

SECTION 4

INFORMATION FACTSHEETS

Leaders

Factsheet

Why be a Leader/Helper?

Who wants the hassle?

- Volunteering is an honourable and worthwhile thing to do.
- Research shows that the Church is foremost in helping children and young people.
- You have the privilege of helping children and young people to enjoy themselves in safety, which is rewarding in itself, and is also appreciated by your congregation.

Your work as a leader/helper in a youth organisation is greatly valued. We not only want to protect children and young people, we want to protect you. In following these guidelines we hope to create a safe environment where both young people and leaders can enjoy the organisation and its activities and glorify the Lord whom we seek to serve.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these". Matthew 19:14

For more information leaders are referred to the Taking Care (Child Protection Guidelines Third Edition, December 2004), a copy of which should be held by the Organisation Leader. Additional copies are available in the Board of Social Witness office.

Helpline Number: (028) 9041 7235.

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



What Every Child Needs

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

Children With Special Needs

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

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

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

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

- Children with disabilities tend to have more physical contact than those without disabilities (i.e. therapists, care workers) and may require higher levels of personal care.
- The definition of what constitutes abuse is wider for children with disabilities. (This can include force-feeding, financial abuse, over-medication and segregation).

The Question Of Appropriate Physical Contact

- As a general principle do not make unnecessary physical contact with young people.
- Avoid physical contact which may be misconstrued by a young person or other observer.
- If you think it appropriate, offer comfort and reassurance to a child by placing a hand on a shoulder.
- If possible, ensure that you are not left alone with a child for long periods.
- If a child wishes to talk confidentially with you, at least ensure that another leader/helper knows where you are and whom you are with.
- If possible try to remain visible to the other leaders/helpers.
- Do not rely solely on your good name or reputation to protect you.

It does not make sense to:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- Take children to your home without the child's parents and the leader of the organisation or other responsible person knowing. Never be on your own with children, always have another adult present.

Leaders and other staff should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child, even in fun;
- Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

Note:

It may sometimes be necessary for leaders to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have disabilities. Except in an emergency, these tasks should be carried out only with the consent of parents. In such situations leaders need to be sensitive to the child and undertake personal care with the utmost discretion.

Control and Discipline - What Is It?

- It means to train
- It means to correct
- It means self-control
- It means to create order
- Good Organisation

When disciplining children and young people:

NEVER

Use force (smack, hit)
Discipline out of anger (but out of love)
Use a “put-down” with children/young people
Humiliate a child/young person in front of others
Reject the child, just the behaviour
Allow some children to take all your time and energy
Compare children with each other

ALWAYS

Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding
Pray for and with the child or young person
Work on each individual child’s positive characteristics
Be a good role model and set a good example
Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention
Be consistent and work together as a team
Ensure other leaders know what you have said – this avoids manipulation

Transport

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

The Internet

Whilst the development of the internet has revolutionised communication systems throughout the world and if used in the right way is an excellent resource, care in its application needs to be exercised so that the safety of a child is not compromised. Children need to be aware of on-line safety in the same way they are taught road safety.

Do's And Don'ts

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

General Safety

Safety is of prime importance during any activity.

Safety is everyone's responsibility.

Everyone should be aware of the following guidelines:

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

Dealing With Accidents

Many incidents that are brought to the leaders attention involve accidents or more minor problems. It is important that leaders know how to handle problems, no matter how minor, and that they are able to respond to more serious concerns.

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

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

What Is Child Abuse?

There are four main kinds of child abuse -

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

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

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

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

What To Do If You Are Concerned About A Child

Do's and Don'ts

- If you are concerned about a child or a young person, there is one thing you must not do, that is NOTHING.
- It is important that you take what the child says seriously and follow it up as soon as possible.
- Tell the leader in charge of the organisation. The leader in charge will then report the matter to the Designated Person.

DO'S

- Stay calm
- Listen and hear
- Give time to the child to say what they want
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling
- Write down what was said to you
- Tell the leader in charge of the organisation
- Keep a note of your report, giving the date, time, name of the individual who you have told and the course of action agreed
- The organisation leader will report to the Designated Person

DON'TS

- Do not panic
- Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily
- Do not promise to keep secrets
- Do not enquire into details of the abuse
- Under no circumstances should you attempt to deal with the problem alone

Your responsibility is to report any concern you have about a child and to ensure that your concern is taken seriously.

What Should You Write Down?

A Report of Concern Form is available from the Designated Person and should be completed by the concerned individual.

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.

