

# Gilnahirk Baptist Church

## Safeguarding Policy



The church has a growing children's and young person's ministry and takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care. A child or young person is a person under 18 years of age. A worker should be anyone aged 13 years or over who is engaged in work or a voluntary activity which involves contact with children or young people.

### **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

1. The church is committed to provide, in a Christian environment, the highest possible care for children and to safeguard their welfare by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm
2. All individuals recruited to work with children or young people will be required to comply with the volunteer process and to undertake training on an annual basis.
3. This Policy and the Guidelines will be issued to all workers. Parents of those attending the activities may request a copy.
4. All workers will treat others with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness when involved in church organised activities.

### **What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred**

Tell your leader in charge (if the Safeguarding Co-ordinator is available, report directly to them).

Complete a 'Report of Concern' form (See Appendix 4).

Give the form to your leader in charge who should report your concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is nominated by the church to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

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## SECTION 1 – CHILD PROTECTION & SAFE RECRUITMENT

### 1.1 DEFINITION

A **Child** is a person under the age of 18 years.

### 1.2 WHAT A 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 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.

Taking care to select the appropriate leaders and team members can meet these needs.

### 1.3 TYPES OF ABUSE

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional setting by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them.

#### PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

#### EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and continuous adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar

as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include failure to thrive at school etc.

### **SPIRITUAL ABUSE**

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose their leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

### **BULLYING**

Bullying is another way in which children (or adults) abuse other children, and it can be verbal or physical. It includes teasing, making unkind comments about a child, demanding money, ganging up on a child or physically assaulting a child. One might see evidence of torn clothes, bruising, burns, or scratches. A child might be afraid to attend school or other activities if they think the bully will be present. The effect of bullying on the victim can be profound, both emotionally and physically.

## **1.4 WHO ABUSES CHILDREN?**

- Rarely a stranger.
- Usually someone who knows the child, e.g. parent, babysitter, sibling, relative, friend of the family.

- Sometimes, someone in authority such as teacher, youth worker, children’s worker or church worker/leader.
- Sometimes, paedophiles and others who set out to join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children.

## 1.5 RECOGNISING POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

### PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse associated with self-harming.

### INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia – associated with self-harming.

### EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.

- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not in itself proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is also important to remember that there might be other reasons why most of the above are occurring.

## **1.6 HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK**

It is not easy to give precise guidance but listen carefully to what the child says without prompting or using leading questions.

### **YOU SHOULD NOT**

- Take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place.
- Act alone.
- Take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns they may have.
- Talk to others about the issue - confidentiality is important for the child's well-being.

### **YOU MUST**

- Talk to the leader in charge and complete a Report of Concern. If the concerns involve the leader, contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator for the church. If the Child Protection Officer is involved in the actual allegations, contact the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Pastor.

## OUR PROCEDURE

1. The person who has the concern should tell the leader in charge.
2. The person who has the concern should complete a **Safeguarding Concern Form** which the leader will give you.

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 to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

## GENERAL POINTS

- Above everything else, listen, LISTEN, LISTEN.
- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- Be honest.
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – **don't promise confidentiality**.
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared, using the child's actual words-do not attempt to interpret them.

### **HELPFUL THINGS YOU MAY SAY OR SHOW**

- You have done the right thing in telling.
- That must have been really bad.
- I am glad you have told me.
- It's not your fault.
- I will help you.

### **DON'T SAY**

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises.
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else."

## CONCLUDING

- Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
- Contact the Safeguarding Coordinator. If they are unavailable, go directly to Social Services or the Police/NSPCC.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed-from the Safeguarding Coordinator or Pastor.
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept safely for an indefinite period.

## 1.7 RESPONDING TO CONCERNS FOR A CHILD OR AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

Where possible, concerns should be passed to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator but difficulty in contacting this individual should not delay action being taken.

### Where a child has a suspected physical injury or symptom of neglect:

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Social Services direct (**Gateway Team-see phone numbers in Appendix 5**) if there are concerns that a child may have been deliberately hurt, is at risk of 'significant harm' or is afraid to return home. Do not tell the parents in such circumstances. It may also be helpful to have the contact number for the Police Child Protection Team.
- If a child needs urgent medical attention an ambulance should be called or they should be taken to hospital, informing the parents/carers afterwards of the action that was taken. The hospital staff should be informed of any child protection concerns. They have a responsibility to pass these concerns on to the statutory authorities.
- It is important to take older children's wishes into account when deciding whether to talk to parents/carers unless other children are potentially at risk.

