

Child Protection Policy

Carrigaline Baptist Church

(Reviewed and Amended September 2016 in line with TUSLA Child and Family Agency)

Introduction: General policy statement on children, young people and the church

As members of this church we commit ourselves first to praying to our heavenly Father for the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all children and young people among us.

As members of this church we also commit ourselves to do all we are able to ensure the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all children and young people among us.

We recognise that the paramount responsibility for children and young people lies with their parents, and so we wish to support and strengthen parental responsibility for them.

We also recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to do what we are able to prevent the neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to handle appropriately any abuse discovered or suspected.

The church is committed to carefully selecting, supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and to providing supervision.

Each worker with children and young people must read this Child Protection Policy and agree to follow the guidelines contained in it.

Good practice with children and young people

Children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity since they are all created in the image of God. To this end:

Each leader or worker should:

Treat all children and young people (meaning under-eighteens) with respect and dignity befitting their age, taking care to control language, tone of voice, and body language.

Not engage in or tolerate any of the following:

- invading the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting;
- rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in 'fun';
- inappropriate or intrusive touching;
- any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting any child or young person.

Learn to control and discipline children without using physical punishment or 'put downs' (see *Managing the discipline of children and young people* below).

Not let youngsters involve them in excessive attention seeking that is physical or overtly sexual.

Ensure that they are not alone with a child where they cannot be seen.

In the church building, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.

Where privacy and confidentiality are important, ensure (a) that another adult knows the conversation is taking place and with whom, and (b) that another adult is available in the building, and the young person knows they are there.

Make sure that any touching should:

- be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult e.g. first aid, safety, comforting.
- be with the child's permission – resistance from the child should be respected.
- avoid breasts, buttocks and groin.
- be open and not secretive.
- be governed by the age and developmental stage of the child.

Not share sleeping accommodation with children or young people if you take a group away. On occasion of your group going away or an 'over-nighter' make sure there is at least two permanent leaders on duty.

Never tolerate abusive youth activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying etc.)

Avoid showing favouritism to any individual.

Crèche

A minimum of two adults will be assisting with crèche each week. If a child needs to use the toilet facilities they will be accompanied by an adult. If a child needs their nappy changed the parent will be alerted by text. A sign-in form will be completed by each parent.

A stand-by for crèche and Sunday school will be on call during the service.

Managing the discipline of children and young people

In the event of a child or young person being disruptive or unruly leaders should be insistent, consistent and persistent.

NEVER smack or hit a child and discipline out of love NEVER anger.
(Call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with the situation unwisely in your anger.)

Do not shout in anger or put down a child.

Communicate rules as laid out in the Code of Conduct form, consulting the children where appropriate.

Talk to a child away from the 'group', not publicly.
(Explain what they have done wrong, encourage remorse - leave them on a positive note)

Never reject a child, just the behaviour.
(Encourage the child that you want them, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour).

Each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We, therefore, need to ask ourselves "Why is the child behaving like that?"
Decide what is the best method for discipline and encourage that child.
Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare them to each other, but encourage and build them up.

The church should ensure that:

All new leaders/helpers shall sign the specimen form below on becoming a leader/helper.

Each new leader/helper to follow the Garda Vetting procedure as often as is required.

Two written references are obtained for leaders who have been with us less than two years, or who have been away for the last two years.

There is a probationary period of at least 6 months for all youth leaders/helpers appointed.

Annual reviews are held for all leaders/helpers with the person responsible for them.

An Accident Book be kept in the Building in which to enter details of all accidents involving young people: Name, Date, Accident, Action taken, How and when parents/carers informed, Names and addresses of witnesses.

At least one Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is appointed to whom all allegations or suspicions of child abuse may be referred. (see *Handling and Recognising Abuse*) Our DLPs are Ralph Depping or Patricia Vernon.

The Church shall appoint a Child Protection Officer.

The Child Protection Officer with the support of the Elders and the Church will be responsible for ensuring the Child Protection Policy is fully implemented in the life of the Church.

Their responsibilities will be:

- Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is kept up to date and amended in line with TUSLA – the Child and Welfare Agency of the state.
- Provide on-going training in Child Protection as is appropriate for all Leaders/Helpers. (This may mean arranging for a trained person to provide training)
- Ensure each Leader/Helper complete and return the 'Volunteer Application Form' and keep on file for record.
- Ensure each Leader/Helper complete the Garda Vetting Process and keep on file for record.
- Provide an Accident Report Book in which all accidents involving young people can be recorded.
- Advise and support each department in their responsibilities as outlined in the Child protection Policy.

