/special activities. The Organisation Leader should hold completed consent forms.

Responsibilities Of The Organisation Leader

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

- There is an Accident/Incident Book/Forms on the premises, or with the leader;

- He/she has immediate access to names, addresses and telephone numbers of the children/young people attending the organisation;
- There is access to a telephone in the event of an emergency;
- All leaders are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an accident;
- All leaders are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an allegation of abuse; He/she has a stock of Report of Concern forms;
- He/she knows the name and telephone number of the Designated Person;
- He/she is satisfied that all leaders have a good understanding of the issues relating to confidentiality

Recommended Ratios

Indoor Activities

All organisations are encouraged to 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 two leaders/helpers present at all times.

Under eight years

0 to 2 years = 1 member of staff to 3 children

2 to 3 years = 1 member of staff to 4 children

3 to 7 years = 1 member of staff to 8 children

8 years and over = 2 members of staff (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children/young people.

There should be one additional staff member for every ten extra children and/or young people or part thereof.

Young people (those under 18 years of age) who are helping leaders should not be left alone in a supervisory capacity with children. They may, however be counted as staff members to make up stated ratios, so long as other adult leaders are present and in charge.

Outdoor Activities

Under eight years

0 to 2 years = 1 member of staff to 3 children

2 to 3 years = 1 member of staff to 4 children

3 to 7 years = 1 member of staff to 6 children

Eight to thirteen years

The recommended ratios for children aged eight to thirteen and over are:

Up to 15 children = 2 adults (preferably one of each gender)

One additional adult for every 8 extra children, or part thereof.

Thirteen years and over

The recommended ratios for children aged thirteen and over are:

Up to 20 young people = 2 adults (preferably one of each gender)

One additional adult for every 10 young people, or part thereof.

Children With Special Needs

The church has a Christian duty to be inclusive and to provide opportunities for children and young people of all abilities. Churches and organisations need to be aware that 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, may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age appropriate way. For example, a young person of 17 might behave in a manner more akin to a 2-3 year old, particularly in demanding cuddles or sitting on a worker's lap. Others experience difficulties in communication because they are blind, or deaf/blind, and are reliant on physical contact for communication. Some may have severe learning difficulties. All these factors make it harder to uncover abuse when it is occurring and in setting boundaries which take into account the needs of those young people.

There is therefore a need for extra vigilance recognising that a worker may encounter the following difficulties:

- Children may not fully understand what is said to them, or may not be able to express themselves in ways that can be understood.
- The worker may not possess the appropriate personal communication skills (e.g. specialised spoken and non-verbal communication such as Makaton signs and symbols, British Sign Language etc).
- The need for regular contact with the parents/carers.

There are a number of reasons why a child with a disability is more vulnerable to abuse:

- Children with disabilities tend to have more physical contact than those without disabilities (i.e. therapists, care workers) and may require higher levels of personal care.
- The definition of what constitutes abuse is wider for children with disabilities. (This may include force-feeding, financial abuse, over-medication and segregation).
- Children with special needs may require an individual care plan which may result in an increased leader ratio.

2.3 Code of Conduct for Young People

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

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

A Sample "Club Code of Conduct"

As members of this club we will:

1. Respect the authority of the club leaders/helpers.
2. Respect the views and feelings of other members of the club.
3. Respect the right of every club member to express their view/opinion.
4. Respect the right of every club member to be heard/listened to.
5. Respect both leaders'/helpers' and other club members' personal privacy and property.
6. Show due care and responsibility for equipment and property.
7. Agree that the following activities/behaviours are deemed unacceptable:
 - (i) Consumption of alcohol and smoking within the confines of the club building or during club activities.
 - (ii) Physical abuse of other club members and/or leaders/helpers.
 - (iii) Verbal abuse including "put-downs" of other club members and leaders/helpers, either directly or electronically e.g. mobile phone, chat rooms etc.
 - (iv) Wilful destruction or damage of property or equipment.

(v) The misuse of any substance or stimulant. When implementing the code of conduct, leaders need to be insistent, consistent and persistent.

2.4 Discipline

When disciplining children and young people:

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

You may wish to include discipline issues in your code of behaviour and you may wish to refer to discipline in your Child Protection Policy.

The Question Of Appropriate Physical Contact

As a general principle leaders/helpers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with young people. One should avoid physical contact which may be misconstrued by a young person or other observer. It may of course be necessary and appropriate to offer comfort and reassurance to a child by placing a hand on a shoulder. 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.

One should take reasonable precautions i.e. if possible, ensure that you are not left alone with a child for long periods, or, if a child wishes to talk confidentially with you, at least ensure that another leader/helper knows where you are and who you are with. If possible, try to remain visible to the other leaders/helpers. Do not rely solely on your good name or reputation to protect you.

It does **not** make sense to:

- Spend excessive amounts 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.

Leaders and other staff should **never**:

- Invite a child to their home alone;
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child, 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.

Note: 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. Except in an emergency, these tasks should be carried out only with the consent of parents. In such situations leaders need to be sensitive to the child and undertake personal care with the utmost discretion

Protecting Children From Harming Themselves

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. It should never be used to inflict pain or as a general means of control.

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 and control, not punishment. Following an incident when restraint has been used, a report should be inserted in the Accident/Incident Report

2.5 Recruitment and Selection of Potential Leaders/Helpers

As we have seen in Section One, it is necessary to have a recruitment policy in place to select leaders/helpers to provide a safe environment. A proper selection 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 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, and already known to the Minister or members of the congregation. 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.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that anyone who may be unsuitable for working with young people is not given that opportunity. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that everyone participates in a selection procedure, even though they are recognised as people of good standing.

The following steps are necessary to ensure good practice:

Defining the Role: This involves thinking through exactly what the role of a new leader/helper is considered to be, and what skills will be required for them to perform effectively.

Application Form: This should be supplied together with appropriate information as to what is expected of leaders/helpers. This form allows prospective leaders/helpers to provide all the relevant details, which will be treated in confidence (See Section 3).

It is important that every leader fills in Application Form so that the church has a complete record of all leaders.

Declaration: All leaders/helpers will be asked to declare any past criminal convictions, and cases pending against them, or any investigation of a complaint that is unresolved.

Interview: The organisational leader and/or the Minister, should meet the person. This is also the opportunity to explain the Child Protection Policy and ensure that the person has the ability and commitment required to put the policy into practice.

