



## **Recommended Practice**

**Advice to create a safe environment for children.**

**Whilst this is more flexible it is also the main way children are protected and should be followed as closely as possible. Changes to this section should only be made after seeking the advice of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. All workers with children should have access to this section.**

## **Practice Guidance**

This collection of practice guidelines build on the recommendations provided in the previous edition of the Diocesan Policy Document “The Care and Protection of Children” and are in accordance with the Department for Children, School’s and Families “Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People”.

It needs to be recognised that this guidance is offered as a support and encouragement to church workers so that they can work safely and confidently with children and young people but that it also provides a standard of practice which may be used to judge whether a person is acting inappropriately or dangerously or who may by such misconduct be deemed by a parish or the diocese to be unsuitable to work with children.

Practice guidance can never cover every situation and workers will be expected to use their judgement and common sense when required. It is expected that if actions are taken which are either not covered by this guidance or for some reason is different from this guidance the worker will communicate this fact to their line manager or Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator as soon as possible. If possible a course of action should be agreed with the line manager and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser before the event. Agreed actions should be recorded.

## **Y1. Working safely with children a checklist for ‘best practice’ - Be caring yet careful!**

### **All clergy, paid employees and volunteers should always:**

- Abide by the child protection policy
- Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner at all times
- Provide a good example, and a ‘positive role model’ to children
- Observe other people’s right to confidentiality (unless you need to report something)
- Treat all children equally; never build “special relationships” or favour individual children, unless this is part of an agreed plan for the child
- Learn to control and discipline children without physical punishment, this must never be used even if they have the parent's explicit permission for this
- Ensure that another adult is informed if a worker needs to take a child to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children. Respect the child’s privacy
- If known in advance, a parent’s permission must be sought if a child or young person is to be seen on his or her own, another adult must be nearby and the child or young person must know this
- Ensure that if possible each group has a gender balance of helpers
- Ensure that children and young people know that they can speak to an independent advocate in the congregation, or contact "Childline", if they need to talk to someone. Have the "Childline" telephone number prominently displayed (tel. 0800 1111).

## **Clergy, paid employees and volunteers should not:**

- Behave in a manner that could lead a reasonable person to question their conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children
- Touch children in a manner which is, or may be considered to be sexual, threatening, gratuitous or intimidating
- Discriminate either favourably or unfavourably towards any child
- Make arrangements to contact, communicate, or meet children outside of approved church activities, unless this has the prior approval of the Child Protection Co-ordinator as well as their parent
- Develop personal or sexual relationships with children
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so with a youth member of the church over the age of consent.
- Make inappropriate remarks or jokes of a personal, sexual, racial, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature either face to face or using mobile or electronic methods
- Intentionally embarrass or humiliate children, for example by using sarcasm or humour in an inappropriate way
- Give or receive (other than token) gifts unless agreed with the Child Protection Co-ordinator
- Allow, encourage or condone children to act in an illegal, improper or unsafe manner e.g. smoking or drinking alcohol or taking drugs
- Undertake any work with children when they are not in a fit and proper physical or emotional state to do so
- Use their position to make relationships with children away from the church or their families
- Play rough physical or sexually provocative games
- Be sexually suggestive about a child or to a young person even in fun
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own. If this is unavoidable ask the child or young person to sit in the back of the vehicle
- Share sleeping accommodation with young people
- Invite a young person to the worker's home alone
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.
- Church workers should ensure that their behaviour either in or out of the church activity does not compromise their position within the church.

**Be prepared for your colleagues to remind you if you forget any of the requirements for good practice and be prepared to help a colleague by advising them in return.**

## **Y2. Physical contact and child protection**

Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is unlikely that any type of physical contact in the course of children and youth work could be misconstrued as abuse.

One of the aims of the Diocesan policy is for church groups to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour. All church workers must work with or within sight or hearing of another adult. They must accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny and could be reported to the parish Child Protection Co-ordinator for the protection of both worker and child.

- Church workers should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- If any activity, for example bell-ringing, requires physical contact make sure that the young person and their parents are aware of this and its nature
- There must be no physical punishment of any kind nor should any sanction ridicule or humiliate a child
- Avoid physically rough games, tickling or fun fights
- Avoid unnecessary informal touching
- Avoid taking young children to the toilet, but when necessary make sure another adult is informed or organise a toilet break for the whole group. Always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Young children may sometimes need comforting, make sure they are responded to warmly, in an appropriate way for the age of the child but with other adults around
- First aid should be administered with others around
- Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming him/herself or others. Use the least possible force in the minimum amount of time and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and the information given to the Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator
- All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child's needs not the needs of the adult. Colleagues must be prepared to support each other and act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.

## **Y3. Inappropriate behaviour by children towards adults**

Children or young people can sometimes initiate physical contact with an adult or seek to develop a personal relationship. They may have a 'crush' or may act inappropriately following previous abusive experiences. The behaviour may be a "cry for help". Any such situation should be handled sensitively.

