

Caring in Practice

Child Protection Guidelines

Creating a safe environment for children, young people and leaders
in Ballymena Baptist Church

- Protecting Our Children and Leaders
- Setting Standards of Care
- Implementing Good Practice

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Preface to the Fifth Edition

The first edition of its Child Protection Policy was approved by the members of Ballymena Baptist Church in 1998. Since then, the Policy has been implemented by all youth organisations within the church, and significant progress has been made in providing a safe environment for our children and young people.

This is the fifth edition of the Policy. The Policy has been strengthened in many areas, building on the principles of the previous versions and further standardising practice.

Specifically, we have streamlined our procedure for the recruitment and selection of leaders and helpers, we have embraced the growing development of social media, and we have developed age-specific multi-purpose parental consent forms.

Whilst we recognise that the production of a revised Policy will not in itself secure a safe environment for children, young people and workers, we wish to acknowledge the commitment of the leaders and helpers within the organisations to implement good practice principles.

Acknowledgements

The contents of this Policy have been based on child protection policies and other literature issued by The Presbyterian Church of Ireland, NSPCC, DHSSPSNI, the Health and Social Care Board and Trusts, Our Duty to Care (Northern Ireland), AccessNI, the Churches' Protection Advisory Service and the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum.

Introduction

Children and young people attend organisations for enjoyment, social contact and personal and spiritual development.

Adults selected and appointed to work with children and young people should enjoy providing this service, secure in the knowledge of clear guidelines. They should also have access to good support and advice.

This manual provides guidance to all youth leaders, Sunday School teachers and all who work with young children, to help ensure that children and young people enjoy their activities with optimum physical safety and are free from the threat of personal abuse. It will also alert leaders to signs of distress and symptoms which may indicate that a child has been mistreated.

The protection and wellbeing of children is not only a Biblical imperative, it is a national and international requirement. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child upholds the best interests of children. It stipulates that “children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm. They must be given proper care by those looking after them.”

The Five Key Principles of Child Care

The Children (NI) Order 1995 emphasises the following key principles:

- **Paramountcy** – It is the fundamental principle in child care law and practice that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him/her.
- **Parental Responsibility** – Parents have the responsibility to children rather than rights over them. There may be situations where other significant adults share this responsibility with one or both parents.
- **Prevention** – We should aim to prevent situations arising where children are separated from their families. The state should provide support and services to keep children within their families and communities, in order to promote their health and welfare.
- **Partnership** – The most effective way of ensuring that a child’s needs are met is by working in partnership. The provision of services must therefore take into account the views of parents.
- **Protection** – Children should be safe and should be protected by intervention if they are in danger.

Treating children and young people with dignity and respect and upholding their best interests is also in the best interests of the organisation or club. It is therefore important for parents to have information about the organisation their child attends, its aims and methods of operation, its policies and procedures, how to share comments, concerns and, if necessary to make complaints.

Does Our Church Need Child Protection Guidelines?

Our church receives many children and young people through its doors every year. It is vital that we provide a safe environment for them, and that our leaders know what to do if a child alleges that they have been mistreated by someone outside or inside the church organisation.

By adopting and using these guidelines we will be raising the standards of care for those entrusted to our supervision. Also our leaders, teachers and helpers will be more assured of their own protection in the event of false accusations.

Clarification of Terms

For the purposes of these guidelines, a leader/helper is anyone who is engaged in work or voluntary activity which involves regular contact with children or young persons. A child/young person is a person under 18 years of age.

The policy makes reference to 'regulated activity' within a post. A regulated position implies that:

- The post involves one-to-one access to children;
- The circumstances of contact are unsupervised;
- Situations may be isolated;
- The contact occurs either once a week or more often, on four or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight (that is, even once between 2am and 6am).

Section 1: Child Abuse and its Prevention

This section aims to make you aware of what child abuse is and what to do if you are concerned about a child.

1.1 Caring For Children

Who is Responsible?

While the primary responsibility for the care of children rests with the parents or guardians, the community as a whole has a responsibility for the wellbeing of children and for protecting them. This means that all church members should remain alert to circumstances in which children may be harmed. When they have knowledge or a suspicion that a child is being mistreated, they should refer their concern to the Child Protection Committee within their church, who will consider what should be done. This may involve seeking advice from the Health and Social Care Trusts, the PSNI, or the NSPCC, or referring the matter to them for investigation/ assessment.

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 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.

1.2 What is Child Abuse?

There are four main categories of child abuse:

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

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Fear of physical contact, a shrinking back if touched.

Emotional Abuse may occur when an adult with responsibility for caring for a child says hurtful things to them and does not have an appropriate caring attitude towards them. Symptoms may include:

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- Continual belittling of oneself
- Over- reaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain
- Neurotic behaviour.

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. Symptoms may include:

- Sexual knowledge, including drawing sexually explicit pictures, or use of language inappropriate for the child's age
- Being over-affectionate in a sexual way that is inappropriate to the child's age
- Regression to younger behavioural patterns such as thumb sucking
- Self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdosing, anorexia
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating.

Neglect is the most common form of abuse. It is persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, with the likely result that he/she will suffer significant harm. It may involve failing to provide a child with adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, of failing to ensure that a child has access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Symptoms may include:

- Appearing to be overly hungry or thirsty
- Often being dirty or unkempt.

Why Do Adults Abuse Children?

There are different reasons – stress, problems, unhappy circumstances, the feeling of having no power in adult relationships, and perhaps having been abused as a child. Some adults may convince themselves that there is nothing wrong with their behaviour, or that it is for the child's own good. Whatever the reason, abuse is wrong, and it is never the child's fault.

It is not only adults who abuse children. Teenage abuse, where older children abuse younger children or their peers, is a growing concern. It is very important that this is stopped as soon as it is discovered for the sake of both the victim and the abuser, for whom it could become a dangerous habit. The sooner you take action, the more likely it is that the abuse will stop and that the child will recover from his or her experiences.

Domestic Violence and Children

Violence against women and men in the home is a serious crime, which causes enormous health and social problems and emotional and psychological damage, not only to the victims, but also to the children. Children are often witnesses and may be affected by the anxiety and personal threat to themselves. Domestic violence is the most common form of interpersonal crime and also the least reported.