Referees: The names of two referees should be given by the applicant. The referees should not be family members. Where appropriate, references should be sought from their previous place of worship, preferably from someone who has had first hand knowledge of

their previous work with children/ young people. (See Reference Request Form (CBC 3 10) in Section 3).

Vetting: The church has resolved that all new volunteers/applicants who will have substantial access to children/young people, or adults with a learning disability will undergo a PECS check.

Induction: An induction process should take place, including familiarising the new leader/helper with your Child Protection Policy, introduction to other workers, children, parents etc. On appointment, all leaders/helpers should be given a copy of the organisation's Child Protection Policy and procedural guidance. The leader/helper should give a written acknowledgement that they have received this.

Trial Period: Appointment should be conditional on the successful completion of a trial period (usually six months). There should be a facility for a yearly review of all leaders/helpers. In particular, The Church should consider the following areas: reliability, trust, relationships with children, parents and other leaders, contribution to the organisation and co-operation with the team. Review should always be carried out within a positive framework.

Guides, Scouts, Crusaders and other Independent Bodies

Leaders of Girl Guides, Scouts, Crusaders and other independent bodies are not appointed by the church, even where a unit operates within a Church hall. Guides and Scouts have their own procedures for appointment but they must consult with the local church in the appointment of leaders. Independent bodies, however, take ultimate responsibility for any appointment made.

If the church is concerned that some practice of an independent body may breach its Guidelines, this should be discussed with the leader in charge of the organisation.

If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, it should be raised directly with the Headquarters of that organisation.

In general, the church should ensure that any outside youth organisation using its premises is operating in accordance with the principles laid down in these Guidelines.

Crèche and Children's Church

It will not be necessary for helpers within crèche and children's church to complete an application form. In all cases, leaders in charge should be asked to complete one.

Detailed Procedure for the Appointment of Leaders

The Minister is responsible for the appointment of all leaders and other staff to work in church organisations within his congregation. It is recommended that the following procedure is followed:

1. The organisation leader advises the Minister that he/she wishes to approach someone as a potential leader.
2. The organisation leader gives the application form to the applicant explaining its nature and that there will be an informal interview arranged.
3. The organisation leader and/or the Minister should meet informally with the candidate to discuss the appointment.
4. The completed application form is given to the Minister, or other nominated Elder, who will hold the form in a safe place.
5. Only the organisation leader, Minister and interviewer should see the application form. It is important to maintain confidentiality at all times.
6. If there is uncertainty about the suitability of a candidate, the Minister should always be consulted. The applicant should be made aware of what is happening and asked whether they consent to a further interview, should this be deemed necessary.
7. The recommendation from the interview is to be recorded in the first box on the Form. Space is provided to state briefly the main reason for the recommendation. PLEASE NOTE: The church should be aware that written records may be subject to scrutiny by another religious or civil court (and in certain cases by the applicants themselves). Information held on computer falls within the Data Protection Act (NI) 1998. Churches need to register with the Data Protection Registrar. For further information see Section 2.11.
8. The Minister receives the recommendation from the interview and makes their decision on the basis of the recommendation. There is space for recording the decision taken/other comments. The form is signed and dated by the Minister and held by him/her or a nominated Elder, in a safe place.
9. From January 2005, if the appointment involves substantial unsupervised access to children, or working with children or adults with a learning disability, then the individual will need to undergo a police record check.
10. The individual is informed that a check is being undertaken which could take four to six weeks. Unsupervised access to children/young people should not be permitted until a clear PECS check has been received.

Obtaining Police Record Checks

The church has resolved that from January 2009 all volunteers/applicants who will have a substantial access to children/young people, or adults with a learning disability, will undergo a police record check. Substantial access implies that:

- The post involves one to one access to children;
- The circumstances of contact are unsupervised;
- Situations may be isolated;
- There is regular contact. While previously only ministers, deaconesses and full-time youth workers were checked it is now agreed a number of job/work descriptions will require to be checked. Currently they are:
 - Superintendent of the Sunday School
 - Sunday School Teacher/Children's Ministry Leader
 - Senior Voluntary Youth Worker
 - Voluntary Youth Leader
 - Youth Fellowship Leader
 - Youth Fellowship Leader
 - Youth Organisation Leader/Assistant Youth Organisation Leader
 - Youth Worker (Paid)
 - All Age Drama Group Leader
 - Crèche Leader/Assistants
 - Caretaker
 - Choir Conductor/Organist/Musical Director/Praise Group Leader
 - Leader of Mothers and Toddlers

The Department has access to records and registers of people who have either been convicted or cautioned for offences, or who have been reported by their employers because their behaviour at work puts children or adults with learning disabilities at risk of harm, and who would not be considered as suitable for such work in the future.

Periodic Review of Child Protection Policy by the Minister

It is recommended that the Minister review their Child Protection Policy at least every three years. The purpose of the review is to assess the effectiveness of its implementation at congregational level, and to address any practical difficulties arising from such implementation. It is suggested that the review be carried out either by the Designated Person and the minister, or the Designated Person and another elder. The Minister may, of course, decide that the Designated Person should not be involved in the review, in which case two other persons should do it.

It is important that the review is not perceived to be an inspection but rather as an opportunity for the Minister to demonstrate its interest in the life of the organisation in general and in the child protection arrangements in particular. The following matters should be discussed with leaders:

Recruitment Practices

What discussion takes place with those interested in becoming leaders to ascertain their suitability?

Does the Minister approve all new appointments and how is such approval sought?

How is the performance of new leaders appraised after six months? How are they supported and encouraged, especially during this critical period?

Discipline

What ongoing help is given to leaders concerning issues of discipline with children and young people?

What particular difficulties (if any) have surfaced in the area of discipline and how satisfactorily have they been dealt with?

Parental Consent Form

What particular difficulties (if any), are experienced in the completion and storing of parental consent forms? How are any such difficulties dealt with?

Is it your practice to use a generic consent form rather than having one form filled in for each organisation attended? If you use one form only, what difficulties arise (if any), and how are such difficulties addressed?

Feedback from Young/Parents/Carers.

The Review should include some comments from young people and parents. A sample group could be used for this purpose.

Team Building

What arrangements are in place to enable organisational leaders to meet so that they may periodically review their work? How effectively does the leadership team work together?

In as far as good practice tends to follow then the team works well together, that steps can be taken to develop good (or better) team spirit?

Reporting Concerns

What concerns or complaints (if any) have been brought to the attention of the leader? If concerns or complaints have surfaced, are you satisfied that these have been dealt with properly or are there issues still outstanding?