If an adult feels uncomfortable about a child or young person's behaviour they must:

- (If it is a young child) remove them gently and at an appropriate time from close physical contact

- Make it clear to the child or young person, with sensitivity, that their language or behaviour is inappropriate
- Tell another adult; a clergy colleague, the parish priest or the Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator. Agree with the colleague what measures should be taken to prevent a re-occurrence
- Record the incident in case accusations are made in the future. Sign and date the record and hand it to the Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator.

#### **Y4. Anti-bullying**

With a view to the prevention of bullying, each group/organisation must adopt an anti-bullying policy and ensure that it is adhered to and made available. A sample policy is included in the appendices.

#### **Y5. Young leaders (under 18)**

##### **Definition**

A young leader is a person, between 14 and 18 years of age who will not have had a Criminal Record Bureau check by virtue of their age and who has expressed an interest in leading activities with other young people. These activities might include youth groups, prayer groups and retreats or weekend activities.

##### **Principles for working with young leaders**

These principles are drawn from the scouting movement and football association as they reflect best practice that has evolved over a number of years of working with young people in a variety of settings.

- Under the Children Act 1989 young people do not become adults until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- Young leaders should not be put in a position of being solely responsible for a group or activity involving other young people. An adult leader should always be present
- Young leaders should not take part in any residential or potentially hazardous activities without their parent or carer's permission
- Young leaders should not be permitted to share accommodation with either the adult leaders or the young people in the group or activity in which they work on residential outings or holidays
- Young leaders should be given child protection training to ensure that they know what to do if child abuse is suspected, if a child discloses abuse or if the behaviour of an adult or another young person causes concern
- They should be made aware of the need to avoid situations that could affect relationships within the group in which they are working (e.g. a relationship between a young leader and a youth member)
- With the right support and opportunities young leaders can be a valuable part of the leadership team and have the potential to be the adult leaders of the future.

## **Y6. A safe environment for children's activities**

There is a wide range of activities where children and young people may be involved in Church. These include regular or one off events, usually indoors such as youth groups, junior church and charity events, non-residential day trips and outings and residential events such as holidays, camps retreats and pilgrimages.

In all cases one person should be designated as a leader for the activity and take overall responsibility for planning, supervision and conduct. This responsibility should include undertaking a risk assessment for the activity.

The leader should ensure that all other adults involved have been properly recruited and establish with them an agreed way of working. When activities take place during church services the parents of the children will usually be close by, so written consent is not needed.

When activities take place on church premises outside of service times or in premises separate from the main body of the church, parents must sign a registration form setting out the arrangements for the activity and for the safe collection or return home of the children at the end of the activity. Additional parental consent will be required for any outings or holidays not specified in the registration form.

A register should be kept of meetings, the children/young people and adults present and a brief record of the activities undertaken. A sample report form is included.

An incident report form should be completed within 24 hours of an accident or incident.

NB: An **accident** is defined as "An unplanned, unforeseen, unexpected and unintended event, which results in injury to people or damage to property." An **incident** is more general and is an event that has an undesirable consequence be it involving physical impact or a "near miss." A sample incident report form is included.

## **Y7. Formal registration of children's groups**

Any group that includes children who are under 8 years old and that meets regularly for more than two hours in any one day, e.g. a youth group, and for more than fourteen days a year, e.g. a holiday club, must register their group with OFSTED. Please contact the local branch of OFSTED for advice. Registration includes standards for workers as well as premises, and tries to ensure that children do not come into contact with unsuitable people who may also be using the premises. A registration fee is payable annually, and inspections are made.

For other groups that include children who are under 8 years old and meet for more than two hours in any one day but for less than fourteen days a year (e.g. a holiday club) there is



a requirement to request an exemption from Ofsted at least 14 days before the group or activity is due to start.

**An exemption registration form is available to download from the Ofsted website at**

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Other/General/Exemption-notification-form>

Many church groups will not need to be registered; nevertheless, it is advisable to adhere to the standards as closely as possible. These are set out below.

### **Y8. Staffing levels**

The minimum required staffing levels for children's groups are given below. More help will be required if children are being taken out or undertaking physical activities.

0-2 years - 1 leader/helper for every 3 children 1:3

2-3 years - 1 leader/helper for every 4 children 1:4

3-8 years - 1 leader/helper for every 8 children 1:8

Over 8 years - 1 leader/helper for the first 8 children and then one extra leader/helper for every extra 12 children.

**Each group should have at least 2 adults and it is recommended that a gender balance is maintained.**

- If groups are in the same room, or adjoining rooms with doors open, one person per group is allowed
- Young people between 14-18 may help with groups but should be supervised by an adult helper who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and the child protection procedures are followed. Young people of this age will not be counted as adults in calculating staffing levels
- Adults asked to help on a very occasional basis may be seen as visitors but must be responsible to an appointed worker. If they become part of a regular rota once a month or more they should become part of the team and be properly appointed using the recruitment procedure in this document.