Leaders should be aware that children may not only overhear or observe violence in the home, but may become direct victims, either accidentally or deliberately.

The social pressures to remain within a violent home and the disincentives which parents perceive in relation to living in refuges or temporary accommodation should not be underestimated. It is important for leaders of church organisations to be aware that agencies such as the PSNI and Health and Social Care Trusts have developed policies to help in situations of domestic violence and that advice, support and help are available from the Women's Aid Federation. Men experiencing violence may also have to seek refuge; accommodation may be available in the Simon Community.

Substance Abuse

Young people are also at risk of being exposed to substance abuse. This can range from tobacco to experimenting with solvents and alcohol. It is important that leaders are aware of the danger-signs.

Self-Injury

Self-injury or self-harm is on the increase. Cutting can begin at a very young age and can range from scratching to deep cuts being self-inflicted, often requiring medical treatment. Disclosure of any self-injury should never be ignored: it is a clear sign that something serious is wrong and that self-esteem is low. Care should always be taken in how this problem is managed and advice should be sought at all times.

Media and Children

In an increasingly complex world, the opportunities for child abuse are growing. Those who care for children need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of video, computer, internet, text messaging and other media, particularly in today's society where the "soaps" and celebrities are setting the agenda. While good use of such media can be beneficial, we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to young people.

The Internet

Whilst the internet has revolutionised communication systems throughout the world and, if used in the right way, it is an excellent resource, care in its application needs

to be exercised so that the safety of children is not compromised. Children need to be aware of online safety in the same way they are taught road safety.

Do's and Don'ts with the Internet

- 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 photographs 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. Care needs to be taken particularly around what is appropriate in this situation.
- If web access is being provided for children or young people then the use of filtering software needs to be considered.
- If web access is being provided then parental permission needs to be obtained.

Photographs

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches must be very careful if they use photographs, videos and webcams of clearly identifiable people. There are several issues to be aware of:

- Permission (verbal or written) should be obtained of all the people (children and adults) who will appear in the photograph, video or webcam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- Where parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video an event, they too should be made aware of the church's expectations, e.g. by including information on photography on a programme or ticket, etc.
- Leaders should be aware that images of a young person under a court order must not be recorded or published.
- It should be made clear why that person's image is being used, what you will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- Unsupervised access to children should not be permitted or one to one photo sessions at events.
- Event organisers may approach and challenge any person they believe to be taking inappropriate or intrusive photographs.
- Children and young people should not be identified by name or other personal details. These details include email or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a web site. For images published on a web site, consideration should be given to watermarking them to dissuade third parties from using the images.

- Carefully consider the location and pose. Images of children in swimwear must not be published.
- Do not insist that the child participates.
- Whilst organisation leaders will be responsible for the photographs placed on the website, this will be supported by second line vetting by the website administrator. Where there is any doubt about the appropriateness of the image, it will not be used

Please note the consent form contains a parental consent for use of images of children for general church purposes including use on the website. However, should the church commission a photographer, the Copyright Waiver Form should be completed.

Mobile Telephones

With the increased use of mobile telephones leaders and young people need to be aware of appropriate and inappropriate use of telephones whilst attending organisations.

Computers

Computers are now common in churches and are used extensively to communicate with young people and leaders. If the church obtains computers which are accessible by young people, it is important that guidelines be drawn up and a policy agreed as to their use. The following areas require to be considered:

- Promote their proper use.
- Supervise and monitor their use.
- Cautious use of e-mail and web-based applications should be specified for each organisation.
- Supervise the use of the internet.
- Be cautious at all times.

1.3 Key Principles to Help Keep Children Safe

There is a moral obligation on anyone accepting responsibility for children and young people to provide adequate care and to pass on information concerning suspected or actual abuse of a child. Any failure to do so may leave them legally liable.

Translating the legal principle that the “welfare of the child is paramount” means that the church is required to have the following in place:

1. **A Child Protection Policy** which includes:
 - Clear statements about why and how the church has a role and responsibility to protect children.
 - Clearly stated standards that are expected.
 - Recognition that it is the responsibility of everyone within the congregation.

Everyone involved in youth work should have a copy of the policy. It should also be displayed prominently in the church premises.

2. A Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee will consist of 3 people appointed by the membership on the recommendation of the officer bearers: one an elder, and a male and female from the membership. Appointment will be for a three-year period and by a 2/3 majority of those members present and voting. Voting will be by secret ballot. Those designated persons will have the support of the membership of the church confirmed every three years. The Child Protection Committee will require to undertake training and will provide consultation and advice on contacting child protection agencies when necessary.

3. A Leader in Charge of Each Organisation

Leaders must be fully conversant with the procedure to follow when concern is expressed about the welfare of a child.

4. A Good Team Procedure and a Code of Conduct

This should be developed to provide both leaders/helpers and members of organisations with a means of preventing inappropriate discipline, avoiding corporal punishment, counteracting bullying or scapegoating and lessening the potential for abuse by adults or young people.

5. A Recruitment Policy which includes:

- Completion of an application form
- Two references, at least one of which must be external to the church
- AccessNI Check (where appropriate)
- Meeting with Child Protection Committee representatives
- Appraisal by the organisation leader at the end of six months.

6. An Annual Review of Work with Children and Young People

This provides the opportunity to recognise and affirm what has been achieved and to identify any areas that require attention. If possible, both children and young people should be involved in this process. Specific times should be set aside for this, such as the end of a season for youth organisations.

The office bearers may wish to receive a report from each organisation and a meeting of the Child Protection Committee with the Leaders of the organisations may facilitate this process.

7. Access to Training Programmes

These should help leaders/helpers to develop best practices and respond confidently to any expressions of concern about children's welfare.

8. Regular Health and Safety Inspections of the church premises and procedures by suitably qualified persons or agencies.

1.4 What to Do if You are Concerned about a Child

Dealing with Accidents

Many incidents that are brought to the leader's attention involve accidents or 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 the Church to have a common Accident/Incident Form to record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses. This should be used to record accidents, injuries and any actions 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.

The completed form should be passed to the Child Protection Committee. It will be available for examination and inspection if required.

Dealing with General Complaints

If a young person, or parent, has a general complaint about the running of an organisation, such complaints should be directed through the organisation leader or elders. The complainant should be assured that the matter will be dealt with in a prompt and appropriate manner. They should be informed as soon as possible of the decision and the action, if any, that will be taken.