Confidentiality

Who Needs To Know What?

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

What Will Happen If You Report Something?

- The Designated Person, the leader and the minister will consider your report and then decide what to do.
- They will do only what is in the best interests of the child or young person, this will include contact with parents/carers.
- If what you have reported is very serious, they may have to talk to the police or to Social Services about it.

Resources/Select Bibliography

Publications And Audio Tapes

<i>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>	The Children's Rights Development Unit 239 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EL
<i>An Abuse of Trust</i>	DHSS, Block C, Castle Buildings Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3SF
<i>Pre-Employment Consultancy Service</i>	Child Care Unit, DHSSPS, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3SQ Tel: (028) 9052 2559
<i>Our Duty to Care</i>	Published by Childcare (NI) – Available from NI Volunteer Development Agency Annsgate House, 70-74 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EH
<i>Keep them Safe</i>	Department of Youth and Children's Work, Aldersgate House, 13 University Road, Belfast BT7 1NA
<i>Keeping Our Children Safe</i>	Crescent Church, University Road, Belfast BT7 1NH
<i>Kidscape</i>	2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1 0DH Tel: 020 7730 3300 Fax: 020 7730 7081
<i>Help to Leaders – (Understanding Child Abuse – Child Sexual Abuse in the Family – “Caring” reprint)</i>	PCCA, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ Tel: 0845 1204550 Fax: 0284 120 4552
<i>Guidance to Churches (with disk)</i>	PCCA
<i>Keeping Safe – A Practical Guide to Talking with Children</i>	Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1 0DH Tel: 020 7730 3300 Fax: 020 7730 7081
<i>The NSPCC have a wide selection of relevant booklets</i>	NSPCC Weston House, 42 Curtain Road London EC2A 3HN Tel: 027 7825 2500 Fax: 020 7825 2525

Secular Books

Recognising Child Abuse NIPPA
TH Jordan, 1998

Christian Books

Releasing The Scream Rebecca Newman
Hodder & Stoughton, 1994

Child Sexual Abuse: A hope for healing Hancock & Mains Highland Books, 1988

A Silence to be Broken E Wilson, Inter-Varsity, 1987

Time for Action Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
CTBI 2002

Support Groups

Domestic Violence Women's Aid Federation
129 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP

Women's Aid (ROI), PO Box 791, Dublin 1
Tel: 003531 8600033

Victims of Sexual Abuse Nexus Institute NI
119 University Street, Belfast BT7 1AB

Victims of Sexual Abuse The Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre
29 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2FG

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre
70 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2
Tel: 003531 6614911

CARI Foundation (Children at Risk in Ireland)
110 Lower Drumcondra Road, Dublin 9
Tel: 003531 8308529

HELPLINE (ROI) 003531 8909245

Church Insurance

A Church represents a complex risk due to the diversity of activity that goes on within and without it's walls.

Twenty-five plus years of experience has shown us a vast array of issues but even now there is still hardly a week goes by that new queries arise that we have not seen before.

It would therefore be impossible within the context of this document to address all the issues but we have attempted to provide some pointers which we hope will assist you.

At the request of Church House, the contents of this fact sheet are concentrated on Youth Activities and represent the position of the insurance cover offered under our Congregational Facility with Royal & SunAlliance with whom most Presbyterian Churches are insured.

Should your Church be insured with a different provider we will of course, if at all possible, be able to provide any clarification that you may require upon request.

Public Liability

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

The Church insurance policy is designed to cover all those Church type activities that have been undertaken for years both in and away from the Church building such as team relay games, football, volleyball, basketball, rambling, Sunday School days away, visits to the swimming pool, pony trekking at approved Centres, weekend retreats etc etc. **It is not** designed to automatically include hazardous activities such as rock climbing, canoeing and as otherwise indicated below.

Scouts, Guides and the Boys Brigade do of course have their own specific insurance as provided via annual capitation fees which provides very wide protection and automatically covers most activities. These uniformed organisations should therefore check the full extent of the cover provided with their headquarters directly. The Church policy will provide public liability cover for those persons deemed to be under age attending these organisations on the basis that they will not undertake any hazardous activities.

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

It should be remembered that the policy of insurance in place belongs to the "Church" and not to any other legal entity. Although an organisation may be affiliated to the Church if it is subject to the rules and regulations of a separate board of trustees or to a separate and distinct code of conduct for example, at law such an organisation may be considered a legal entity in its own right and therefore would have to be insured under a standalone policy.