## 1.8 WHERE THERE ARE ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Social Services (Out-of hours, the Emergency Duty Team). DO NOT try to investigate the matter. The important thing is to

relay the information to Social Services and/or the Police so they can carry out any investigation and take appropriate action under Article 66 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

- In the case of very severe sexual assault (such as rape), which may have occurred over the last few days, and where it has not been possible to get an immediate response from Social Services, contact the police in order to facilitate a medical examination by a designated police surgeon. This could provide evidence, which may be used in any criminal prosecution. (Older young people are able to decline such an examination if they are considered to be of sufficient age and understanding). Do not touch or tamper with any evidence, such as stained clothing.
- DO NOT tell the parents/ carers, they could be involved. It is also important no one else who might be involved is inadvertently alerted to the situation because this may lead to the child being 'silenced'. Allegations of sexual abuse are usually denied and often difficult to prove. Remember, the child's welfare must be the first consideration at all times.
- Keep information on a need to know basis so that any alleged perpetrator is not tipped off. The child or young person also has a right for their privacy to be respected as much as is possible.

The safety of the child over-rides all other considerations and it is important to remember that sexual abuse of children is a serious crime. The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service can advise in cases of difficulty.

If the allegation is against a church leader who has responsibility for implementing the safeguarding policy, the referral should be made direct to Social Services or appropriate professional advice sought, e.g. from the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service. The Pastor and or Elders should be informed of the action taken.

## **1.9 REFERRALS AND THIRD-PARTY ALLEGATIONS**

Where a third party alleges abuse towards a child, the role of the church worker is to listen carefully and gather as much information as possible from this person. Do not share your own opinions or knowledge of the child. The individual should be advised that the information they have provided will be shared with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and may result in a referral to the Social Services Department with their details. This is so that Social Services can contact them if necessary.

## **1.10 REASONS FOR NOT CONTACTING THE PARENT OR ALLEGED ABUSER**

A child, young person or vulnerable adult might make a direct allegation of abuse naming the person who did it. Because of fear, confusion or other reasons the allegation might not be wholly accurate. However, any allegation must be taken seriously.

Informing a parent/carer of the allegation could damage any subsequent investigation by the statutory authorities if their reaction inadvertently alerts the person under suspicion e.g. the parent/carer going to see them to sort the matter out. It is vital no one from the church informs the parent/carer of the allegations at this stage. This decision should be left to the statutory authorities.

Another very important reason the alleged abuser is not contacted is that they could try to silence their victim with bribery or threats. Also, they could dispose of any incriminating material such as books, videos, DVDs, photos, computer files or text messages.

## **1.11 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WORKERS & VOLUNTEERS**

If the alleged perpetrator has a role among children in the church, or has any contact with children, seek the advice of Social Services and the police before taking any action such as suspension of employment. During an enquiry, it will be necessary to supervise the worker as closely as possible without raising suspicion during the period between the matter coming to your attention, the authorities being informed and the appropriate being action taken. The suspension of a worker following an allegation is by definition a neutral act but may be necessary because the priority is to protect children from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.

## **1.12 ALLEGATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Children and young people have always been curious about the opposite sex and/or experimented sexually. However, where a child has responsibility over another child (as in a babysitting arrangement) and abuses that trust through engaging in sexual activity, this is likely to be regarded as abusive. The same applies where one child introduces another child to age-inappropriate sexual activity or forces themselves onto a child. This is not mutual exploration. Such situations should be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved, because the effects on the child victim can be as great. Approximately one third of sexual offences are committed by children and young people.

Instances such as these would be investigated by the child protection agencies in the same way as if an adult were involved, though it is likely that the perpetrator would also be regarded as a victim in their own right.

### **1.13 HELPING CHILDREN TO PROTECT THEMSELVES**

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/workers. A sample **Code of Conduct** is attached at Appendix 1.

### **1.14 CHURCH ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

All church members have a part to play in welcoming children, young people and vulnerable adults, supporting those working with them and knowing who to speak to if they suspect that a person is being harmed.