### **Y9. Individual tuition**

People giving individual tuition on church premises must make sure that another adult is present or nearby and that the child or young person is aware of the other person's presence.

### **Y10. Premises and other health and safety advice**

- Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter. Electric sockets should be covered

- Toilets and hand basins should be easily available. Hygienic drying facilities should be provided
- There should be enough space available for the intended activity
- If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a "Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate" acquired. Children's packed lunches should be kept refrigerated. Drinks should always be available. NB: YES regularly run Food Handling and Hygiene courses in the Diocese. For further Information check the YES website at [www.yesonthenet.org.uk/training/goodpractice/](http://www.yesonthenet.org.uk/training/goodpractice/)
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary
- Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises. A fire drill should be carried out regularly
- No smoking should be permitted in the areas where there are children
- Alcohol and illegal drugs must not be used by those having children and young people in their care or at a time that could affect their care (see the drug and alcohol guidance in this document).
- Unaccompanied children and young people should not walk to or from your premises along dark or badly lit paths
- Workers should be encouraged to attend first aid training. A list of first aiders in the parish should be compiled and kept available. All accidents must be recorded in the accident book. see [www.sja.org.uk](http://www.sja.org.uk) for advice about first aid courses. It is recommended that the 'emergency and basic first aid' course is attended by children's workers. NB: YES also run first aid courses with the help of St John's Ambulance. For further Information check the YES website at [www.yesonthenet.org.uk/training/goodpractice/](http://www.yesonthenet.org.uk/training/goodpractice/)
- The PCC should be responsible for an annual safety audit of the premises.

### **YII. First aid**

All premises used by children should have a first aid kit, the contents of which should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents regularly. All workers should be encouraged to have some first aid knowledge. (See above). A first aid book should be kept, all treatment should be written up in the book and a note made that the parents have been informed.

A suggested minimum for a First Aid kit:

2 x small wound dressing

1 x large wound dressing

1 x eye pad

4 x triangular bandages

2 x non-stick dressing 5cm x 5cm

2 x non-stick dressing 10cm x 10cm

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1 reel of low allergy adhesive tape  
4 x safety pins  
5 x pairs of disposable latex gloves  
2 x conforming bandages 6cm  
1 x resuscitation shield  
20 x wrapped adhesive dressings (plasters)  
2 x crepe bandages 5cm  
1 x disposable apron  
1 x sealed eyewash  
1 x Emergency aid card  
4 x individually wrapped cleaning wipes (non-alcoholic)  
An accident report book

## **HIV and AIDS**

Confidentiality regarding a child's HIV status should always be maintained. Good hygiene should ALWAYS be practised with all children and young people. Disposable latex gloves and a disposable apron should always be used when dealing with broken skin, body fluids and faeces.

## **Y12. Children and young people with special needs**

- Welcome children and young people with special needs to the group
- The premises and toilets should be accessible to people with disabilities
- Ask the parent about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility only of the child's parent
- If premises are being designed or refurbished, it is now a legal requirement to make reasonable adjustments to meet the possible special needs of future children and adults; advice is available.

## **Y13. Taking children and young people out**

No child under the age of 8 can be taken away on residential activities without being accompanied by his or her parent or guardian.

### **Parental consent**

Each child or young person under the age of 18 (unless they are over 16 and living away from home or married) must have the written consent of his or her parent or guardian; this gives authority to the person named as responsible for the activity to take the young person away and to act as a careful parent would. It does not transfer parental responsibility. Parental consent forms should clearly set out the activities, risks and safety measures that  
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will be adopted. In an emergency, while every attempt should be made to contact a parent, this should not delay seeking medical treatment. The group leader should take the consent forms with them on the trip.

### **Information for parents**

It is important that parents should have full information before giving consent. This should include:

- Aims and objectives of the event or activity
- Date of the event and its duration
- Details of venue including arrangements for accommodation and supervision
- Travel arrangements
- Name of group leader and contact numbers
- Information about financial, medical and insurance arrangements
- It may be helpful to hold a briefing session for parents before the event.

### **Preparing for the event**

The designated leader should:

- Make sure that insurance is adequate for the activities planned, especially any hazardous activities
- Prepare the programme and as appropriate visit all venues in advance to check for suitability and potential problems and in the case of a residential venue ensure that the premises has a current building certificate and fire certificate
- Check on the venue's own policies to ensure they can be complied with
- Ensure that any instructors or workshop leaders within the group or at the event venue are suitably qualified for specialist activities
- On arrival at the venue, establish a leader's base and ensure the children know where the base is, to which they can return to if lost or in trouble
- Ensure that all leaders have access to a full list of children/young people and leaders attending the event in case a roll call is required
- Ensure that a named person back in the home area has the names and addresses of everyone both adults and children, who are on the trip. In the event of an incident or accident the named person will be responsible for speedily contacting the parents. This person's name and contact details should be given to the parents and they should be available during the time that the group is away. This person should have the itinerary and be aware of the plans - estimated time of arrival at the destination, estimated time of return back to the church etc.