Our Child protection officer is: Christine Newenham.

These guidelines be publicly displayed on the church web site.

Each department should ensure that:

A register of children and young persons (that is all under 18 year olds) is kept based on information from forms given to all parents/guardians to fill in, including: Names, Address(es), Contact numbers, Notes of medical or other problems, together with the granting of Consent by the parents/guardians to involvement by their children in the normal activities of the group, and special trips e.g. Bowling & Hiking.

The leaders name and contact be sent to all parents/carers of the children attending as often as appropriate.

A policy of openness with parents is developed as much as possible.

Where appropriate, the Code of Conduct, form shall be signed by each of the young persons and a parent or carer.

Contact, communication and travel with children and young people

Each leader and worker should:

Not invite a child or young person to their home alone; but to invite a group making sure there is another responsible adult present.

Make sure the parents/guardians know where the child is.

Not invite children or young people to events outside the church building without the consent of a parent or guardian.

Not contact young people through social networking sites such as Facebook.

Always seek prior permission from a parent or guardian to contact children or young person outside official church activities, in particular direct contact by mobile phone or email.

Ensure that consent is given in relation to the taking of photos or video.

Not give lifts to children or young people on their own, unless permission has been given by parent/carer. It is good practice to arrange for a different child to be the last dropped home on each occasion and always make sure the child sits in the rear of the car.

Ensure your insurance allows you to carry children other than your own and ensure seat belts are worn at all times.

Good practice with colleagues

For mixed groups there must always be 2 Adults present either 2 Females or 1 Male 1 Female.

It is important to be clear about individual responsibilities in a team.

If you see another leader or worker acting in ways, which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your supervisor about your concerns.

Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

Where another leader is a young person under the age of eighteen, then leaders who are eighteen or over should be careful to treat such younger leaders with the same care with which they would treat young persons under these guidelines.

These measures will also protect leaders and workers from false accusations.

Recognition and handling of abuse

Definition of abuse

There are four broad categories of abuse:
(Taken from 'Children First': TUSLA Child and Family agency)

Neglect

'An omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to affection from adults, medical care'

Emotional

'Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.'

Physical

'Physical abuse is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction which is reasonably within the control of a parent or a person in a position of responsibility, power or trust.'

Sexual

'Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others'

Signs and Symptoms of abuse

Neglect. Some indicators include:

Children persistently left alone without adequate care and supervision.
Malnourishment, lack of food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding.
Lack of adequate clothing and inattention to basic hygiene.
Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental problems.

Emotional. Some indicators include:

Rejection and continuous lack of praise and encouragement.
Lack of comfort, care and love.
Inappropriate non-physical punishment.
Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play) and serious over-protectiveness.

Physical. Some indicators include:

Bruises, Fractures, Burns/Scalds, Abrasions/Lacerations.
Shaking violently, Excessive force in handling.

Sexual. Some indicators include:

Noticeable and uncharacteristic change in behaviour and hints about sexual activity.
Age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour or use of language.
Separation anxiety; Depression; Running away or missing school; Self harm, eating disorders; Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse.

Online use can also be an indicator for sexual abuse. For example:

Excessive texting/use of computer
Secretive use of computer

Responding to abuse

Reasonable grounds for concern will include:

An injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse.

Consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Admission or indication by someone of an alleged abuse.

Specific indication from the child that (s) he was abused.

An account by a person who saw the child being abused.

Evidence, such as an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way.

If a child or young person discloses abuse:

Do Stay calm, Don't Panic

Making a disclosure to an adult is a difficult step for a child, they will watch the adult closely to see how they react and receive the information. It is important to remain as calm and as natural as possible.

Do Listen, Don't pressurise the child

Listening to what the child has to say is important. Give them time and the opportunity to speak as much as they want to.

Do Accept what the child says, Don't show signs of emotion or make assumptions

Disclosures are disturbing and make you feel anger, disgust or disbelief. It is important to conceal these emotions and differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the abuse itself. The child, quite possibly, may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what has been done to them.

Do be open and honest, Don't Promise to keep secrets

It is important that you are open and honest with children. Acknowledge that the child came to you because they trust you. Explain that you will be sharing this information with people who understand and can help. Make it clear that there are some secrets that should be told otherwise it might make things worse.