### **SAFEGUARDING CO-ORDINATOR**

The Safeguarding co-ordinator takes the lead in ensuring compliance with the Access NI Code of Practice. Specific responsibilities include ensuring that:

- There are Accident/Incident/Concern Forms (see Appendices 2,3 & 4) on the premises or with each Ministry Leader(s),
- He/she has immediate access to names, addresses and telephone numbers of the children/young people (and parents) attending the organisation,
- There is access to a telephone in the event of an emergency,
- All leaders are aware of the reporting procedures in the event of an accident, incident or concerns,
- All leaders are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an allegation of abuse,
- The volunteer recruitment procedures are carried out effectively, confidential information is stored, and ministry leaders encouraged to provide good supervision, support and training for their teams.
- To ensure that the church responds in a correct and prompt manner to accidents, or suspected child abuse.
- Appointed to be the contact person for any child protection concerns raised within the church and will know where to go to find advice when needed.
- Facilitate training in safeguarding for all volunteers on an annual basis.

### **MINISTRY LEADER(S) (LEADERS OF ORGANISATIONS)**

They must be responsible adults and be appointed by the church, know the Safeguarding Guidelines, how to go about appointing new workers, principles of good supervision and what to do if there is concern about a child or young person.

#### WORKER

Responsible as a team member for working with children and young people and should be 15 years of age or over. They need to know the Safeguarding Guidelines, what to do and have completed the volunteer process.

#### HELPER

Within certain groups e.g. crèche, Breakout and Holiday Bible Club, helpers should be aged from 13 years and may assist workers with activities. They will not count when considering worker/child ratios and should be responsible to a named worker.

### **1.15 TRAINING**

Opportunities for appropriate training will be provided not to make everyone an expert but to enable them to be well informed, aware of issues and supported in giving of their best. The expectation would be that any volunteer or worker involved in the youth and children's ministry of the church would undergo training once a year.

## SECTION 2 – ACCEPTABLE CONDUCT FOR LEADERS, WORKERS AND HELPERS

### 2.1 RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST

Relationships between children, young people or vulnerable adults and their leaders take many different forms, but all of them can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The leader is someone in whom the individual has placed a degree of trust. That relationship is not one of equal partners and there is the potential for the trust to be abused by the leader, who is in a position of power over the child or young person. All voluntary organisations are now expected to have a policy which sets out the boundaries of such relationships.

A worker should **NEVER**:

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own or other's advantage.
- Use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships that are or may become sexual.

### 2.2 ACCEPTABLE & UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

1. It is always wrong for a leader to enter into a sexual relationship with a young person. Whilst young people aged 15 or 17 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity, they may still be emotionally immature. Their vulnerability could be exploited either deliberately or unwittingly. In these circumstances it does not make any difference whether or not the sexual relationship is consensual. The imbalance of power makes it an abuse of trust.
2. It is not acceptable for a leader to form a romantic relationship with a child or young person with whom they have a relationship of trust. Such a romantic relationship (even if consensual) would not be a relationship of equal partners - the leader is always in a position of power over the young person and exploitation is almost inevitable, even if unintentional.
3. The inappropriate nature of romantic relationships is obvious where the worker is an adult, but less so when the worker is also a young person. However, if such a romantic relationship did occur, there would still be a confusion of the roles of worker and romantic partner. Normally in these circumstances the worker should cease either the relationship of trust or the romantic relationship with the young person.

## 2.3 GENERAL CONDUCT

Treat all children and young people with **respect** and **dignity**. Use age appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language and the effect you are having on the individual child or young person.

**Listen** well. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or young person is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the body language to better understand what is being said.

Be aware of the dangers arising from **private meetings** with children. Such meetings should be transparent and in the knowledge of another leader.

Ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that you are **not left alone** with a child. Where possible another child or worker should be present at private meetings or within sight or hearing.

Have at least **two adults** present with a group.

Ensure that a **mixed** group has workers from both genders.

Do not make unnecessary **physical contact** with children, e.g. horseplay.

Do not allow a **personal relationship** to develop with an individual child.

Conduct which could be **misconstrued** should be avoided.

Exercise discretion and caution in what **texts** you send, receive and respond to.

Distressed children may need **comforting**—use your discretion and ensure that it will be seen by others to be normal and natural.

Those giving **first-aid** should ensure that other children or another adult are present when they are administering help.

Take great care in the setting of a **residential** or **day trip** where relationships tend to be less formal.

Following an incident where a worker feels that his/her actions may be misconstrued a report should be written and submitted immediately to the leader.