### **Health and safety**

There must be a designated leader who will oversee health and safety issues.

He or she must:

- Ensure a risk assessment appropriate to the planned event is carried out prior to the event taking place. Where appropriate, this should include obtaining a copy of the event



venue's own risk assessment. Transport and first aid provision should form part of the risk assessment

- Ensure that all leaders have a briefing prior to the event, covering the health and safety policy, supervision, child protection and transport policies.

A risk assessment pro-forma and guidelines on risk assessment can be found in the appendices at the back of this manual

### **Specialist activities**

Specialist activities (e.g. abseiling, swimming, canoeing etc) must always take place under the supervision of suitably qualified staff and explored in the risk assessment. The activity provider is responsible for the safe running of an activity whilst the event leader and other leaders retain responsibility for children and young people at all times during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff.

### **Y14. Guidelines for transporting children by private car**

- Children and young people should not be taken out with transport without the prior consent of the parents
- Unless the PCC makes a specific exception, all those who drive children on church organised activities should be over 25 years of age and should have held a full driving licence for over two years
- All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts during church activities
- All cars that carry children should be clean and in a road worthy condition
- All children must wear suitable seat belts. If there are no seat belts children should not be carried. Children under 135cms in height must have the appropriate car seat or booster seat
- At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number
- If a child is known to have a disability or special need, consideration should be given whether to have a non-driving adult in the car. This adult should sit in the back, behind the driver, with the child in the seat beside him or her
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their licence should inform the Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator
- Any driver who has an "unspent" conviction for a drink driving offence or for Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway should not transport children.
- If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car. Please record every unexpected lift

To ensure that these guidelines are adhered to it would be appropriate to get a signed undertaking, covering the above issues, from those people who are prepared to transport children in their cars.

## **Accessibility**

If any of the group uses a wheelchair, the event leader must ensure that transport used has appropriate access and securing facilities. It may be appropriate to use portable ramps. Further information can be obtained from: Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR).

## **Use of own minibus**

Some parishes use their own minibuses for short frequent journeys and sometimes for longer trips. Minibuses have a maximum capacity of 16 seated passengers plus the driver. They must comply with the various regulations about construction and fittings. A forward facing seat belt must be provided for each child. An escort must always be taken in the minibus.

All drivers of minibuses (9-16 passenger seats) are required to hold a valid driving license showing either Group A on an old style UK license or Category B and D or D1 on a new EC style license issued in any EU Country.

Drivers who passed the car test (Category B) after 1 January 1997 and who wish to drive a minibus are required to take a further statutory driving test for vehicles in Category D or D1. However, certain drivers who passed the car test (Category B) after 1 January 1997 are permitted to drive a vehicle in Category D1 (minibuses) without the need for a further test so long as the following conditions are met:

- A full driving license has been held for at least two years
- The driver is aged 21 years or over
- The driver receives no payment (or any other consideration) other than out of pocket expenses (i.e. they are a volunteer)
- The vehicle is driven for social purposes only
- There is no trailer attached
- The maximum authorised mass (mam) of the vehicle does not exceed 3.5 tonnes, or if fitted with specialised equipment used for disabled passengers, does not exceed 4.25 tonnes.

## **Minibus maintenance**

### **Pre-use inspections**

Prior to each driver using the vehicle for the first time, on each day of operation, the vehicle should be inspected to ensure that all obvious safety critical items are in a satisfactory condition, and in full working order. A report book should be completed after each daily inspection and where appropriate, repairs initiated before the minibus is driven.



### **Nil-defect reporting**

Drivers must have the provision to formally report, in writing, any defect that has occurred with the vehicle on each individual journey. A competent person must be assigned to receive and act upon these reports.

### **Vehicle maintenance**

Your minibus must be regularly inspected and maintained by professional vehicle technicians. A planned maintenance schedule should be drawn up with a contractor.

### **Hiring Vehicles**

The event leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed. The event leaders must ensure that the operators have the appropriate public service vehicle (PSV) operators' licence.

When booking transport, the event leader should ensure that seat belts are available for children and young people. All minibuses and coaches which carry groups of 3 or more children aged between 3 and 16 years inclusive must be fitted with a seat belt for each child. The seats must face forward and seat restraints must comply with legal requirements.