Do Reassure, Don't make a child repeat a disclosure, ask leading questions or start to investigate

It is important to reassure the child that they are doing the right thing telling an adult about what has happened. Any questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only.

Example: *'Do you want to tell me more?'*

Avoid leading questions such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse or suggesting what else might have happened.

Example: *'Did your brother do that to you?'*

Do remain supportive to the child

Following disclosure it is important to provide support:

Maintain a positive relationship with the child

Keep lines of communication open by listening carefully

Continue to include the child in the usual activities

Recording abuse

Record all alleged abuse in writing and not in the presence of the child.

When: Date and Time

Who: The person(s) involved

What: Record in a factual rather than judgemental way

Inform your DLP immediately, don't delay or do nothing.

Maintain confidentiality. It is essential that any child protection information is only discussed on a 'need to know' basis.

Reporting abuse

Once the DLP has been notified they should:

Contact social worker for informal consultation or to make a standard report.

OR

Contact An Garda Siochana if a child is in immediate danger and social worker cannot be reached.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The DLP must have:

- A working knowledge of the organisation
- Good listening and communication skills
- An understanding of abuse
- Be available to contact

Their role includes:

- Providing information and advice to leaders and workers of children and young people
- Receive and consider child protection concerns
- Informal consultation with the HSE (see contact details below)
- Make a formal referral/standard report to the HSE Children and Family services or to An Garda Siochana
- Manage confidential records
- Inform parents/carers unless it puts the child at further risk

Contact Tel: Social worker South Lee – 021 4923001

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/ChildrenandFamilyServices/>

Volunteer Application Form (Confidential)
Please fill in the form below clearly and return to the Leader Responsible.

Christian name & Surname:

Address:

Date of birth:

Telephone number:

Mobile number:

Email:

Your current occupation:

How did you become a Christian?

Briefly describe your understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Do you have any previous relevant experience in children's/youth work?

Do you have any spare time hobbies, interests or activities?

Name of Group you will be working with:

Person to whom you will be responsible (e.g. Leader):

Role and range of work/tasks to be undertaken:

'I confirm that I have read the church Child Care Policy on protecting children and young people. I understand that it is my duty to protect the children and young people with whom I come into contact. I will endeavour to follow the guidelines and if there are things I do not understand of if I have reason to be concerned about a child, I will check with the Designated Liaison Person: *Ralph Depping or Patricia Vernon*'

Signed & Dated

'I confirm that I have filled out the '*Garda Vetting Form*' and have returned it to the '*Child Protection Officer*' *Christine Newenham*'

Signed & Dated

Where required please provide the names and addresses of two people whom we could contact for a reference (not relatives)

Name

Address

Email

Name

Address

Email

Code of Conduct & Consent Form
To be signed by young person and Parent/Carer

Name:

Date of Birth:

Class in School:

Address:

Parents/Carers Name:

Telephone Home:

Mobile - Dad:

Mobile - Mum:

Mobile - Child:

Code of Conduct

All members of the group are expected to:
Respect the authority of the leaders/helpers.
Respect the views and feelings of other members.
Respect the personal property of leaders/helpers and other members.
Show due care and responsibility for equipment and property.

The following behaviours are unacceptable:

Smoking, consumption of alcohol and abuse of any other substance within the community centre or grounds or at any of the group's activities.
Physical abuse of other members or leaders/helpers.
Verbal abuse, including 'put-downs' of other members or leaders/helpers.
Wilful destruction or damage of property or equipment.

Parent/Carer

When a group member is away from the usual meeting place, I give my permission for my child to travel by private transport (cars of leaders & parents or hired coach). **Yes No**

I give permission for my child to walk home from the community centre. **Yes No**

I give permission for leaders to contact my child on their mobile phone. **Yes No**

I understand that personal accident and insurance is my responsibility and that the leaders cannot be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury suffered by my child whilst at a children's or youth activity.

I give my permission for emergency medical treatment to be carried out in the event that I cannot be contacted.

Parent/Carer

I give my permission for my child to be involved in activities at Carrigaline Baptist Church and agree to ensure that they abide by the above Code of Conduct.

Signed & Dated

Child

I have read the above 'Code of Conduct' and agree to abide by it.
Signed & Dated