**All workers (paid or voluntary) should contact the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator where they have concerns regarding behaviour towards a child.**

## 2.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

Never promise total confidentiality. Should a person wish to disclose to you a situation such as abuse, within a prayer ministry context, you have a duty to pass this on to your church's Safeguarding Co-ordinator/social services/police. You may need to gently give clear

boundaries but reassure the individual that if you share anything about their situation with someone else it will be on a 'need to know' basis only and you will make sure they are supported and cared for. Before the child confides in you, they must be made aware that you cannot promise confidentiality if they divulge something to you that you are obliged to report.

## 2.5 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Churches and organisations need to be aware that children, young people and vulnerable adults 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.

### You should:

Ask the child, young person or vulnerable adult attending the activity, and parents or carers how their needs can be met, ensuring all workers involved with them are aware of their expectations. Listen, and give feedback to the person, family or carer as to what can or can't be achieved and the reasons why.

Ideally ensure that a worker of the same gender assists if they need help with toileting, but again discuss with the person, their family or carer to discuss their preference and your ability to provide this.

## 2.6 MOBILE PHONES AND TEXTING

Anything which compromises a leader's ability to maintain a safe environment and give their full attention to the supervision of children, such as using a mobile phone, should be actively discouraged. A blanket ban is not necessary as mobiles may obviously be useful in emergency situations. Use of mobile phones when transporting children and young people must comply with current legislation.

Text messaging is a quick and easy way to communicate with others and is a popular and often preferred means of communication with children. Leaders and their team members must be aware that intimidating, bullying or even abusive messages can be discreetly sent by text. Information sent in this way, even where well-meaning, could be misinterpreted.

Leaders and team members should:

- Never engage in personal or sensitive communications with children via text messages.
- Carefully store phone numbers and only grant access to those who have a legitimate reason for having such access.
- **Not** contact young people through chat rooms and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etc.

- Not email children and young people directly as individuals on personal matters. Disclosed lists should be used for sending organisation information via a suitable and designated adult. The opportunity should be given to individuals to have their details removed by including e.g. "If you wish to be removed from this email list please contact the administrator."

## 2.7 FILMING AND TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, organisations must be very careful if they take photographs or film footage of people and how images are used. This does not mean that photographs should not be taken, or filming prohibited, but there are certain protocols that must be followed to comply with data protection legislation as well as safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

Permission must be obtained of both children and adults before a photograph is taken or film footage recorded. However, it is perfectly acceptable to ask parent/carers to let you know if they do NOT want their children photographed or filmed. The worker should write to parents or carers to explain what is happening and that the onus is on the parents/carers to contact them if they have any objections. In addition to this:

- It must be made clear why that image/film is being used, what it will be used for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event, this is regarded as a public area and permission from a crowd is not necessary.
- When using photographs of children and young people use group pictures. NEVER identify them by name or other personal details.
- Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a website.

Many mobile phones have digital cameras. Leaders/Workers should ensure that they only take photographs of children and young people in accordance with their church's policy on photography, i.e. ensure that consent is obtained and all images are stored in accordance with Data Protection Act principles. It would be unwise to keep images on a worker's mobile phone. Images should be downloaded to the church computer and kept securely.

## SECTION 3 – GUIDANCE FOR THE RUNNING OF GROUPS OR ACTIVITIES

### 3.1 SUPERVISION – GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. As far as possible, a worker should not be alone with a child or children, where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room. Glass panels in doors are a great advantage in church premises.
2. In a counselling/mentoring situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, ensure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom.
3. Don't invite a child or young person to your home alone.
4. Children and young people must not be given access to church premises unless responsible adults are present.
5. At no time should one adult be alone on church premises with a child or group of children and young people.
6. Make sure you have a suitable ratio of staff to children and young people.

### 3.2 SUPERVISION – RATIOS

Below are suggested ratios of adult to child, recommended for a specific indoor/outdoor activity or holiday event. These are the ratios required in regulations governing day care for under 8's.

Age	Adult: Children	Comment
2 yrs & under	1:3	
3 yrs	1:4	
4-7 years	1:8	(preferably one of each gender) plus 1 extra adult for every 10 children
8 years and over	2:20	

It may not, in practice, be possible to achieve the same standards as for registered activities, but it is vital to ensure there are sufficient adults for child supervision. For children over 12, there is no official guidance. A suggested ratio is two adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children, with an additional leader for every 10 children. Following a risk assessment, this ratio would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered high risk or dangerous, or when catering for children with disabilities/special needs.