Designated Person

What consultation (if any) has taken place with the Designated Person? How may the Designated Person be involved (or become more involved) in the introduction of new leaders to the Child Protection Policy?

Staff/Child Ratios

What difficulties (if any) have been adhered to the recommended staff/child ratios?

Where it is has not been possible to achieve these staff/child ratios, how has the Minister satisfied himself with the current level of supervision?

Training

When was child protection training of leaders last carried out? Have all leaders undertaken child protection training?

Register of Leaders It is good practice for the Minister to keep a register of current youth leaders and dated of resignation of previous leaders. This register should be filled in by each organisation leader at the beginning of each new year and lodged with the Minister (See TBC 11 10 Section 3).

2.6 General Safety

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. That is not only the responsibility of the leader in charge but of every leader/helper. They should be aware of the following guidelines.

1. There should be adequate supervision by a leader/helper of certain equipment e.g. table tennis tables, snooker tables etc.
2. When using special equipment for your programme e.g. for 'one-off' activities such as trampolining, bouncy castle etc, ensure there is adequate supervision by trained leaders/helpers. You may also require special insurance to cover these higher risk activities. Be aware of the physical environment and remove/avoid items which may cause injury. If

the organisation is undertaking what is deemed to be high risk activities, the leaders/helpers must seek written permission from parents/guardians in advance.

3. If all possible aim to have a trained first aider present. Where possible, leaders/helpers should be aware of any medication children are currently taking but this should not be given without written consent from parents or doctors. Leaders/helpers should also seek to obtain information concerning allergies and reaction to foods e.g. peanuts. Medication should be clearly marked, out of reach of children and securely locked away.

4. Be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that they are 'unblocked'. Know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located. These must be checked regularly by a qualified person. Occasionally fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all young people know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire. It is helpful to have a record of these.

5. During games or "ice-breakers", be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these.

6. Young people must be supervised at all times by a leader/helper while in the kitchen area.

7. Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used and where possible should be screened off. The Minister should keep organisation leaders informed about maintenance work.

8. A telephone should, where possible, be installed on the premises for safety purposes.

9. Each organisation should have an Accident/Incident Report Book in which to record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses/date.

2.7 Transport

All Youth work will involve transporting young people at some stage, whether this is on a club night or to and from a residential programme. Increasingly more church organisations are travelling by train, boat and aeroplane. This demands a higher level of organisation and warrants maximum levels of supervision.

Planning Outings

Leaders of Organisations must exercise discretion as to who is permitted to drive cars or mini-buses. The following should be considered at all times:

- Insurance cover must be adequate and up to date.
- The driver needs to be sufficiently aware of his/her responsibility towards the passengers.
- The benefits of driving in convoy and also the dangers.
- Speed limits should never be exceeded.

- The driver needs to know what to do in the event of a breakdown or accident. In addition leaders/helpers should observe the guidelines below which will help ensure protection for both them and the young people.

Private Cars

- Drivers should be aware of the limitations of third party insurance.
- Private cars may be used so long as they are not used for hire of for carrying passengers for rewards.
- Seat belts should be worn by each passenger at all times.
- Avoid transporting a child or young person on your own. Try to ensure that another leader/helper or other children/young people are with you. If a situation occurs when you have to transport a child alone, ensure other leaders/helpers know this is happening, and that the child is in the rear seat.

Mini-buses/ Coaches

A “mini-bus” is a vehicle constructed or adapted to carry more than 8, but not more than 16, seated passengers in addition to the driver.

A “coach” is a large bus which can carry more than 16 seated passengers and with a maximum speed exceeding 60 mph.

- All drivers of minibuses must have a PSV licence if driving vehicles with more than sixteen seated passengers.
- If driving the congregation’s minibus(es), drivers must be named on the congregation’s insurance policy.
- The law states that it is the driver’s responsibility to make sure that the vehicle is in a road-worthy condition before use. Failure to do so may result in the driver being legally liable in the event of any accident. Therefore, each driver must carry out a range of checks to ensure the road-worthiness of the vehicle. **IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT DRIVE THE VEHICLE.**
- When hiring a minibus or larger bus, it is the responsibility of the user group to verify the legality and insurance cover of the operator prior to the use of the transport. If in doubt, ask to see a copy of the operator’s insurance cover and operator’s licence.
- Under existing legislation children may sit:
 - o 3 to a seat if under 14
 - o 2 to a seat if over 14

Preferably this should be in seats with seat belts/restraints, and with the seats facing forward. Where seat belts are provided the ration is one child per seat belt. Seat belts must be worn for any journey, no matter how short, and again it is the driver's/leader's responsibility to enforce this

Under EU regulations the minimum age for driving a passenger carrying vehicle with more than eight passengers is 21 years.

Legislation effective from September 1997 requires forward facing seats in minibuses and coaches to have a seat belt for each child carried, when a group of three or more children are on an organised trip.

A single seat belt must not be used by more than one child, not should a belt be place around a child who is on an adult's lap. For the purpose of the legislation:

- A child is a person who is 3 to 15 years of age;
- A seat belt is a minimum of a lap belt with a width not less than 400mm.

Note: It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that this legislation is complied with. There is no requirement for urban uses used to transport children to have seat belts. Buses have a different pattern of use and are generally not fitted with seat belts.

Note: In the Republic of Ireland current road traffic regulations require the fitting of seat belts in all forward facing seats in all minibuses. Leaders/helpers who accompany young people in minibuses should, where possible, sit among the young people. Preferably, a leader/helper should sit near the exit points of the vehicle.

An accident report book/breakdown logbook should be carried in church minibuses and kept up-to-date.

Carry a First Aid Kit and Fire Extinguisher and familiarise yourself with their use.

Supervision in Transport

At least one adult should travel in the back of a mini-bus at all times.

Where possible leaders must be equally dispersed throughout a coach/bus/carriage/boat or plane. Their group members must be in the sight of a leader at all times. An acceptable gender mix of leaders is essential with a mixed gender group

2.7 Parental Consent Forms

A Multi Purpose Parental Consent Form TBC 4 10 can be found in Section 3.

This should be completed at the start of the year, for the involvement of children in youth organisations. The benefit of this is that you have valuable information throughout the time the young person is with you. Copies of the consent form should be circulated to all the organisations attended by the individual child.

If you go on a day trip or special activity a specific consent form covering this trip/activity should be completed. A sample of such a consent form (CBC 5 10) is also contained in Section 3.

Sunday Schools which do not use parental consent forms for week to week involvement of children, must ensure that they obtain written parental consent for any outings.