Further information can be obtained from:

Department of Transport  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DR

## Law on seat belts – from RoSPA

	Front Seat	Rear Seat	Who is responsible
Driver	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available		Driver
Child up to 3 years	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used. If one is not available in a taxi, then the child may travel unrestrained	Driver
Child from 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday up to either 135cms or 12 years old	Correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used	Where seat belts fitted, correct child restraint <b>MUST</b> be used. <b>MUST</b> use adult belt if the correct child restraint is not available in three scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a licensed taxi/PHV</li> <li>• Over a short distance for reason of unexpected necessity</li> <li>• Two occupied child restraints prevent fitment of a third.</li> </ul> In addition, a child 3 and over may travel unrestrained in the rear seat of a vehicle if seat belts are not available	Driver
Child over 135cms or 12 to 13 years old	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available	Driver
Adult passengers (i.e. 14 years and over)	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available	Seat belt <b>MUST</b> be worn if available	Passenger

(See [www.childcarseats.org.uk](http://www.childcarseats.org.uk) for more information about suitable restraints).

### Y15. Additional guidelines for residential events for children and young people

Following Department for Children, Schools and Families (previously DfES) guidance, no child under the age of 8 can be taken away on residential activities without its parent or guardian.

#### Overnight arrangements

- Boys and girls must have separate sleeping and washing facilities, which are private to them
- Mixed groups must have adults of both sexes involved. Adults should have separate accommodation but in close proximity to the young people

- All children should be made aware of where the leaders base is and where the designated leader overseeing medical issues sleeps in case there is an emergency during the night
- It must be impressed on children that they should not hesitate to go to the leaders base in case of emergency. If in doubt, they should go anyway
- Extra leaders should be assigned to be on duty on the first and last night and should be led by experienced leaders anticipating first and last night problems
- Duty leaders and room supervisors must ensure that they have access to children and young persons medical records and parental consent forms.

### **Y16. Sleeping on church premises**

Churches sometimes arrange sleepovers for children or church premises may be used during pilgrimages or missions for example. The guidance for taking children away must be followed as closely as possible.

The venue must be suitable, have a kitchen available and washing facilities. There must be separate sleeping toilet and washing facilities for adults and young people. When part of the activity is for young people to remain together separate sleeping areas should be organised for girls and boys. Likewise separate washing and toileting should be provided or different times for washing arranged so that there is some privacy.

Enough adults should be present, at least two, male and female, to ensure adequate supervision. Young people under the age of 18 must not be left alone overnight. Depending on the event it may be necessary to ensure a rota of awake adults during the night or at least until all the youngsters have settled down. All leaders and helpers must be (CRB) checked before they can help at a sleepover.

Great care must be taken to ensure the safety of the young people from the risk of fire:

- The external entrance to the building must be kept clear in case of access for emergency services
- The passageways/corridors should be kept clear
- There should be two separate routes out from the sleeping accommodation
- All exit routes should be clearly marked
- It must be possible to open all final exit doors without a key
- Prohibit the use of naked flames, candles and smoking
- All internal doors should be kept closed at night to prevent the spread of smoke or fire
- Portable fires should be placed in safe positions and turned off at night
- All adults should have access to a torch and a telephone
- A list of those present should be hung up near the main exit door. Everyone should know where outside to assemble and a roll call completed
- Anyone discovering a fire should raise the alarm by shouting **FIRE**
- The fire service should be called to all fires. Use the 999 facility

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- Adults should know where to locate fire fighting equipment and how it is operated. This equipment should only be used if safe to do so
  - Leaders and young people should have a short fire drill and information on arrival.

### **Y17. Guidelines for holiday clubs and missions**

These are situations when there are likely to be extra helpers for part or all of the activity:

- Plan the activity carefully. If in the course of one year several events for under 8 year olds, extend over more than 2 hours for more than 14 days there is a requirement for the activity to be registered with OFSTED
- Ensure that all the usual health and safety recommendations are in place
- Make sure there are enough helpers for all the activities
- If there are many new helpers divide them into teams ensuring that there is an experienced, properly appointed leader responsible for each team. Every helper should go through the proper recruitment process.
- If using volunteers from other churches make sure they have complied with that church's child protection procedures and have been safely recruited
- Give all helpers a copy of the pocket guide for workers with children "Keeping Children and Young People Safe in Church" (see separate document)
- Ask the children's parents to fill in a consent form to cover all the activities

Sometimes an outside organisation is used for a youth event, or a mission. It is the responsibility of the Church Council to ensure that the organisation is bone fide, has its own child protection procedures and is properly accountable. Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or Diocesan Youth Adviser for information or advice (see Appendix 13 for a form to use in these circumstances).

### **Y18. Mixed age groups in churches and child protection**

One of the positive things that the church can offer is a place where young and old, children and adults, can be together, including worship and learning about the faith together. Children have the opportunity to get to know adults in a shared activity; perhaps singing, making music, serving, bell ringing, acting together, study groups or parish weekends.

When these activities include children without their parents or carers being present, it is the responsibility of the PCC or equivalent body to make sure that these children are cared for, within health, safety and child protection guidelines. Experience has shown that mixed age groups are vulnerable to infiltration by people seeking to harm children. The opportunity for regular informal contact can enable an offender or potential offender to gain the trust of a child or young person enabling them to move on to offend. With clear procedures in place it will give confidence to parents that their children and young people are suitably protected when involved in a mixed age group activity.