Dealing with Suspected Abuse

In the event that child abuse is alleged or suspected, it is *not* appropriate to include an entry in a common Accident/Incident Form. Instead, the procedure outlined below should be followed.

Responding to incidents of alleged or suspected child abuse must be based upon clearly defined procedures. Knowing what to do, whom to contact and who needs to know will make you feel better about sharing any concerns.

If you are concerned that a child or young person may have been abused, or is at risk of abuse, it is important that action is taken.

It is important that you take what the child says seriously and follow it up as soon as possible. The primary responsibility is to report any concern and ensure that the concern is taken seriously.

Do: Stay calm
Listen and hear
Give time for the child to say what they want
Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
Write down what was said to you
Tell the leader in charge of the organisation or, if this is not possible, the
Child Protection Committee
Make a note of your report, including the time, date and name of the
individual you have informed, for the Child Protection Committee

Don't: Panic
Make a child repeat the story unnecessarily
Promise to keep secrets
Enquire into the details of the abuse
Under no circumstances should you attempt to deal with the problem alone

Procedure for Reporting Concern

1. The person who has the concern should tell the leader in charge.
2. The person who has the concern should complete a Report of Concern Form, which the Child Protection Committee or the leader will provide.

If possible, this should include:

- 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 relevant information you may have, such as the name of the child's GP, school, etc.
3. The organisation leader gives the completed Report of Concern Form to the Child Protection Committee, the names of the members of whom can be obtained from the Church Secretary.
 4. The Child Protection Committee will consider all the available information and decide what action to take. Remember the task of deciding whether or not abuse has occurred rests with the professional agencies.

Where a Pastor is implicated, the Child Protection Committee will advise the other elders of the issue and inform the Association of Baptist Churches as soon as possible that a Report of Concern has been received. In all circumstances, the identity of the child will be protected as far as possible.

Where there is a complaint of sexual abuse against a person who is employed by the church (not the pastor), those receiving such complaints must ensure that the relevant employment procedures and policies in place under the employee's contract are followed. The matter should be reported through the appropriate line management procedures in the employment contract, ensuring that legal advice is taken and referral to the statutory authorities is carried out when necessary.

When such complaints arise it may be necessary to advise the Secretary of the Association of Baptist Churches.

If there is disagreement on whether or not to refer a concern to a child protection agency, any individual, as a concerned citizen, can make a referral on their own.

5. The Child Protection Committee will follow the advice given by the appropriate agency.

Health and Social Care offices are normally open 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday. There is an emergency out-of-hours service for Northern Ireland, which can be contacted at **(028) 9504 9999**.

6. The reason for the decision and the designated individual responsible for taking action will be noted. The Child Protection Committee will keep a record of this decision in a secure place.
7. Consideration should be given by the Child Protection Committee to offer support to the leader or other person who made the initial report.

Contact Addresses and Telephone Numbers

Police Service for Northern Ireland CARE Units

Anyone wishing to contact the Police Service for Northern Ireland should telephone **101** (unless in the case of an emergency, when the number is **999**). You should ask for the Police CARE Unit and give the name of the area from which you are telephoning. You will be transferred to the appropriate CARE Unit dealing with your area.

Health and Social Care Trusts

When contacting the Health and Social Care office for your area you should ask for the Duty Officer. The office (which for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Children's Services, is at **028 2565 5640**) is open between 9.00am – 5.00pm. In Northern Ireland the out-of-hours duty team telephone number is **(028) 9504 9999**.

1.5 The Child Protection Committee

Function

The function of the Child Protection Committee is primarily for the protection of children in our care. Additionally, the Child Protection Committee will provide consultation, advice and support to the elders and organisation leaders and to act as a contact point with statutory agencies. The Committee has responsibility for holding a supply of blank Report of Concern Forms and storing these forms securely.

The Committee will also be responsible for facilitating training, storage of completed application forms and active participation with organisation leaders in the recruitment of children's and youth workers (which includes arranging AccessNI checks).

Appointment

The people best equipped for membership of the Committee are those whose occupations, or lengthy voluntary experience have brought them into contact with children. Those who have already participated in foundation training in child protection may be particularly suitable.

Before appointment, persons selected for the Child Protection Committee must complete an Application Form for Leaders/Helpers in Youth and Children's Work and be vetted by AccessNI. They must also, in due course, attend appropriate training.

Accountability

Both the support and oversight of the Child Protection Committee rests with the elders, to whom the Committee is accountable.

Reporting

Abuse of children often goes undetected because people who have pieces of information are reluctant to share these. It is important to develop links with parents and statutory

organisations, so that anyone feels empowered to take action should they receive information which is of concern.

The leader of an organisation should contact the Child Protection Committee to report (on a Report of Concern About a Child form) any suspicion or concern they may have. The Committee will acknowledge receipt of the form to the leader of the organisation who made the initial report. It must be noted that any youth worker in an organisation should feel empowered to make such an approach.

It is essential that the nature of the concern, the discussion and the decision regarding referral are all carefully recorded. Normally the Child Protection Committee will do this.

It is important to note that if there is ever any difficulty in making contact with the Child Protection Committee, any concern about the immediate safety of a child must be referred directly to a child protection agency.

Confidentiality

The Child Protection Committee must maintain confidentiality at all times. Only those with a need to know, in the interests of protecting a child or other vulnerable person, should be given any information.

In the first instance, only the person who initiated the concern and the Child Protection Committee should be privy to the information. It is for this group to decide how the matter should be handled – in particular whether, and by whom, the child's parents should be contacted, or whether a child protection agency should be contacted. All records relating to child protection matters must be securely stored.

Information Security

In relation to AccessNI checks, "disclosure" information (i.e., information about the criminal records and/or cautions of applicants), Ballymena Baptist Church will, in line with procedural requirements, ensure that the following is adhered to:

- Disclosure information is not passed to persons who are not authorised to receive it under section 124 of Part V of the Police Act.
- Disclosure information is available only to those in the organisation who need to have access in the course of their duties.
- The Church will not retain Disclosures or a record of Disclosure information for longer than is required for the particular purpose. This will be no longer than six months after the date on which recruitment or other relevant decisions have been taken, or after the date on which any dispute about the accuracy of the Disclosure information has been resolved. This period will only be exceeded in very exceptional circumstances which justify retention for a longer period.
- All sensitive and personal Disclosure information is stored when not in use in a locked fireproof container in a secure environment.
- The Church will co-operate with AccessNI to undertake assurance checks as to the proper use and safekeeping of Disclosure information.