Before taking children on a residential programme it is important to have a parental/guardian consent form signed. This will include space to give medical information/allergies etc and consent to medical treatment, if necessary.

It is important that parental consent forms can be accessed by the leader in charge, particularly in an emergency. A leader in charge may therefore be the most appropriate person to store the completed forms.

2.8 Residential Programmes/Outings

Residential programmes often become the highlight of any congregation's youth programme, offering a whole new world of relationships and events. While recognising the tremendous impact residential 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 group and activity.

1. The Centre must have adequate insurance cover for your group and the activities it hopes to engage in.
2. 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.
3. The Centre must provide access to First Aid/GP in the event of an emergency.
4. The Centre must also provide separate sleeping accommodation for males/females.

Parents

5. Parents/guardians consent must be obtained when taking any young person away for a residential experience. A form must be signed by the parent/guardian and it should also give any relevant medical information e.g. allergies, special diets etc.
6. Before taking a group away, ensure the parents/guardians 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.
 - If there will be shopping trips and the level of supervision.

- The names and numbers of leaders/helpers accompanying the group. (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).
- Names and contact details of all young people and leaders attending a residential/camp etc. should be left with a nominated person in the congregation.

The Young People

7. They must have parental/guardian consent to participate in the residential programme and its named activities (see point5).

8. They should be fully informed of the nature of the residential programme, i.e. what is expected from them.

9. They should never be coerced/forced into any activity with which they are uncomfortable.

10. They should be involved in the drawing up of rules and a contract for behaviour and be made aware of sanctions in the event of them being broken. Using Church Halls for Accommodation If church premises are being used for accommodation certain factors need to be taken into consideration:

11. Only ground floor accommodation is considered suitable for sleeping.

12. There should be appropriate male/female segregation and supervision.

13. There should be at least two separate routes leading from the sleeping accommodation and out of the building.

14. Doors should be checked for ease of opening in an emergency. Exits should be clearly marked and unblocked. Clear instructions in the event of fire should be given to both young people and leaders/helpers.

15. Portable heating appliances should not impede exits and should be turned off during sleeping hours.

16. Leaders/helpers should have torches in case of power failure.

17. There should be a "no smoking", "no alcohol", "drug free" rule applied to the premises.

18. If there is a telephone in the church, the leaders/helpers should have access to it. If not, they should be aware of the nearest telephone.

19. Leaders/helpers should avoid staying on their own with a young person. Always be sure that there are other leaders/helpers or young people present.

20. Sleeping accommodation for leaders/helpers and young people, where possible, should be separate, but the young people's accommodation ought to be easily accessible.

Outings

Churches are now offering a wide range of activities outside church premises. These all include day trips to the seaside, forest parks, theme parks – visits to the cinema, theatre, museums and shopping trips. It is essential that parents are informed of any proposed outing and any plan to leave their son/daughter unaccompanied i.e. for shopping.

1. Is the place are visiting suitable for the age range you are taking?
2. Is the proposed outing age appropriate, e.g. is the film, or the theatre show suitable?
3. What is the best time to go – time of year, time of week? Are there busy seasons, discounted days?
4. Check that the venue can cater for anyone with special needs.
5. Make sure you have adequate leaders before booking.
6. Does the outing warrant additional insurance?
7. Has consent been given by the parent/carer?
8. Is there an area for eating packed lunches and for the group to let off steam?
9. Do you have an alternative plan if it rains or your venue is closed because of an emergency?
10. How will you get there?
11. How much will it cost?
12. Inform a nominated person of your exact location and contact mobile phone number.
13. Complete a contact sheet and leave with the nominated person.

Review

Carry out a review of the residential/outing with all concerned – what went really well and what could be improved on

2.9 Training and Resources

Training Leaders/helpers who work with children and young people are a valuable resource to the church. They should have appropriate training which must include some basic Child Protection Awareness training along with knowledge of agencies which can provide further training, resources and advice. Training, however, needs to be ongoing and not simply a one-off-event.

It is recommended that a record be kept of all training that has been undertaken and who has attended.

Resources

Information on some of the available resources can be found in Section 4.

2.10 Legal/Insurance Matters

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

- The Child Care Act 1991
- The Domestic Violence Act 1996
- The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Children Trafficking and Prostitution / Sex Offenders Act 2001
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children's Act 2001

Insurance

The provision of insurance protection for churches remains a complex issue. The three main areas of cover relate to offsetting legal expenses in the event of a claim/ public liability cover relating to claims for inadequate supervision, negligence etc; and professional indemnity to cover errors, omissions or negligent advice. Churches are advised to contact their insurance broker for more detailed and up-to-date information on these insurances.

See also factsheet on church insurance in Section 4

Data Protection

If you are holding information on a computer you need to register with the Data Protection Registrar.

Please note the eight data protection principles under the Data Protection Act (1998) (UK only).

Registered organisations should:

1. Obtain and process personal data fairly and lawfully.
2. Hold data only for the purposes specified on the register entry.
3. Use the data only for the purposes, and disclose it only to the people, listed in the register entry.
4. Only hold data which is adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is held.
5. Ensure personal data is accurate and where necessary, kept up-to-date.
6. Hold data for no longer than is necessary.
7. Allow individuals access to information about them and, where appropriate, correct or erase it.
8. Take security measures to prevent unauthorised or accidental access to, alteration, disclosure or loss and destruction of information.

TBC 1 10 Child Protection Policy

_____ Thurles Baptist Church

Ensuring a safe environment for children, young people and leaders.

Policy Statement

This policy statement is aimed at providing a safe environment where children and young people may enjoy social contact, personal and spiritual development. Adults selected to work within youth ministries should be secure in the knowledge that they have the full support of the Minister.

1. Adoption of Thurles Baptist Church Child Protection Guidelines

The Minister of Thurles Baptist Church has adopted the Thurles Baptist Church Child Protection Guidelines. All organisations are expected to adhere to these Guidelines. The Minister will review the implementation of the Guidelines annually.

2 Leadership

The Minister believes that the selection procedures outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines greatly assist the assessment of a person's suitability to work with children and young people. As a result of implementing such procedures, leaders and helpers within this congregation will be more assured of their position and of the confidence place in them by the Minister.

The following procedures must be followed for the appointment of leaders/helpers who will be 18 years or over.

- (i.) All leaders will be required to complete an Application Form.
- (ii) Applicants will be required to provide 2 references, by persons who are not relatives. (All confidential records e.g. applications and references will be stored safely by the Minister).
- (iii) The Minister will appoint an interviewer to meet informally with the candidate. Interviewers will normally be the organisational leader and/or a Minister/Elder.
- (iv) At the interview the Child Protection Policy will be provided and explained.