## **Principles for mixed age activities**

- Mixed age activities must have designated children's leaders/chaperones who have been appointed in accordance with the recruitment procedures in this document.
- There should be sufficient designated children's leaders/chaperones to ensure a proper level of supervision of the children and young people.
- All adults in mixed age group activities should be advised of safeguarding issues and good practice associated with activities in mixed age groups.

If these Principles are followed then only the designated children's leaders/chaperones in the group will require CRB checks.

## **Implementing the policy**

- Mixed age groups should identify who their designated children's leaders/chaperones should be, including the number of designated children's leaders/chaperones required to ensure an adequate level of supervision of the children/young people in the group
- Organists, choir masters, tower captains and bell ringing trainers should always be appointed as children's leaders if there are or are likely to be children for whom they are responsible
- There must always be a minimum of two designated children's leaders/chaperones present when children or young people are being taught or during rehearsals
- Parents must sign a consent form which sets out the arrangements for the activity e.g. arrangements for weddings, arrangements for dropping off and collecting, what, if any, physical contact will be needed during training
- A register of children and young people under 18 years must be kept by the leader of the activity
- Safety must be the top priority in the bell tower or organ loft. Those responsible must be aware of the insurance requirements for the activity
- The leader of the activity should make sure that everyone knows what to do if child abuse is suspected, if a child discloses abuse or if the behaviour of an adult causes concern. These adults should be asked to agree and sign up to good practice guidelines.

These are the main ways that children are protected. Guidelines are provided in this document and also by various interest groups for example the Royal School of Church Music, or Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. These guidelines should include:

- Not arranging to meet children outside the group without their parent's permission
- Not giving extra tuition in your own home
- Not giving lifts to a child on their own or without the parent's permission.

Adults who have been convicted of a sexual offence against a child or young person will not be able to take part in church activities involving children.

### **Y19. Private tuition on church premises**

If church premises are used for individual tuition, the PCC must be aware of and approve the arrangements. Another adult should be present or nearby and the child or young person should be made aware of the other person's presence. Additional guidance, for example from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, the Incorporated Society of Musicians, or the Royal School of Church Music, should be obtained and followed as applicable.

### **Y20. Home visits**

Make sure that any home visits to children and young people are made with the agreement of the person to whom the worker is accountable. A record should be kept of all such visits.

### **Y21. Seeing young people on their own as a "befriender", "listener" or "counsellor" in a youth camp or parish setting**

Sometimes it is important to give young people time 'one-to-one'. This should only be on an occasional basis with the prior consent of parents and the person to whom the worker is accountable. In an emergency, if possible, make sure another adult is aware and the young person knows where another adult is.

### **Guidelines**

- Be open, available and relaxed
- Listen before you speak
- Avoid putting any pressure on the person
- Remember none of us have all the answers
- Help the person decide what they want to do
- Be part of a team with a trained co-ordinator who gives supervision
- Use other members of the team to explore general issues further
- Always meet in an open area where others are around but not too close
- In exceptional circumstances, if a person is distressed and more privacy is needed, use a separate room after telling another adult about the arrangements. Make sure that the young person knows where the nearest adult is
- Preferably women should advise females, and men advise males
- Keep a record of who is spoken to (not the content unless agreed with the person) in case follow up is needed. Sign, date and time the notes and hand them to the co-ordinator
- If a young person is distressed they should be entrusted to another adult at the end of the session
- If a situation is encountered where the listener feels uncomfortable they should speak to the co-ordinator as soon as possible.

## **Confidentiality**

At the first meeting, explain that the conversation will be confidential unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the person is being harmed themselves, if they are harming others, or if they know that a child or young person is being harmed, the information will have to be passed on. The person will be told what will be done and how they will be supported if they need to talk to someone else. In these circumstances always make a written record, sign, date and time, and follow your child protection procedures.

No one should see a child or young person on their own on a regular basis unless they are professionally trained counsellors, properly appointed and vetted, and being professionally supervised.

## **Y22. Use of own home**

Many church workers use their own homes during their ministry, perhaps for counselling or a bible study group. Any activity which includes under 18 year olds when their parents are not present are subject to the child protection procedures:

- Rooms used for church activities should be checked for physical hazards
- Rooms should be clean and hygienic
- Bedrooms should not be used in any circumstances
- Two adult workers should be present from before the first child arrives until after the last one leaves.

## **Y23. Unaccompanied children**

Children may begin attending church services or church activities without their parent's knowledge.

- Welcome the children and try to establish whether their parents are aware of where they are
- Try to discover when they are due home and encourage them to keep to that arrangement
- If possible ring the parents or get the young person to ring to gain the parents' consent to the child remaining
- Complete a registration form as much as possible
- Make sure a responsible adult takes care of the child – this is particularly important during public worship where unknown adults may attend and attempt to befriend the child
- Give the child information about the church service/activity to take home. This information should include contact details so that the parent can get in touch
- Try and include the child with members of the same age
- If the child comes regularly, try to establish contact with the parents
- Do not take the child on outings or transport them without the parent's consent.