- The Church will report to AccessNI any suspected malpractice in relation to this Policy or any suspected offence concerning the handling or storage of Disclosure information

Handling of Reports by Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee may be concerned about the extent of their legal liability in the referral or non-referral or cases brought to their attention. However, it is unlikely that any Committee acting in good faith will be held legally liable for its decisions.

An important safeguard is to make a full written record of what was reported, by whom and when, together with the reason for any subsequent action, e.g. whether or not to involve parents or a child protection agency.

General Guidance on Dealing with Concerns Reported to the Child Protection Committee

Experience suggests that rarely will serious allegations of child abuse be voiced for the first time to church leaders. It is more likely that matters needing discussion will be of a less serious nature and that they will be resolved or clarified through discussion, often involving the child's own family.

It is, however, important that a brief written record is kept of any matter referred to the Child Protection Committee. This should include the decision reached and the reason for it.

The following is for the guidance of Child Protection Committee (CPC) members:

1. A meeting should be convened by the CPC as soon as practicable, unless a child is clearly in imminent danger or at risk of abuse. In all events, a meeting should be convened within 72 hours of the CPC being informed of the concern.
2. Those invited to attend should include only those who need to know about the incident or concern. Confidentiality must be preserved. Those invited will include the person who has passed the information to the CPC.
3. The purpose of the meeting is to consider the available information and decide what to do.
4. If the child is considered to be in any form of imminent danger, a child protection agency or the Police should be contacted immediately by the CPC. Where there is any doubt or uncertainty about what to do, it is strongly recommended that the concerns are tested, in confidence, either with the Police or a child protection agency.
5. A clear record should be made of the meeting, and it may be helpful to use the following headings:
 - Names of those attending the meeting.
 - Details of the concern or complaint that has been expressed, being very clear about what is fact and what is opinion.
 - If a child has made a complaint, record as accurately as possible what the child has said.

- Record the decision reached, and why.
For example: Take no further action - why?
or: Arrange a preliminary discussion with a child protection agency - why, and who should do it?
or: Make a formal report to the child protection agency or Police - why, and who should do it?
6. The record of the meeting and the report that has been given to the CPC must be held together in a sealed envelope, in a secure place.
 7. If it is decided to have a preliminary discussion with a child protection agency or the Police, it is not necessary to give them any written report.
 8. If it is decided to make a formal referral to either a child protection agency or the Police, it will be helpful to make available to them a copy of the report that was given to the CPC, as well as the record of the meeting convened to discuss the matter. These should be sent under cover of a letter signed by the CPC.
 9. It is for the CPC to decide how much information about a particular incident is shared with the elders. The CPC will wish to be assured of the support of the elders in the handling of delicate matters, while at the same time treating sensitive information as confidential.
 10. The CPC may need to contact the Secretary of the Association of Baptist Churches where a pastor is implicated.
 11. The purpose of this guidance is to promote good practice and to protect both Church personnel and children. While it is true that people today are more prone to complain, sensible precautions and wise counsel will usually result in a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.

1.6 Confidentiality

Who Needs to Know What?

Everyone in the church, including children, must be aware that there are some situations in which confidentiality needs to be broken – specifically, 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.

This will mean that where the Child Protection Committee considers that a child is at risk of abuse or that a criminal offence may have been committed, the following should be informed:

- A statutory child protection agency.
- The parents of the child (when deemed appropriate).
- The alleged perpetrator.

Statutory Agencies

Statutory child protection procedures are very child-centred. This means that in all investigations the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. The official policy is that those receiving information should “disclose it only where the welfare of

the child requires it and then only to those with a legitimate need to know”. The details you give will be passed only to the relevant people within those agencies, whose task it is to decide what action to take.

Never be put off making contact with any of the agencies in order to obtain advice on how to deal with a situation. You may decide whether or not to disclose your name. If a referral is made to a child protection agency, Church personnel may be interviewed in order to clarify the information they have reported. In some instances they may be asked to make a formal statement.

Parents

Informing the parents of a child about whom you are concerned will need to be dealt with in a sensitive way. The Child Protection Committee will need to consult a statutory agency about whether to inform the parents, what to say and who should inform them.

Alleged Perpetrators

Any individual under suspicion, whether or not he or she is a leader/helper within the Church, has a right to be notified that a complaint has been made against them. This is another matter which will need careful consideration and should only be undertaken after consultation between the Child Protection Committee and the appropriate child protection agency and/or the Police.

Should a leader/helper be accused of abuse, that person too should be shown appropriate Christian love and support. It is also important that the Child Protection Committee liaises with the appropriate child protection agency so that any action taken on behalf of the church does not impede the work of the statutory agencies.

What Happens Next?

Abuse is wrong, against the law and must be stopped. When there is a referral about abuse, there will be an investigation and a risk assessment by a statutory authority to find out if anything has happened. Where there is sufficient cause for concern the appropriate Health and Social Care Trust will hold a case conference, where the child and parents will have the opportunity to participate. The need for an action plan to protect the child will be considered.

1.7 Bullying

What is Bullying?

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum defines bullying as “the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others”.

There are four main categories or types of bullying:

Physical bullying, which involves the use of physical force, such as jostling, punching, kicking, hitting, biting, tripping or physical intimidation.

Verbal bullying, which involves oral or written means of communication, such as name-calling, insults, jokes, verbal threats, graffiti or writing nasty notes.

Damage to property, which involves theft or the destruction of personal property.

Indirect bullying, which involves such things as isolation, refusing to work with, talk to or play with, or spreading rumours.

Increasingly common is what is known as **cyber bullying**, where bullying is carried out electronically – for example, by sending nasty text messages, spreading malicious rumours or posting embarrassing photographs on-line. Both verbal and indirect bullying can take place in this way.

It is recognised that bullying may be driven by a number of prejudices. These include:

Disability – related to either a perceived or an actual disability.