3. Reporting of Concerns

The leaders in each of our organisations will be fully conversant with the referral procedure where there is concern about the welfare of a child, as outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines.

4. Code of Practice

Each organisation will be expected to comply with the Good Team Procedures outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines.

5. Parental Consent Forms

Organisational leaders must ensure that Parental Consent Forms are completed at the commencement of each session for each child attending organisations. Special consent forms will be issued for any 'off the premises' activity and residentials. Leaders in charge will store these forms in a safe place.

6. Designated Person(s)

The Minister has appointed a Designated Person (**Molly Doherty**) who will provide consultation, advice and support to organisations and to the Minister on matters concerning the welfare of children and young people. The Minister will keep organisational leaders updated with the name of the Designated Person(s). Any matter brought to the attention of the Designated Person will be treated in strict confidence. Information will be divulged only where there is a legitimate need to know.

7. Health and Safety

The Minister expects organisations to adhere to the guidance on safety matters outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines.

8. Transport

Organisations are expected to adhere to the guidance of the Child Protection Guidelines relating to use of private cars and minibuses for transporting children to and from youth activities.

9. Residentials

Guidance on residential trips is provided in the Child Protection Guidelines and will be followed on all residential trips organised by Thurles Baptist Church.

10. Implementation and Review

The Minister is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, and will review it every three years with the leaders in charge of youth organisations.

Signed(Minister)
Date

TBC 2 10 Confidential Thurles Baptist Church

Application Form for Leaders/Helpers in Youth and Children's Work (Republic of Ireland)

Name of Church and Organisation/Group.....

Position applied for.....

Full name.....

Any previous surname.....

Date and place of birth.....

PRSI Number.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone Number.....

How long have you lived at this address

.....

If less than two years, then previous address.....

.....

Name of previous Church you attended.....

Name and Address of previous Minister.....

.....

Please give details of previous experience of working with children and/or young people:

.....

.....

.....

Please describe your reasons for working with children and include comment on your Christian development:

.....

.....

.....

Are you prepared to undertake appropriate training?.....YES / NO

Have you had treatment for any illness during the past 5 years which may have a bearing on your ability to work with children and young people?.....YES / NO If yes, please state:.....

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or are you at present the subject of any investigation or criminal charges?.....
YES / NO

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

Have you ever been held liable by a court for a civil wrong such as an order made against you by a matrimonial or family court?.....YES / NO

If yes, please give details:
.....

(NB: The disclosure of any offence may be no bar to your appointment)

Signed.....Date.....

In signing this form you agree to undergo any check which may be required by the Church, or under law, in respect of your suitability to do this work and understand that any appointment will be subject to those checks being made.

Please give the names, addresses, telephone numbers and positions of two people who know you well (not members of your family). One should have first hand knowledge of your work with children/young people.

First Referee Name..... Second Referee:

Address:..... Address:

.....

Tel No: Tel No:

Date received by Minister:..... Interviewed by:.....

1. Name..... Position.....

2. Name..... Position.....

Date of Interview:..... Recommendation: Approved/Not

Approved/Deferred Main reason for decision:.....

Signed:..... Date of decision:.....

TBC 3 10

Thurles Baptist Church

Reference Request Form

Reference for.....

The above named person has volunteered for the position of:

..... in
.....Congregation

1. How long have you known the applicant?years

2. In what capacity do you know the applicant?.....

2. How would you rate him/her as suitable for the above position? **1 = Excellent 2 = Very Good 3 = Good 4 = Satisfactory 5 = Poor 6 = Unknown**

1 2 3 4 5 6 Relationship with children and young people Experience in working with children and young people? Ability to relate to other leaders? Energy / commitment? Flexibility and approach? Self motivation? Ability to act on own initiative? Ability to act as part of a team?

Any additional information including other church involvement and Christian commitment which you feel may be relevant:

Name:

Signature:.....Date:

TBC 4 10

Multi Purpose Parental Consent Form Thurles Baptist Church

Please circle those attended by your child: Youth Club Sunday School

Anything written on this form will be held in confidence. The leaders need to know these details to meet the specific needs of your child.

I give permission for my child to attend the organisations which I have marked about at their usual meeting places and participate in all their activities.

Child's full name:.....DOB.....

Name by which he/she is usually known:.....

Address:

Phone number where I can be contacted in an emergency: Home:.....

Work:Mobile:.....

If unavailable contact: Name:

Phone no (including code):

Relationship to Child:

Name and phone number of GP:

Details of any known conditions, allergies etc (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) and any medication being taken:

.....

Any other special needs, requirements or directions that would be helpful for the leaders to know about:

I will inform the leaders of any important changes to my child's health, medication or needs and also of any changes to our address or to any of the phone numbers given above.

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a trained first aider, if available, or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

During the time your child will spend with us, photographs may be taken for general church purposes and for this we need your permission. On signing this form we will assume you have given permission for your child's photograph to be taken unless otherwise informed. I confirm that the above details are correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:.....(Parent/Guardian) Date:

Name Printed in full:.....

TBC 5 10

**Consent Form for
Special Outings/ Activities / Residentials
Thurles Baptist Church**

Organisation:.....

Details of trip / outing / activity:
.....

Date: Time:

Method of Transport:

Cost (if any):

Collection Arrangements:

.....

I note the arrangements and give permission for my
child..... to take part in this trip/activity.

Please indicate details of any known medical conditions, allergies, special needs or
requirements:

.....

.....

.....

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I
give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a trained
first aider, if available or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified
medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I
authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the
hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as
possible.

Signed:.....

Relationship to Child:

Contact Telephone Numbers: Home:
.....

Mobile:

TBC 6 10

Accident / Incident Form

This form should be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident. The worker should Discuss with the minister/church leader what follow up action is necessary.

Day.....Day.....Time.....

Name, contact details and ages of those involved in the accident

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Where did this incident take place?
.....

Name of church and organisation:

Name of the group:

Who is normally responsible for group? (Name, address and telephone number)

Name:

Address:

.....

.....Tel No:.....

Who was responsible for the group at the time of the incident, if different from the above?
(Name, address and telephone number)

Name:

Address:

.....

.....Tel No:.....

Who witnessed the incident? (Names, addresses, telephone numbers and ages if under 16).
Normally only two witnesses would be needed.

