

Tips for All Group Leaders

Ensuring Safeguarding standards are met when engaging with children and young people in a Church setting

General Points to note

These notes will assist the PSC Chair and Group Leaders to complete relevant parts of the Annual Parish Self- audit.

1. Create and maintain an attendance register for your group.
2. Group Leaders must ensure that parental consent and social media permission is obtained.
3. Group Leaders must have an accident form available for each group session. This form must be completed as soon as possible, i.e. at the end of session and must be shared with the parent/guardian and signed by the parent/guardian and group leader at the end of the group session. This is a formal record of what happened and who was informed.
4. Group leaders must create a code of conduct with the children attending the group using age appropriate child friendly language.
5. Group Leaders must give the child's parent/guardian a copy of the children's code of conduct following the first group meeting.
6. Group Leaders must give all volunteers a copy of the adult codes of conduct for their specific role and retain a signed copy in the group file.
7. Know who the Diocesan Designated Safeguarding Officer is (Philip O'Hara). See below for details

USEFUL CONTACTS

PSNI	101
Social Services (Regional Out of Hours Service)	028 9504 9999
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Safeguarding Office 511 Ormeau Road BELFAST BT7 3GS	028 9049 2798 office@soddc.org
Designated Liaison Person Philip O'Hara	07534 992124 philip.ohara@soddc.org

Points to note

1. Ratios of adults to children

For under two-year-old 1 adult to 3 Children

2-3 years 1 adult to 4 children

4- 8 years 1 adult to 8 children

8-11 years 1 adult to 10 children

12-18 years 1 adult to 10

2. Complaints procedure

Parents must be made aware of the existence of the Diocesan Complaints Procedure (current Resource Pack found at <http://www.downandconnor.org/safeguarding/files/2014/10/PARISH-RESOURCE-PACK-Revised-Edition-October-2013.pdf> on page 74-75)

3. Reporting procedures for all allegations, concern or suspicion of child abuse

Group leader must ensure that parents and children are aware of how to raise a concern e.g.

- 1) The bookmark
- 2) The Reporting a Concern leaflet
- 3) The child friendly leaflet – this leaflet will be available soon from the safeguarding office.

4. Support, advice and guidance

Everyone needs to feel that they are supported in the work they do as a volunteer.

- 1) Group leaders
Can seek advice and guidance from their local PSC Chair
- 2) Group volunteer
Should know to ask for help and guidance from the group leader.
All volunteers, leaders, deputies etc can seek help and support if needed from
 - a) Safeguarding Support Officers (contact the safeguarding office) for details
 - b) The Safeguarding Office Philip O'Hara - Susan Gordon

5. All group leaders should be alert to who needs to be **vett**ed. It is the responsibility of the group leader to inform the PSC of those within their group who require to be vetted.

6. Training

In the “new world of training” initially all group leaders must come forward for training. Once they have been trained, the new world training will target deputy leaders/assistants and others. Group leaders need to put their names forward to PSC Chairs in order to secure a place on the 1 full day/2 x ½ days training. This is referred to as level 2.

What are the two main levels of training for Parish Volunteers?

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
Safeguarding Children Information Session	New Mandatory Child Safeguarding Training
<p>Length: 90 minutes</p> <p>Who is this information session for?</p> <p>This information session is recommended for all volunteers and staff who need to have basic awareness of safeguarding e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Diocesan and parish staff and volunteers (e.g. secretaries, Diocesan personnel, sacristans) • PSC members (other than chair or deputy) 	<p>Length: 1 day</p> <p>Who is required to attend this training?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Clergy • At least one leader/coordinator/deputy from each Church activity which involves children • Key personnel with responsibility for safeguarding, e.g. Designated Liaison Person's, advisors, support personnel • Advisory Panel personnel • PSC (chair and deputy) • Diocesan Safeguarding Committee Members
Refresher training every 3 years	<p>Refresher training every 3 years</p> <p>This training is also offered over 2 evenings but BOTH sessions MUST be attended in order to complete the course</p>

A framework for a simple complaints procedure

If there is a complaint which is not a child protection issue, the parent or child should follow the framework below for making a complaint which is not related to child protection:

1. Any complaint should normally be raised, first by speaking with the leader of the group and then,
2. if not satisfied, then it should be raised with the Parish Priest
3. If you feel that you do not want to discuss the matter with a leader, if he /she cannot answer your concern, or if your query is more serious, a formal written complaint should be submitted to the Parish Priest whose contact details should be made available to you. Please be assured that all complaints will be looked into in the strictest confidence and that a response will be offered within the agreed time-frames. If the nature of your complaint suggests that a child may be at risk of 'significant harm', then a report will be made to the statutory child protection agencies in line with the Diocese of Down and Connor Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

4. The parish undertakes to acknowledge any formal complaints within five working days. It is our aim to resolve all complaints within four weeks but this may take longer depending on the nature of the complaint. In any event you will be kept informed of progress. Please understand that most leaders are volunteers and that it may take a little while for them to reply in detail.
5. Should you feel unhappy with the initial response there are arrangements to appeal a decision regarding a complaint or grievance.

For more information regarding the current complaints procedure please access this in the resource pack found at <http://www.downandconnor.org/safeguarding/files/2014/10/PARISH-RESOURCE-PACK-Revised-Edition-October-2013.pdf> pages 73-74.

Ongoing with a child (6-12 years) who wants to share a concern (useful pointers)

1. The existing Child Protection Policy and Procedures gives a clear indication of things to do and more importantly things you should not do (The Do's and Don'ts)
2. Useful points to remember
 - a. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in speaking up, e.g. "I'm glad you have shared your worry with me and I understand how brave you have been".
 - b. Acknowledge as the adult you have a responsibility to help. This takes the burden of responsibility and worry away from the child. "I will need to speak to someone who will be able to help you. There are adults whose job it is to know what to do."

Note: Never use the word "story" in your language to a child. This could be misinterpreted that the child has in some way "made it up". Any negative reinforcement, perceived or otherwise will silence a child.