Race – related to skin colour, culture, language.

Beliefs or opinions – related to religion, beliefs and/or political opinions.

Other personal characteristics – related to things such as body-size, hair colour or perceived or actual sexual orientation.

The Church's Position on Bullying

It is our aim at Ballymena Baptist Church to create an ethos of good behaviour, where children and young people treat each other (as well as leaders, helpers and others) with respect because they know that is the right way to behave.

All children and young people should be able to attend Church and enjoy its activities in a safe, supportive and caring environment, without the fear of being bullied.

Any child or young person affected by bullying should feel able to tell an adult worker and know that any incidents involving bullying will be dealt with promptly.

We realise that, if unchecked, bullying can be profoundly damaging emotionally and/or physically to any child or young person who has been targeted. It is therefore important that all leaders and helpers are alert to the possible signs of bullying and take appropriate action if they are informed of any incidents involving bullying.

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

The following are examples of possible signs and symptoms that might indicate that a child or young person is being subjected to bullying:

- Not wanting to come to the organisation
- 'Losing' possessions
- Changing behaviour (for example, becoming withdrawn or anxious)
- Having unexplained cuts or bruises
- Physical illnesses such as stomach-ache or headache

- Appearing frightened to say that something is bothering him/her
- Appearing nervous when a text message is received
- Having clothing that is torn or possessions that are damaged
- Losing their appetite
- Asking for money or starting to steal money (possibly to “pay off” the bully)
- Starting to bully other children
- Having trouble sleeping or having regular nightmares
- Self-harming behaviour or attempted suicide.

Responding to a Child or Young Person Who is Being Bullied

Much of the procedure here is similar to what is to be done when a form of abuse is suspected (see above, Section 1.4):

Be aware that the child or young person may be reluctant to tell you if they have been threatened, or perhaps they may not want to be thought of as being a “tell-tale”.

Listen to their story, showing empathy and acceptance.

Establish the facts of the incident (or incidents) and also if there were any witnesses.

Assure the person that they were right to tell you and that you will support them. Let them know what you are going to do next.

Do not promise confidentiality, as you may need to tell someone else of your conversation. (The leader of the organisation should be informed in any event. Otherwise, information should be shared with others only on a “need to know” basis.)

Depending on the nature of the incident and the perceived risk involved, you may need to take action to ensure the safety of the child or young person.

Keep a note of what you have been told and any action taken, including dates and times.

If the person carrying out the bullying behaviour also goes to the organisation, it may be appropriate for you to talk to that person and find out why they are doing it. They should be told the behaviour must stop and, if necessary, they should be helped to change their behaviour.

If you believe the matter has been resolved, you must monitor the situation for some time afterwards, to ensure there is no reoccurrence.

If the outcome of your investigation reveals serious concerns, you (or the organisation leader) should contact the Child Protection Committee to report the incident and seek advice. It may be necessary to tell parents and in some instances to involve the PSNI.

In exceptional cases, if the bullying behaviour does not stop it may be necessary to exclude the offender from the organisation.

Periodically, it is good practice for the subject of bullying to be covered as part of the general programme of each organisation. This could be done either directly or indirectly (e.g., as part of a study of the life of Joseph and his brothers) and it should stress not only that bullying will not be tolerated within the organisation, but also that any child being bullied should feel free to approach an organisation leader or helper directly.

Section 2: Good Standards of Practice

This section aims to provide more detailed advice on good practice for organisations working with children and young people.

2.1 Good Team Work and Recommended Ratios

1. It is advisable that each organisation, on a yearly basis, draws up clearly defined aims and objectives of its overall running.
2. Within each organisation, a clearly defined line of accountability should be in place whereby all leaders/helpers report to the appointed leader in charge. The leader reports to the Elders with whom ultimate responsibility lies. It is advisable that the Elders provide support, pastoral oversight, and a yearly appraisal for all the work among children and young people.
3. At any given meeting, leaders/helpers must be informed of the specific programme, and be clear about one another's responsibilities.
4. Acquaint the team with useful advice on getting to know children i.e. trying to get to know the names of the children as quickly as possible; talking to the children about themselves, what they like, what they do during the rest of the week; talking to the children about yourself. They will be interested in all sorts of things.
5. Parents should be supplied with the name and telephone number of the leader in charge of the organisation and what the organisation provides.
6. Each organisation leader/helper must be fully acquainted with the Child Protection Policy and referral procedure.
7. Each leader/helper must be acquainted with and be in full support of the discipline procedure for that organisation.
8. At the conclusion of the session/ evening, i.e. weekly meeting or at the end of June, there should be an evaluation of the programme, when leaders/helpers can share information about issues and any difficulties which may have arisen.
9. Every organisation should aim to have a trained first aider. This is particularly important where high risk activities are involved. Leaders/helpers should have up-to-date contact numbers for parents/guardians. A trained first aider will have completed a recognised first aid course delivered by St John's Ambulance, Red Cross, Order of Malta or other recognised organisations.
10. A consent form should be completed by parents at the beginning of each year. The original forms will be stored by the Child Protection Committee and a coloured copy will be returned to the leader of each organisation indicated. In turn, these copies will be destroyed at the start of the following year, once updated forms have been requested and received. Special consent forms should be completed for trips/special activities. The organisation leader should hold completed special consent forms until after the event and then pass them to the Child Protection Committee for long-term storage.

Responsibilities of the Organisation Leader

To ensure that the organisation responds in a correct and prompt manner to accidents, or suspected child abuse, the organisation leader should ensure that:

- The Child Protection Guidelines are implemented and adhered to within their organisation;
- There is ready access to Incident Report Forms;
- He/she has immediate access to names, addresses and telephone numbers of the children/young people attending the organisation;
- There is access to a telephone in the event of an emergency;
- All the leaders are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an accident;
- All leaders are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of an allegation of abuse;
- He/she has a supply of Report of Concern Forms;
- He/she knows the names and the telephone numbers of the members of the Child Protection Committee;
- He/she is satisfied that all leaders have a good understanding of the issues relating to confidentiality;
- He/she will be responsible for complying with the policy on the use of photographs, and in particular, with those placed on the website;
- A register of attendance is to be kept following each session and should indicate attending children and leaders. This should be retained and given to the Child Protection Committee at the end of the yearly session.