Name:..... Name:

Address:..... Address:

.....

.....

Tel No: Tel No:

TBC 6 10 Describe the accident/incident (include injuries received and any first aid or medical treatment given) continue on separate sheet if necessary.

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

Have you retained any defective equipment? Yes No None Involved (Please tick) If so, where is it being kept and by whom?

.....

What action have you taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident?

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

Is the site or premises still safe for your group to use? Yes No (Please tick)

Is the equipment still safe for your group to use? Yes No (Please tick)

Have the parents/carers been informed? Yes No (Please tick)

Date..... Time:

Has Designated Person been informed? Yes No (Please tick)

Has Minister been informed? Yes No (Please tick)

Has Leader in charge been informed? Yes No (Please tick)

Signature of person in charge of group at time of accident/incident

Signed:..... Print Name:.....

Date:

Form seen by Minister/Leader in charge Signed:.....

Print Name:..... Date:

TBC 7 10

Thurles Baptist Church

Report of Concern About a Child

Please use this form to record any concern you have about a child. If you need help in completing this form please talk to the leader in charge of your organisation or the Designated Person. The completed form will be given by the organisation leader to the Designated Person.

Child's Name:

Address:

Address:

.....

Age.....DOB.....Tel No:.....

State as clearly as possible why you are concerned, from whom you received the information and when. If possible include the details of the person(s) causing concern in relation to the child. Continue overleaf if necessary.

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

Details of Person reporting concerns:

Name:

Address:

.....

Telephone Number:.....

Signed:..... Organisation:.....

Date:

TBC 8 10

Thurles Baptist Church
Acknowledgement by Designated Person
of a Report of Concern About a Child
Acknowledgement

To:

Organisation:

Child's Name:

Address:.....
.....

I acknowledge receipt of your report in respect of the above named child

Name of Designated Person:

Signature:

Date:

TBC 9 10

**Standard Form for Reporting
Child Protection and / or Welfare Concerns
Republic of Ireland**

To Duty Social Work Service

In case of Emergency or outside Health Board hours, contact should be made with An Garda Síochana.

1. Details of Child Name:.....

Male: Female

Address:..... Age/DOB:.....
..... School:

1a. Details of Parents

Name of Mother:.....

Name of Father:

Address of Mother if different to Child:

Telephone Number:

Address of Father if different to Child:

Telephone Number:

1b. Care and custody arrangements regarding child, if known

.....
.....

1c. Household Composition (Note: A separate form must be completed in respect of each child being reported).

Name

Relationship to Child

Date of Birth

Additional Information e.g. School/Occupation

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

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

Name:Age:Male: Female:

Address:.....

.....

.....

Relationship to Child:Occupation.....

TBC 9 10 4. Name and Address of other personnel or agencies involved with this child

Social Workers:

School:

Public Health Nurse:

.....

GP:

Pre-School/Crèche/Youth Club.....

.....

Hospital:

Other, Specify e.g. Youth Groups, After School Clubs:

.....

.....

5. Are Parents/Legal Guardians aware of this referral to the Social Work Department?

Yes

No

If yes, what is their attitude?:

.....

6. Details of Person reporting concerns: (Please see Guidance Notes re: Limitations of confidentiality).

Name:

Occupation:

Address:
.....

Telephone Number:

Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family:
.....

7. Details of Person completing form:

Name:

Occupation:

Address:
.....

Telephone Number:

.....

Signed: Date:

Guidance Notes:

Health Boards have a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act, 1991, to promote the welfare and protection of children in their area. Health Boards therefore have an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection. This report form is for use by:

- Health Board Personnel
- Professionals and individuals in the provision of child care services in the community who have service contracts with the health boards.
- Designated person in a voluntary or community agency.
- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children who become aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. (Health Board personnel should do this in consultation with their line manager). This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child, or support services required.

If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report. Health Boards aim to work in partnership with parents.

If you are making this report in confidence you should note that the Health Board cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality as:

- A Court could order that information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act 1997, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed. You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report' you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

If you are unsure if you should report your concern, please telephone the duty social worker and discuss your concerns with him/her.

TBC 10 10 Thurles Baptist Church Checklist for Developing Safe Practices in a Group or Organisation

Know the children: (Please Tick)

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

Keep records of:

- Attendance
- Accidents – keep an incident book
- Consents given for various activities
- Any complaints or grievances

Pay attention to health and safety matters making sure that:

- Any building being used are safe and meet required standards
- There is sufficient heating and ventilation
- Toilets, shower areas and washing facilities are up to standard
- Fire precautions are in place
- There is access to a phone
- Equipment is checked regularly
- Insurance cover is adequate

It is important to ensure that:

- Children are not left unattended
- Adequate numbers of leaders of both sexes are available to supervise the activities
- Leaders know at all times where children are and what they are doing
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment has constant adult supervision
- Dangerous behaviour is not allowed.

CBC 10 10 If the activities involve staying away from attention should also be paid to the following:

- Safe methods of transport
- Adequate insurance, to cover all aspects of the trip
- Written parental consent
- Any information about the children which may be relevant to staying overnight, like allergies, medical problems, or special needs.
- Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements
- Respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets.

Discipline and challenging behaviour:

Leaders need to be trained and prepared for coping with disruptive behaviour, it is recommended that:

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

Providing training, including:

- Induction training
- Particular skills training, to raise awareness and provide information about how to respond to suspicious or incidents of child abuse
- Have an annual review or 'staff appraisal' to assess general performance and review any changes that have happened or that you need to make.

Thurles Baptist Church

Register of all Leaders and Helpers Working with Children and Young People

20...../20.....

Name of Organisation.....

Name

Address

Contact Tel Number

Date of Commencement

Date of Resignation within the last year

Position in Organisation Captain' Leader etc

Signed:.....(Leader in Charge)

.....(Minister)

TBC 12 10 Thurles Baptist Church Residential / Day Outing

(To be completed prior to any Outing Residential / Camp and left with a nominated person in the congregation Name of Organisation)

Parent / Carer Contact Numbers

Location:

Date:.....

Name and Contact Number of Leader in Charge of Residential / Outing:

.....
.....

Name of Young Person

Contact Tel Number

Second Contact Tel Number

TBC / FSI /10 SECTION 4 – Information and Factsheet Leaders Factsheet

Why be a Leader / Helper? Who wants the hassle?