### **3.3 REGISTRATION: PARENTAL CONSENT FORMS & REGISTER**

When the child becomes a member or becomes involved in an activity run by an organisation, it is important at the outset that a general information and consent form is completed and returned giving contact details of parents/carers, plus medical and other details such as allergies or special dietary requirements. This form should be renewed annually.

Parents/carers may or may not attend a place of worship even though the individual does. It is important that they are given information about the group and activities including contact telephone numbers.

There should be a clear understanding of what sort of activities the child or young person will be doing and the time limits of these. Arrangements for returning the children to their parents' care should be clarified. Where children are collected from activities, nominated persons should be identified by the parent/carer as acceptable to carry out this task.

### **3.12 KEEPING RECORDS**

A register of children or young people attending a club or activity should be maintained, together with a register of helpers.

An A-I-C (Accident – Incident – Concern) system (appendices 2,3 & 4) should be used for all activities involving children and young people.

### **3.14 TRANSPORT**

Where children are being transported by mini-bus the organisation needs to ensure there are guidelines in place and that these apply to all drivers and journeys carried out on behalf of and with the knowledge of the organisation. This does not apply to private arrangements for transportation made, for example, between adults with parental responsibility.

Advice for transporting children, young people or vulnerable adults is as follows:

- ❖ Driving should be restricted to those who are approved by the church for such a purpose.
- ❖ All drivers must have read the child protection policy of the church and agree to abide by it.
- ❖ Parents / carers should be asked to sign a Transportation Consent Form (or include it in the General Information and Consent Form).
- ❖ The driver should hold a full driving licence, the vehicle must be adequately insured and the vehicle road worthy.
- ❖ Having checked drivers, it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods. Consideration should therefore be given to dropping off the least vulnerable last and plan routes accordingly.
- ❖ Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in the vehicle with someone they are transporting. If, for example, a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk there and then, but arrange to meet them at a location where there are other adults around with the knowledge of the group leader. (Remember they may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- ❖ At collection or dropping off points no child should be on their own and the driver should make sure they are collected by an appropriate adult. This may also apply to a vulnerable adult, depending on the nature of their vulnerability and/or disability.
- ❖ If parents or carers do some transporting, ensure they are made aware that such arrangements are their own responsibility and not the organisation's.

## SECTION 4 – OTHER ISSUES CONCERNING CHILDREN

### 4.1 BULLYING

The damage inflicted by bullying can be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to individuals to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm. In these circumstances bullying should be considered as abuse and treated as such. It is unacceptable behaviour and may take many forms:

<b>Physical</b>	hitting, kicking, punching, theft.
<b>Verbal</b>	name calling, sarcasm, sexual comments/gestures, sectarian/racist remarks including emails/text messaging.
<b>Indirect</b>	spreading rumours, making rude signs.
<b>Emotional</b>	being unfriendly, being ignored, left out, ridiculing, threats, gestures.
<b>Cyber</b>	silent, abusive or offensive calls, threats, text messages or via social media.
<b>Unofficial activities</b>	e.g initiation ceremonies and practical jokes that cause unwanted physical or emotional harm.

Sometimes children being bullied are afraid to tell what is happening but some of the signs include:

- Not wanting to go to the activity.
- Asking for money or stealing food.
- Missing possessions.
- Crying to sleep, nightmares, bedwetting.
- Change in behaviour- withdrawn or aggressive

### RESPONSE

There should be zero tolerance of bullying. The most important thing is how a bullied person FEELS so try to find out the facts by offering reassurance, explaining that bullying is wrong and that no one deserves to be bullied. Stress the person needs to tell the truth and that you will help them to stand up for themselves.

Ensure those who attend your activity know that bullying is unacceptable and that if they are bullied, they should tell the leader, their parents or a friend or write a note to them. If they see someone being bullied, they should mention it discreetly to the leader as people who are being bullied need friends and support.

## PREVENTION

Strategies can be adopted to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of group rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

## ACTION

Report the bullying incident to group leaders

Ensure that details are carefully checked before action is taken

In all cases of bullying, the incidents should be recorded by the worker

Consideration should be given to informing the parents/carers of the bully, but this should only be done if workers are satisfied there is no bullying/abuse going on at home that might exacerbate the situation

If it is thought that an offence has been committed, consideration should be given to contacting the police

The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and stopped quickly

Help should be offered to help the bully address his/her behaviour

The worker involved in dealing with the incident should issue a warning to the child concerned

An apology should be given by the child who has bullied another

If possible, those involved will be reconciled

After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the situation should be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place

After the incident/incidents have been investigated parents/carers should be informed of the action taken

**All incidents must be recorded on the appropriate form.**

## 4.2 ACCIDENTS

All accidents, however minor, should be recorded on an Accident form, and the parent/carer of the child or young person informed as soon as possible.