Recommended Ratios

Indoor Activities

All organisations are recommended to abide by the recommended ratios of children/young people to leaders.

In determining the ratios of staff to children organisation leaders should bear in mind that there should be a minimum of at least two leaders/helpers present at all times.

0 – 2 years	1 member of staff to 3 children.
2 – 3 years	1 member of staff to 4 children.
3 – 7 years	1 member of staff to 8 children.
8 years and over	2 members of staff (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children/young people, and one additional member of staff for every 10 extra children and/or young people or part thereof.

Young people (those under 18 years of age) who are helping leaders should not be left alone in a supervisory capacity with children. They may, however be counted as staff members to make up stated ratios, so long as other adult leaders are present and in charge.

Outdoor Activities

0 – 2 years	1 member of staff to 3 children.
2 – 3 years	1 member of staff to 4 children.
3 – 7 years	1 member of staff to 6 children.
8 – 13 years	2 adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 15 children, with one additional adult for every 8 extra children, or part thereof.
13 years and over	2 adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 young people, with one additional adult for every 10 extra young people, or part thereof.

Children and Young People with Special Needs

The church has a Christian duty to be inclusive and to provide opportunities for children and young people of all abilities. Organisations need to be aware that children and young people who have a disability can be at greater risk of abuse, owing to a number of factors:

- They will often require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility, etc, and a higher level of physical contact generally.
- Some may have severe learning difficulties.
- They may have limited understanding and behave in ways that are not age-appropriate.
- They may experience difficulties in communication, e.g. because they are blind or deaf/blind, and they may be reliant on physical contact for communication.
- They may not fully understand what is said to them, or may not be able to express themselves in ways that can be understood.
- Workers may not possess the appropriate personal communication skills (e.g. Makaton signing) with which to communicate with children with special needs.

All of these factors make it harder to uncover abuse when it is occurring with children or young people with special needs. Indeed, the definition of what constitutes abuse is wider for those with disabilities, and may include things such as force-feeding, for example. It can also be harder to set boundaries for children with special needs.

Overall, there is a need for extra vigilance when working with children and young people with special need. Leaders and helpers should recognise that:

- It is often advisable to establish regular contact with their parents/carers.
- An individual care-plan may be required, and this may result in a need for an increased staffing ratio.

2.2 Code of Conduct for Young People

In every aspect of life organisations function best where there are clear guidelines and structures. The following suggested code of conduct for children and young people recognises his basic fact. The code of conduct will reflect the particular characteristics of individual groups.

It is recommended that at the commencement of the organisation's year, a code of conduct will be drawn up with members' participation. While it is recognised that discipline may seem at times restrictive to young people, it is best enforced with their agreement. Such a code will help to create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children will feel that they can confide in the leaders/helpers.

Sample Code of Conduct

As members of this organisation we will:

1. Respect the authority of the organisation's leaders/helpers.
2. Respect the views and feelings of other members of the organisation.
3. Respect the right of every member to express their view/opinion.
4. Respect the right of every member to be heard/listened to.
5. Respect the personal privacy and property of leaders, helpers and other club members.
6. Show due care and responsibility for equipment and property.
7. Agree that the following activities/behaviours are deemed unacceptable.
 - Consumption of alcohol and smoking within the confines of the church building or during organisation activities.
 - Physical abuse of other members and/or leaders/helpers.
 - Verbal abuse including "put-downs" of members and leaders/helpers, either directly or electronically e.g. via mobile phones, chat rooms etc.
 - Wilful destruction or damage of property or equipment.
 - The misuse of any substance or stimulant.

When implementing the code of conduct, leaders need to be insistent, consistent and persistent.

2.3 Discipline

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 or young person 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 children 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

You may wish to include discipline issues in your code of conduct.

The Question of Appropriate Physical Contact

As a general principle, leaders/helpers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with young people. One should avoid physical contact which may be misconstrued by a young person or other observer. It may of course be necessary and appropriate to offer comfort and reassurance to a child by placing a hand on a shoulder. This is a valid way of expressing concern and care for children and most children will feel comfortable with it. Making leaders or helpers frightened of any physical contact with children is not an effective way of reducing abuse.

One should take reasonable precautions, i.e. if possible, ensure that you are not left alone with a child for long periods or, if a child wishes to talk confidentially with you, at least ensure that another leader/helper knows where you are and who you are with. If possible, try to remain visible to the other leader/helper. 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.

Leaders/helpers staff should **never**:

- invite a child to their home alone;
- 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.

It may sometimes be necessary for leaders or helpers 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 only be carried out with the consent of the parents. In such situations leaders need to be sensitive to the child and undertake personal care with the utmost discretion.

Protecting Children from Harming Themselves

Sometimes restraint may need to be applied to a child in order to protect him/her from harming themselves or others, or seriously damaging property. It should never be used to inflict pain or as a general means of control.

The proper use of restraint requires skill and judgement. Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied, and for the least amount of time that is necessary too. Leaders should never try to restrain a young person on their own. Another leader may act as an assistant or a witness.

Remember that restraint should be an act of care and control, not punishment.

Following an incident where restraint is used, an Incident Report Form should be completed.

2.4 Recruitment and Selection of Potential Leaders/Helpers

As we have seen, it is necessary to have a recruitment policy in place to select leaders/helpers to provide a safe environment. A proper selection procedure is one of the most sensible and effective ways of assessing a person's suitability to work with children and young people, and may itself act as a deterrent to potential abusers. This is often felt to be an unnecessary burden, particularly if the person is part time, a volunteer, and already known to the members of the congregation. However, the more routine the procedure becomes, the less intimidating it will be to all concerned. By having good standards of practice in our organisations, people are more likely to want to join.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that anyone who may be unsuitable for working with young people is not given the opportunity. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that everyone participates in a selection procedure, even though they are recognised as people of good standing.

It is recognised that having a criminal record or being subject to criminal investigations may not be a bar to undertaking a role in children's activities. This is made known to all prospective applicants in "Application Form for Leaders/Helpers in Youth and Children's Work Form". Each application will be considered in its own merits.

Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Ballymena Baptist Church complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

Ballymena Baptist Church is committed to equality of opportunity, to following practices and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We ensure that no person is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, responsibilities for dependents, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to the ability to undertake the role.