- Volunteering is an honourable and worthwhile thing to do.
- Research shows that the Church is foremost in helping children and young people.
- You have the privilege of helping children and young people to enjoy themselves in safety, which is rewarding in itself, and is also appreciated by your congregation. Your work as a leader/helper in a youth organisation is greatly valued. We not only want to protect children and young people, we want to protect you.

In following these guidelines we hope to create a safe environment where both young people and leaders can enjoy the organisation and its activities and glorify the Lord whom we seek to serve. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”. Matthew 19:14

This Factsheet should help you to promote good practice in all your work with children. They will also help you to prevent and, if necessary, deal with abuse of children and young people.

TBC / FSI /10 What Every Child Needs

Respect: Children’s ideas of what is important may be very different from yours. Try to remember this when a child wants to tell you something urgently, even if you are busy.

Physical Care: This includes warmth, adequate clothing, enough to eat and safety from hazards.

Praise: This will help children to grow up to be secure, confident adults.

Attention: Listen to children, not just to their words but to anything they might be trying to tell you by their behaviour.

Trust: Make sure that the children know that you trust them and that you will always take what they say seriously and seek to help them.

Children With Special Needs

The church has a Christian duty to be inclusive and to provide opportunities for children and young people of all abilities. Churches and organisations need to be aware that 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, may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age appropriate way.

For example, a young person of 17 might behave in a manner more akin to a 2-3 year old, particularly in demanding cuddles or sitting on a worker’s lap. Others experience difficulties

in communication because they are blind, or deaf/blind, and are reliant on physical contact for communication.

Some may have severe learning difficulties. All these factors make it harder to uncover abuse when it is occurring and in setting boundaries which take into account the needs of those young people. There is therefore a need for extra vigilance recognising that a worker may encounter the following difficulties:

- Children may not fully understand what is said to them, or may not be able to express themselves in ways that can be understood.
- The worker may not possess the appropriate personal communication skills (e.g. specialised spoken and non-verbal communication such as Makaton signs and symbols, British Sign Language etc).
- The need for regular contact with the parents/carers. There are a number of reasons why a child with a disability is more vulnerable to abuse:
 - Children with disabilities tend to have more physical contact than those without disabilities (i.e. therapists, care workers) and may require higher levels of personal care.
 - The definition of what constitutes abuse is wider for children with disabilities. (This can include force-feeding, financial abuse, over-medication and segregation)

TBC / FSI /10 The Question Of Appropriate Physical Contact

- As a general principle do not make unnecessary physical contact with young people.
- Avoid physical contact which may be misconstrued by a young person or other observer.
- If you think it appropriate, offer comfort and reassurance to a child by placing a hand on a shoulder.
- If possible, ensure that you are not left alone with a child for long periods.
- If a child wishes to talk confidentially with you, at least ensure that another leader/helper knows where you are and whom you are with.
- If possible try to remain visible to the other leaders/helpers.
- Do not rely solely on your good name or reputation to protect you. It does not make sense to:
 - Spend excessive amounts 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. Never be on your own with children, always have another adult present. Leaders and other staff should never:
 - Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
 - Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;

- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child, 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. Note: 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.

Except in an emergency, these tasks should be carried out only with the consent of parents. In such situations leaders need to be sensitive to the child and undertake personal care with the utmost discretion.

Control and Discipline – What Is It?

- It means to train
- It means to correct
- It means self-control
- It means to create order
- Good Organisation When disciplining children and young people:

NEVER

Use force (smack, hit)

Discipline out of anger (but out of love)

Use a “put-down” with children/young people

Humiliate a child/young person in front of others

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 child or young person

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

TBC / FSI /10 Transport

1. If transporting young people make sure that you have adequate passenger liability.
2. Private cars may be used so long as they are not used for hire or for carrying passengers for reward.
3. Seat belts should be worn at all times. One seat belt per person.
4. Avoid transporting a young person on you own. Try to ensure that another leader/helper or other children/young people are with you.
5. If a situation occurs when you have to transport a child alone, ensure other leaders/helpers know that this is happening, and that the child is in the rear seat.
6. Ensure that the appropriate level of supervision is provided when using mini-buses and coaches. Leaders must sit in the rear to have adequate control.

The Internet

Whilst the development of the internet has revolutionised communication systems throughout the world and if used in the right way 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 on-line safety in the same way they are taught road safety.

Do's and Don'ts

- When designing a website, make clear what is available for copying or downloading. Do not refer to other inappropriate sites.
- Parental permission must be obtained before using any picture of a child/group of children on the website.
- Avoid using photos of individual children. In preference use a group photograph. However, do not use it if a child can be identified by their name or the location they are in. Names and addresses should be given.
- Personal email or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers must not be divulged.
- Youth workers are increasingly communicating with children/young people using email and text messaging. It is advisable that churches develop a protocol for this type of 'one-to-one' communication, detailing what is appropriate and what is not.
- If web access is being provided for children or young people e.g. youth project providing a cyber café, then consider using filtering software (e.g. Netnanny, Cyberpatrol or Surfwatch)

to prevent access to inappropriate web sites. Your internet Service Provider may also have filtering software.

- If you are providing web access e.g. cyber café ensure that parental permission has been obtained.

TBC / FSI /10 General safety

Safety is of prime importance during any activity Safety is everyone's responsibility
Everyone should be aware of the following guidelines:

1. There should be adequate supervision by a leader/helper or certain equipment e.g. table tennis, snooker tables etc.
2. When using special equipment for your programme e.g. for 'one-off' activities such as trampolining, bouncy castle etc, ensure there is adequate supervision by trained leaders/helpers. Remove/avoid items which may cause injury.
3. High risk activities require the written permission of parents/guardians in advance.
4. If at all possible aim to have a trained first aider present.
5. Where possible, leaders/helpers should be aware of any medication children are currently taking but this should not be given without consent from parents or doctors.
6. Leaders/helpers should also seek to obtain information concerning allergies and reaction to foods e.g. peanuts. Medication should be clearly marked, out of reach of children and securely locked away.
7. Be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that they are 'unblocked'. Know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located. These must be checked regularly by a qualified person.
8. During games or "ice-breakers", be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these.
9. Young people must be supervised at all times by a leader/helper while in the kitchen area. Supervise the use of computers and printers. Agree guidelines for the use of emails. Agree the safe and appropriate use of mobile phones.
10. Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used and where possible should be screened off.
11. A telephone should, where possible, be installed on the premises for safety purposes.
12. Each organisation should have an accident report book/form in which to record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses/date.

TBC / FSI /10 Dealing With Accidents

Many incidents are brought to the leaders attention involve accidents or more minor problems. 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.