## **Y24. Communicating electronically and the Internet**

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should always take place within clear and explicit boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.

The risks presented by developments in modern technology are becoming increasingly recognised. Adults who seek to harm children have been known to use text messaging and Internet chat rooms to “groom” children. This area is now specifically addressed by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

### **Mobile phones**

Short Message Service (SMS) messaging is a quick and easy way to communicate with others and is a popular and often preferred means of communication with young people. It is necessary to 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.

Adult leaders must consider whether it is necessary and appropriate to hold the mobile phone numbers of children. The general principle is that all communications with young people should be open, transparent and appropriate to the nature of the relationship. In the first instance contact should always be made at the phone number the parent has provided on the child’s behalf. Good practice would include agreeing with young people and parents what kind of information will be communicated directly to young people by text message. This information should only be “need to know” information such as the last minute cancellation of a meeting/activity or a change of venue. Remember that text messaging is rarely an appropriate response to a child or young person in a crisis situation or at risk of harm. It should only be used as a last resort when other forms of communication are not possible.

The following good practice is also required:

- The mobile phone numbers and email addresses of young people will be carefully stored (in accordance with data protection principles) and access will only be provided to those who need access for a legitimate reason
- Adult leaders must never engage in personal or sensitive communications with children via text messages, email or other Internet or web based communication channels.

### **Camera phones**

There have already been a number of cases where young people have been placed at risk as a result of the ability to discreetly record and transit images through mobile phones. The use of mobile phones in this way can be very difficult to monitor. The procedure for the use of photographs, film and video should be observed in relation to the use of mobile phones as cameras/videos. Particular care is required in areas where personal privacy is

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important e.g. toilet and sleeping quarters. No photographs or video footage should ever be permitted in such areas of personal privacy.

All concerns about the inappropriate use of mobile phones should be dealt with in line with the procedures for responding to concerns about child abuse in this document. This may include the concerns being reported to the Police.

### **Use of shared computers**

Ensure that all shared computers have a different password for all users so that they cannot be accessed secretly.

### **Internet guidelines for children and young people**

- Be Net smart
- Never tell anyone you meet on the Internet your home address, your telephone number, or your school's name unless your parent or carer specifically gives you permission
- Never send anyone your picture, credit card, bank details, or anything else without first checking with your parent or carer
- Never give your password to anyone, even a best friend
- Never arrange to meet anyone in person without first agreeing it with your parent or carer, and get them to come along to the first meeting, which should always be in a public place
- Never hang around in a chat room or in a conference if someone says or writes something which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, and always report it to your parent or carer
- Never respond to nasty, suggestive, or rude emails or postings in Usenet Groups
- If you see something you do not like (e.g. bad language or distasteful pictures) then move on or click 'back'. If you are still concerned talk to your parent or carer
- Always remember if someone makes you an offer which seems too good to be true, it probably is.

These latter guidelines for children and young people are adapted from the NCH paper 'Children on the Net: Opportunities and Hazards' (1998). NCH remains one of the most useful sources for the latest information on Internet safety for children and young people.

### **Online Safety Commandments**

- Remember, people may not be who, or how old they say they are
- Never disclose identifying details
- Only MSN with people already known in the real world
- Never reply to cyber-bullying, block the sender, save the evidence, and tell a trusted adult
- Do not spend time on websites that make you feel bad about yourself

- Set social networking profiles to “private” and be careful who is added as a “friend”
- Set Internet security settings as high possible
- Never do anything online that could jeopardise your education or your career, or lead to a criminal record
- Think of yourself as a role model, what might happen if a much younger child saw your on-line profile
- Never respond to spam emails, dubious competitions or chain letters
- Do not spend too much time online, have “real-world” friends and interests too
- Pray regularly that God will bless and protect your time on line

From Nicola David ‘World of danger behind the bedroom door’ Church Times 22 February 2008. Nicola David is the author of *Staying Safe Online*, Grove Books 2007.

### **Y25. Taking and publishing photographs including websites <sup>1</sup>**

Taking and publishing photographs of children is usually enjoyed by children and parents and can bring good publicity, but there are some important issues to note. The issues are the same for still photographs or films, and regardless of the particular technology used. For convenience they are all referred to as images.

Images count as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998, and therefore the eight principles of the Act apply. It is therefore important that the consent of the children and their parents is obtained for the taking and use of images.

Do not take pictures of children without another adult present. Those taking photographs need to bear in mind that parents and carers may have good reasons for refusing consent, for example:

- If individual children are identified, it would be possible for paedophiles to use them to target prospective victims
- Some children may have been subject to disputed custody matters, be in Local Authority care, adopted or they may be subject to a witness protection scheme, and their whereabouts should not be too widely known. Parents and carers of the affected children will know this and will appropriately withhold consent without necessarily giving the reason
- Photographs taken using digital cameras can be manipulated for child pornography, which is a growing problem on the Internet. This is particularly relevant if children are scantily dressed.