## APPENDIX ONE

### A SAMPLE CODE OF CONDUCT

As members of this club we will:

1. Respect the authority of the club workers/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 workers/helpers and other club members' personal privacy and property.
6. Show due care and responsibility for equipment and property.
7. 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 workers/helpers.
  - iii. Verbal abuse including "put-downs" of other club members and workers/helpers.
  - iv. Wilful destruction or damage of property or equipment.
  - v. The misuse of any substance or stimulant.

When implementing the Code of Conduct, workers need to be insistent, consistent and persistent.

# ACCIDENT FORM

This form should be completed immediately after any accident (e.g. a bump of the head)  
 Once completed, please store confidentially in the 'Accident, Incident & Concern' RED Folder and keep indefinitely. The volunteer should discuss with the Leader if follow up action is required.

WHO: NAME, CONTACT DETAILS & AGES OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE ACCIDENT		
1		
2		
3		
4		
ACCIDENT DETAILS:		
WHEN: Day	Date:	Time:
WHERE did the accident take place?		
HOW did it appear to happen?		
WITNESSES (Names, addresses, telephone numbers and ages - if under 16). <i>Normally only TWO witnesses are needed.</i>		
DESCRIBE the accident. (Include injuries received, any first aid or medical treatment given and the outcome)		

PLEASE CIRCLE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE		
Have you retained any defective equipment?	YES NO	NONE INVOLVED
If YES, where is it being kept and by whom?		
What action have you taken to prevent a recurrence of the accident?		

Is the site or premises still safe for your group to use?	YES	NO
Is the equipment still safe for your group to use?	YES	NO
Have the parents / careers been informed?	YES	NO
Has the Safe Guarding Officer been informed?	YES	NO
Has the Point Leader been informed?	YES	NO

SIGNATURE OF PERSON REPORTING THE ACCIDENT		
Signed:	PRINT Name:	Date:
FORM SEEN BY POINT LEADER		
Signed:	PRINT Name:	Date:

# INCIDENT FORM

This form should be completed immediately after any incident (e.g. toileting issue; fighting; fall) Once completed, please store confidentially in the 'Accident, Incident & Concern' RED Folder and keep indefinitely. The volunteer should discuss with the Leader if follow up action is required.

WHO: NAME, CONTACT DETAILS & AGES OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT		
1		
2		
3		
4		
INCIDENT DETAILS:		
WHEN: Day	Date:	Time:
WHERE did the incident take place?		
HOW did it appear to happen?		
WITNESSES (Names, addresses, telephone numbers and ages - if under 16). <i>Normally only TWO witnesses are needed.</i>		
DESCRIBE the incident. (Include injuries received, any first aid or medical treatment given and the outcome)		

PLEASE CIRCLE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE		
Have you retained any defective equipment?	YES NO	NONE INVOLVED
If YES, 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
Is the equipment still safe for your group to use?	YES	NO
Have the parents / careers been informed?	YES	NO
Has the Safe Guarding Officer been informed?	YES	NO
Has the Point Leader been informed?	YES	NO

SIGNATURE OF PERSON REPORTING THE INCIDENT		
Signed:	PRINT Name:	Date:
FORM SEEN BY POINT LEADER		
Signed:	PRINT Name:	Date:

# CONCERN FORM

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 point leader or the Designated Person. The completed form will be given by the point leader to the Designated Person.

Child's Name:		
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.

What is the nature of the concern?
Are there any visible injuries?
Has medical attention been sought / necessary?
Have there been any previous concerns?
Other relevant information?

## DETAILS OF PERSON REPORTING CONCERNS

Name:		
Address:		
Telephone Number:		
Signed:	Organisation:	Date:

# Gateway Team & Important Telephone Numbers

## **Belfast Trust Gateway services**

Office hours (9-5) 028 9050 7000

Out of hours / weekends 028 95 049 999

## **PSNI "B" District Public Protection Unit (PPU)**

101 Non-emergency number

999 Emergency number

## **The Rowan (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)**

Specialist centre for victims of sexual violence

0800 389 4424