Should organisations other than Scouts, Guides or Boys Brigade within the Church wish to undertake a hazardous activity please ensure that the Church Secretary is informed well in advance so as any insurance extension necessary can be put in place.

Personal Accident

Personal Accident cover is provided for officers/leaders of the Church who may suffer injury during a Church organised activity. The exclusion of hazardous activities equally applies to this section of cover.

“Hazardous Activities”

In the list that follows we have detailed not only the most obvious type of activities that would be excluded but also those for which we have received enquiries over the years.

We have categorised these into high/medium and low risk.

Hopefully you will appreciate that the type of activities listed within the “high” category are those that could not constitute a “normal Church type activity”. As such it has not been possible in the past to persuade insurers to offer cover, unless they are undertaken at outdoor pursuit’s centres that provide their own equipment, leadership and insurance.

For the activities listed in the other categories cover can usually be included following referral to Bartholomew & James.

Referral to us may simply involve the provision of some risk management advice on the one hand or result in the payment of an additional premium on the other.

For those activities that are referred to us we often will require the following additional information:

- Leader numbers, experience & qualifications
- Number of children
- Supervision ratios
- Dates & timescale
- Information on any past incidents

High Risk Activities:

Water Sports
Regattas
Flying
Hang Gliding
Hot Air Ballooning
Parachuting
Any air-side activity
Hunting on horseback
Motor Competitions
Motor Cycling
Mountaineering
Cliff or Rock Climbing
Hazardous Activity weekends
Potholing
Racing other than on foot
Bonfires
Firework Displays
Use of firearms including Clay Pigeon Shooting
Use power driven machinery
Winter Sports
Physical Contact Sports (eg boxing, fencing, martial arts)
Overseas Building Projects
Mountain Biking
Rugby
American Football
Skateboarding

Medium Risk Activities:

Bouncy Castles/Bungy Runs & other inflatable equipment
Tractor Rides
Gymkhana/pony rides/Rodeo Bull
Archery/Rifle Shooting/Crockery Smashes/Darts Stall
Mini Assault Courses, indoor and outdoor Fairground Rides
Building Projects deemed to go beyond routine maintenance
Ice Skating
Overseas Travel

Low Risk Activities:

Art Exhibitions/Flower Festivals/Auctions
Sponsored Walks/Fun Runs

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

Should the Church feel that any particular activity is hazardous or outside the scope of a 'normal church activity' the details should be referred to us.

Apart from Activities, other commonly asked questions include:

Use of Vehicles

Where non-Church owned vehicles are used on Church “business” insurance cover should be provided by the vehicle driver’s policy. The driver’s policy must therefore be adequate and not rendered invalid by, for example, overloading. It would be prudent for the vehicle owner to inform his/her car insurance company of their role as a Youth Leader – for which you should not encounter additional terms being imposed. We also suggest that the Church may wish to make leaders and others aware of this issue. If so we can upon request provide a sample letter for your assistance.

Indemnity Agreements

If asked to sign one – don’t. Commonly such agreements attempt to impose a liability on the Church for matters not only outside your control but also beyond common law and therefore beyond the protection afforded by your insurance policy.

Ages

Our policy does not contain any restrictions in cover relating to the age of children attending Church Organisations.

Adult to Child Supervision Ratios

Our policy does not contain specific guidance on ratios however the general “reasonable care condition” applies. Reasonable Care would be judged on the basis of the recommended ratios set out within Taking Care.

Cover Away from Church

Non-hazardous activities [such as day trips/ Church week-ends] are covered free from charge.

Church Fetes

Generally the events undertaken at Church Fetes are considered non-hazardous and are therefore covered automatically. If however the likes of a Bouncy Castle is to be used, then this should be referred.

Maintenance Work/Building Projects/Overseas

Additional Insurances may be required. Refer to Bartholomew & James for specific advice.

Child Protection

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

Legislation/Health & Safety/Risk Assessments

Generally the Church should be complying as far as reasonably practicable with all appropriate Health & Safety and other legislation in order to ensure a safe environment remains available to users of the premises. Youth groups can play an important part in this process by, in particular, reporting defects in premises to an appointed person. A joint liaison approach between Church Committee and Youth Organisations will benefit all in the mitigation of hazards that could have the potential to cause injury or loss.

Claims

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

This fact sheet has been produced by Bartholomew & James Ltd who act as Insurance Brokers for the majority of Presbyterian Churches in Ireland. Any queries regarding the content of this document or on any other insurance related matter can be addressed in the first instance to:

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