Ballymena Baptist Church actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, and not excluding those with criminal records. The selection of candidates is based on those who have the skills, qualifications and experience as required for the role.

An AccessNI disclosure will only be requested where this is considered proportionate and **relevant** to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where an AccessNI disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, the person will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that Ballymena Baptist Church will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate AccessNI disclosure check.

In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, Ballymena Baptist Church will only ask about convictions which are defined as "unspent" within the terms of that Order, unless the nature of the position is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record.

We undertake to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.

We ensure that all those in Ballymena Baptist Church who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).

We undertake to make every subject of an AccessNI disclosure aware of the existence of the Church's Child Protection Policy document (Caring in Practice), and to have a copy available on the Church's website and/or on request.

HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD WILL NOT NECESSARILY DEBAR YOU FROM WORKING WITH BALLYMENA BAPTIST CHURCH. THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF THE POSITION, TOGETHER WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND BACKGROUND OF YOUR OFFENCES OR OTHER INFORMATION CONTAINED ON A DISCLOSURE CERTIFICATE OR PROVIDED DIRECTLY TO US BY THE POLICE.

Managing Those Who Pose a Risk

It is fact that those in the community, who pose a risk to, have committed, or been accused of sexual or other crimes against children or vulnerable adults may wish to be actively involved in local organisations or groups.

This can be for a number of different reasons and it is vital that organisations ensure children, young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded. Having said this, the church can also explore strategies that, if implemented, mean these individuals can be managed and supported within the church without compromising the safety of others. However, we must never lose sight of the fact that although some will be looking for support to address their offending behaviour others may be seeking contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults to abuse them.

One of the main reasons the church needs to take abusive or offending behaviour seriously is because it is often addictive in nature. The person may have truly regretted and accepted responsibility for what they have done but the possibility of succumbing to opportunity or habit is still present. Equally they may try to manipulate and control, and start attending activities specifically to come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. This attempt at establishing this type of trusting relationship is known as ‘grooming’.

It is vital therefore that those who may be vulnerable are protected and this must be the prime motivator in decisions concerning an individual’s involvement in the life of the organisation and attending activities. One way of doing this is for the person who poses a risk to sign a contract of behaviour.

The issues surrounding a person who poses a risk inevitably raises a lot of anxieties, and unfortunately the majority of those who offend against children are not caught. Of those who are, few are prosecuted and even fewer convicted. The reality is that there are many potential opportunities to offend in the ‘normal life’ of some organisations, particularly places of worship so it is important to take the matter seriously whether or not an offender has been identified. This means it should be normal to have policies and procedures in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, whether or not there is a recognised problem.

It is accepted that due to the addictive and/or persistent nature of abusive behaviour, if a person has committed sexual offences, they should never again work or be placed in any position of responsibility that puts them in contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Similarly where an individual has committed offences of a violent nature a thorough risk assessment will need to be carried out to ascertain their suitability for working with the above.

Grooming

Grooming is ‘a course of conduct enacted by a suspected paedophile, which would give a reasonable person cause for concern that any meeting with a child arising from the conduct would be for unlawful purposes.’ This type of behaviour can be applied to other sex offenders (see In Focus – Definitions of Paedophile, Sexual and Violent Offender). A suspected paedophile or sex offender will often spend considerable time targeting, enticing and ensnaring a child for sexual purposes.

Sexual Offenders also use the Internet to groom children, young people and vulnerable adults and view indecent images of children. Individuals who download images of children being abused such as drawings, photographs, pseudo photographs, videos, comic representations or any other digital images are participating in the abuse of children.

It is commonly referred to as ‘child or kiddie porn’ but correctly described as ‘indecent images of children’ or ‘child abuse images’. These abusive images are available over the internet through PCs, MACs and mobile technology such as WAP and internet ready mobile phones.

Managing Risks Within an Organisation

If someone who poses a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults wants to join in with activities or become part of a church or church organisation, clear policies and a code of behaviour the individual must follow will be established to manage this risk. This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future.

The church will seek direct contact with the person's supervising probation officer, and also expect the probation officer to make contact with the church on any issue relating to the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. If the person is no longer being supervised, the church will contact the local Public Protection Unit to ascertain how much of a risk the individual is considered to be.

Not all the leadership need to be informed of the details about the individual. It will frequently be adequate for the eldership to know there is a concern but that it is being managed appropriately by the Child Protection Committee.

Written Contracts

Where the individual who poses a risk is to be allowed to attend certain activities run by the church, it is vital robust measures are put in place to ensure children, young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded. This should include their agreement to a written contract setting out behavioural boundaries they sign and agree to abide by, as well as the provision of appropriate supervision and support. These safeguards are in the interests of everyone - those at risk, the offender who may be making strenuous efforts to change, and the organisation.

However, at all times the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount when assessing the risk an individual may pose. It is recognised that no one has an automatic right to work with or have access to children or young people. Similarly no one has a right to work with adults who may be at risk.

While this sounds very formal, sex offenders in particular are often manipulative. They may not have developed an understanding of the importance of personal boundaries or even accept what they have done is wrong. This contract should involve the person's partner and other members of the family who may also be involved with the organisation and need to be kept informed.

The contract will begin by setting out the pastoral support and care that is being offered but it will need to be personalised to the individual concerned, local circumstances and the risk they may pose to others.

In looking at the appropriate supervision of an individual considered a risk the organisation should:

- Arrange a frank discussion between the leaders (more than one) and the person concerned. This may include the probation officer or other agencies involved.

- Make efforts to sustain open communication with the statutory and voluntary agencies involved with the offender
- Establish clear boundaries of behaviour in relationships. These boundaries may vary depending upon the nature of the offence(s) they have committed
- Draw up a contract between leadership and offender based upon an open discussion.
- Ensure the contract is signed and dated by the offender and by leaders of the organisation
- Understand that a contract may be associated with but not solely follow a criminal prosecution. Similarly the ending of a period when an offender's name has been on the sex offenders register should not indicate the ending of the contract drawn up between the offender and the leadership.

Risk Management of Those Known to Pose a Risk

As well as a written contract, there are several practical ways of managing those who may pose a risk to promote a safe environment for all.