It is good practice for a youth organisation to have an Accident/Incident Report Book/ Forms to record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses. This book/form should be used for the recording of accidents, injuries and any action taken. Each entry should be signed by the leader in charge.

It is good practice to inform the parents/guardian in person or by telephone of the accident and any action taken as soon as possible. In the event that the incident involves alleged or suspected child abuse it is not appropriate to include an entry in the Accident/Incident Book. In this event the procedure outlined below should be followed.

What is Child Abuse?

There are four main kinds of abuse

Physical Abuse: Occurs when an adult or other young person hurts, kicks, beats or punches a child.

Neglect: Occurs when an adult leaves a child alone, does not give them enough to eat or does not take them to the doctor when they are ill.

Emotional Abuse: May occur when the adult with responsibility for caring for the child says nasty things to them and does not have appropriate physical contact with them.

Sexual Abuse: Occurs when an adult or other young person touches a child's private parts in a way which makes the child feel worried or unhappy.

Some adults or other young people, who sexually abuse children, also ask the child to touch parts of their body or try to show them pornographic pictures or videos.

TBC / FS3 /10 Public Liability

This section of cover is the main area under which most claims for bodily injury or loss of or damage to the property of a third party arising from Church run activities will fall.

The Church insurance policy is designed to cover all those Church type activities that have been undertaken for years both in and away from the Church building such as team relay games, football, volleyball, basketball, rambling, Sunday School days away, visits to the swimming pool, pony trekking at approved Centres, weekend retreats etc etc.

It is not designed to automatically include hazardous activities such as rock climbing, canoeing and as otherwise indicated below. Scouts, Guides and the Boys Brigade do of course have their own specific insurance as provided via annual capitation fees which provides very wide protection and automatically covers most activities.

These uniformed organisations should therefore check the full extent of the cover provided with their headquarters directly. The Church policy will provide public liability cover for those persons deemed to be under age attending these organisations on the basis that they will not undertake any hazardous activities.

The day to day activities of all other affiliated Church organisations fall under the Church policy and therefore are subject to it's exclusions, conditions and warranties.

It should be remembered that the policy of insurance in place belongs to the "Church" and not to any other legal entity. Although an organisation may be affiliated to the Church if it is subject to the rules and regulations of a separate board of trustees or to a separate and distinct code of conduct for example, at law church an organisation may be considered a legal entity in its own right and therefore would have to be insured under a standalone policy. Should organisations other than Scouts, Guides or Boys Brigade within the Church wish to undertake a hazardous activity please ensure that the Minister is informed well in advance so as any insurance extension necessary can be put in place.

Personal Accident Personal Accident cover is provided for officers/leaders of the Church who may suffer injury during a Church organised activity. The exclusion of hazardous activities equally applies to this section of cover. "Hazardous Activities" In the list that follows we have detailed not only the most obvious type of activities that would be excluded but also those for which we have received enquiries over the years

We have categorised these into high/medium and low risk. Hopefully you will appreciate that the type of activities listed within the "high" category are those that could not constitute a "normal Church type activity". As such it has not been possible in the past to persuade insurers to offer cover, unless they are undertaken at outdoor pursuit's centre that provide their own equipment, leadership and insurance.

High Risk Activities: Water Sports Regattas Flying Hang Gliding Hot Air Ballooning Parachuting Any air-side activity Hunting on horseback Motor Competitions Motor Cycling Mountaineering Cliff or Rock Climbing Hazardous Activity weekends Potholing Racing other

than on foot Bonfires Firework Displays Use of firearms including Clay Pigeon Shooting Use power driven machinery Winter Sports Physical Contact Sports (e.g. boxing, fencing, martial arts) Overseas Building Projects Mountain Biking Rugby American Football Skateboarding Medium Risk Activities Bouncy Castles/Bungy Runs & other inflatable equipment Tractor Rides Gymkhana/pony rides/Rodeo Bull Archery/Rifle Shooting/Crockery Smashes/Darts Stall Mini Assault Courses, indoor and outdoor Fairground Rides Building Projects deemed to go beyond routine maintenance Ice Skating Overseas Travel Low Risk Activities Art Exhibitions/Flower Festivals/Auctions

Sponsored Walks/Fun Runs The list should not be considered exhausted. Any similar activities to those listed will be treated in the same manner.

Should the Church feel that any particular activity is hazardous or outside the scope of a “normal church activity” the details should be referred to the insurance company. Apart from Activities, other commonly asked questions include: Use of Vehicles Where non-Church owned vehicles are used on Church “business” insurance cover should be provided by the vehicle driver’s policy.

The driver’s policy must therefore be adequate and not rendered invalid by, for example, overloading. It would be prudent for the vehicle owner to inform his/her car insurance company of their role as a Youth Leader – for which you should not encounter additional terms being imposed.

We also suggest that the Church may wish to make leaders and others aware of this issue. If so we can upon request provide a sample letter for your assistance. Indemnity Agreements If asked to sign one – don’t. Commonly such agreements attempt to impose a liability on the Church for matters not only outside your control but also beyond common law and therefore beyond the protection afforded by your insurance policy.

Ages Our policy does not contain any restrictions in cover relating to the age of children attending Church Organisations. Adult to Child Supervision Ratios Our policy does not contain specific guidance on ratios however the general “reasonable care condition” applies.

Reasonable Care would be judged on the basis of the recommended ratios set out within Taking Care. Cover Away from Church Non-hazardous activities (such as day trips/Church week-ends) are covered free form charge.

Church Fetes

Generally the events undertaken at Church Fetes are considered non-hazardous and are therefore covered automatically. If however the likes of a Bouncy Castle is to be used, then this should be referred. Maintenance Work/Building Projects/Overseas Additional Insurance may be required. Refer to Bartholomew & James for specific advice. Child Protection

The TBC Protection Guidelines should be adopted and implemented as these are now considered to be the yardstick on which any decision would be made, with regard to where liability rests.

The Church should be complying as far as reasonable practicable with all appropriate Health & Safety and other legislation in order to ensure a safe environment remains available to users of the premises.

Youth groups can play an important part in this process by, in particular, reporting defects in premises to an appointed person. A joint liaison approach between Church Committee and Youth Organisations will benefit all in the mitigation of hazards that could have the potential to cause injury or loss.

Claims Incidents can happen that result in a claim against the Church. Churches should therefore have a formal reporting procedure for incidents that result in injury, loss or damage. Such incidents should then be reported to Insurance in order to protect your interests should a formal claim be taken at some time in the future.