Good practice is therefore as follows:

- Obtain consent from parents and children before taking images. Consent need not be in writing if it is not proposed to publish the pictures in any way, but if they are going to be posted up, used in a newspaper or magazine (including the Diocesan or parish

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<sup>1</sup> Consent form for using images Appendix 19  
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newspapers and magazines), or put on the Internet, then a specific consent should be obtained. Since images are usually taken in the context of a specific activity for which parental consent is sought, the simplest way of dealing with this is to add a suitable wording to the parental consent form.

- If the image is to be published, avoid naming the child
- If the child is named, avoid using their image
- If children are scantily dressed, e.g. for swimming, then:
  - Focus on the activity rather than a particular child
  - Avoid full face and body shots
  - Consider the age of the children involved
- Be clear about whether the image is to be retained for further use
- Store the image securely.

It is necessary to exercise common sense in the application of these guidelines in the case of a general photograph of a public event, such as a church fete, where no individual or group of people is the focus. It would not be practicable to obtain the prior consent of everyone concerned, nor is this required by data protection law. It is still appropriate to consider carefully where and how such photographs should be displayed.

Schools, including church schools, will have their own policies which apply to children on school premises, or engaged in school sponsored activities. The Department for Children, Schools and Families also publishes advice on this issue, available on their website.

Newspapers and other print media are bound by the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice, of which the latest version was issued 1 June 2004. Legitimate journalism is a 'special purpose' under the Data Protection Act, which exempts it from the requirement of security, but there are numerous restrictions on photographing children. These are not likely to be relevant to church use but advice if needed should be obtained from the Diocesan Communications Department.

## **Y26. Guidance on drugs and alcohol**

### **Purpose**

To provide workers with a clear policy and a practical framework to enable them to work with young people in a positive, drug free, environment.

### **Suggested Parish policy statement on drugs and alcohol**

- This parish does not condone the misuse of drugs or alcohol nor their illegal supply
- This parish will work pro-actively with young people to enable them to make informed decisions about drug and alcohol use
- The welfare of young people must be paramount at all times
- The youth and children's workers will observe the current legal framework and act within it

- Youth and children's workers will not take illegal substances and will make sure that they are not under the influence of legal drugs or alcohol whilst working with and responsible for children or young people.

### **Confidentiality**

The parish aims to protect the young person's right to privacy, however unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where the young person's actions or behaviour represents a serious risk to the safety or well being of other members, workers, or the community at large.

### **Police**

In circumstances where a worker is given, finds, or confiscates an illegal substance, there is no legal obligation (see below) to contact the Police but it would be good practice to inform them of the circumstances. It is always beneficial to maintain an effective working partnership with the local Police.

### **Parents**

In cases of immediate risk to health the parents will be contacted. If the worker believes parental contact would exacerbate the situation (e.g. the family home may be an important factor in the young person's drug use) he/she must discuss the situation with the Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator prior to any contact being made.

### **Dealing with drug related situations**

Establish and be clear about the nature of the incident before deciding on any course of action.

### **Finding drugs**

If workers find any drugs, including prescribed medication, in a communal area they will be removed, to limit the risk to others. The law allows youth workers to confiscate illegal drugs, but they must be destroyed immediately or handed to the Police (it is not a legal requirement to inform the Police who the substance was taken from - see **disposal of illegal drugs**). If the drug is prescribed medication it will either be returned to the owner, or handed in to a pharmacist.

### **Disposal of illegal drugs**

Where the quantity of drugs found is large (implying supply) the Police should be notified. Small quantities of drugs can be flushed away. The incident must first be logged (see record keeping), and should be carried out in the presence of another worker. Disposal should be carried out as soon as practicable, otherwise the worker could themselves be open to charges of possession. Workers must take extreme care if disposing of needles. If no sharps bins are available they should be carefully placed in a safe place (e.g. drinks can) until proper disposal can be arranged.



### **Use on premises**

The parish will not tolerate the use of **any** drugs on the premises. Where workers suspect drug use is taking place they must always take action. This may include the young person being asked to leave, or the Police being contacted.

### **Intoxication on Premises**

Anyone whose behaviour is disruptive, whether due to drugs or alcohol, will be challenged and asked to change their behaviour. If they refuse to do so they will be asked to leave the premises. If their condition gives cause for concern medical assistance will be called.

### **Incident recording**

An incident book will be maintained. This book will record all incidents including drug related incidents. This should not be a loose-leaf file, it should be stored securely. Staff should endeavour to record accurate details as soon as possible following an incident.

### **Referral**

Should a young person be identified as a drug user, they should be offered support, guidance, and relevant referral if needed.