- Details about a convicted offender will be shared only with key individuals appropriate, e.g. the eldership, child protection committee and those with leadership responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults. As well as addressing safeguarding issues, this will promote greater understanding and support for the individual.
- The person who poses a risk should never be on their own with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Seating and activities should be planned to avoid unwittingly placing the vulnerable in the vicinity of the person who poses a risk
- No undue attention should be given to an offender's story because they may derive sexual pleasure from this

If the person does not keep to the boundaries set, the police should be contacted for advice. If the person leaves the church, the statutory agencies, such as probation, Public protection Unit, or Children's and Adult Social Services, should be informed.

Response of Leadership Towards an Alleged or Suspected Perpetrator

If the matter is formally referred to the statutory authorities an initial assessment will be made to decide whether a formal investigation should be carried out. Where both the alleged perpetrator and the victim and/or their family are attending church events, support will need to be given to both. Pastoral care for an alleged perpetrator is important and may include:

- retaining contact
- emotional support
- encouragement to seek legal advice
- accompanying to court hearings

This should be done with the full knowledge of the statutory authorities. Limiting information in relation to allegations of abuse to those who need to know permits leaders not privy to the detail to be free to offer support to either party and others who may be affected.

Risk Management of Those Where There is a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse

Nearly always incidents of abuse are carried out when only two people are present - the victim and perpetrator. It is not for the leadership or any one else to rush to judgement as to where the truth lies. Pending the outcome of the investigation the leadership will need to ensure they are even handed in their support and in their relationships with all those involved.

In view of the differing impacts such disclosures can have, the church can help in the following way:

- one person is responsible for dealing with the authorities
- different people offer support to the victim, the victims' family, the alleged perpetrator and the alleged perpetrator's family

General Principles for the Appointment and Recruitment of Leaders/Helpers

The following steps are necessary to ensure good practice:

- 1. Defining the Role.** This involves thinking through exactly what the role of the new leader/helper is expected to be, and what skills will be required for the role to be performed effectively.
- 2. Application Form.** This should be supplied to prospective candidates, along with appropriate information as to what is expected of leaders/helpers. The Application Form allows prospective leaders/helpers to provide all relevant details, which will be treated in confidence.
It is important that every leader/helper fills in an Application Form, so that the Elders have a complete record of everyone involved in organisations.
- 3. Declaration.** All leaders/helpers will be asked to declare any past criminal convictions, cases pending against them, or any investigation of a complaint that is unresolved.
- 4. Interview.** The Child Protection Committee should meet with the person. This is also the opportunity to explain the Child Protection Policy and ensure that the person has the ability and commitment required to put the Policy into practice.

5. **Referees.** The names of two referees should be given by the applicant. The referees should not be family members, and at least one should be from outside the Church. Where appropriate, references should be sought from the applicant's previous place of worship, preferably from someone who has first hand knowledge of their work with children/young people.
6. **Induction.** An induction process should take place, including ensuring that the new leader/helper is fully familiar with the Church's Child Protection Policy and introducing him/her to other workers, children, parents, etc. At the time of their application, all leaders/helpers are encouraged to access a copy of the Church's Child Protection Policy and procedural guidance which is available on the Church website. The leader/helper should give a written acknowledgement that they have read this.
7. **Vetting.** All new volunteers who will hold regulated positions will undergo an AccessNI check. As part of this, confirmation of identity, including by means of a driving licence or passport, will be sought.
8. **Trial Period.** Appointment should be conditional on the satisfactory completion of a trial period (usually 6 months). There should be a facility for a yearly review of all leaders/helpers. In particular, leaders of organisations and ultimately the Office Bearers should consider the following areas: reliability, trust, relationships with children, parents and other leaders, contribution to the organisation and co-operation with the team. Review should always be carried out within a positive framework.
9. **Crèche and Children's Church.** It is accepted practice that leaders and helpers in all organisations catering for babies and toddlers will have completed an application form.

Detailed Procedure for the Appointment of Leaders/Helpers

1. The organisation leader advises the eldership that he/she wishes to approach someone as a potential leader, having assessed their suitability for the role, and seeks their approval.
2. The organisation leader gives the application form to the applicant, explaining that there will be an informal meeting arranged with the Child Protection Committee.
3. The completed application form is given to the Child Protection Committee who will hold it in a safe place. (Only the Child Protection Committee should see the application form, since it is important to maintain confidentiality.)
4. The Child Protection Committee seeks references from the two persons identified on the application form.
5. Once the references are received, the Child Protection Committee meets with the individual to assess his/her suitability to work with children/young people.
6. If there is uncertainty about the suitability of a candidate, they should be made aware of what is happening and asked whether they consent to a further meeting, should this be deemed necessary.
7. If the appointment qualifies as 'regulated activity' as prescribed by AccessNI, then the individual will need to consent to an enhanced disclosure application being undertaken. An Enhanced Disclosure Application Form will be provided to the applicant, along with guidance notes provided by AccessNI.

8. Confirmation of the identity of the individual will be undertaken, as outlined on the ID Validation Form (AccessNI). Original documents should be examined by a Child Protection Committee member (or a designated organisation leader on behalf of the Child Protection Committee) and returned to the applicant.
9. The individual is informed that a check is being undertaken and that this could take four to six weeks. Unsupervised access to children/young people should not be permitted until an appropriate Enhanced Disclosure Certificate has been received from AccessNI.
10. Once the result of the AccessNI check is known (if appropriate), the outcome of the appointment process is recorded on the individual's application form by a Child Protection Committee member and verified by the elder with responsibility for Child Protection. The form is then held by the Child Protection Committee in a safe place.

Obtaining Disclosures

AccessNI is a criminal history disclosure service within the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland. AccessNI commenced operations in April 2008 and operates in accordance with Part V of the Police Act 1997.

There are three levels of AccessNI disclosure, each representing a different level of check: Basic, Standard and Enhanced. Enhanced disclosures are appropriate for posts involving work with children and/or vulnerable adults. They contain all the information in Standard disclosures, plus other relevant information held on police records and whether or not an applicant has been officially barred from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. Enhanced disclosures are completed jointly by applicants and their (potential) employers before being sent to AccessNI for processing.

Enhanced disclosures are issued where the Registered Body (of which Ballymena Baptist Church is one) confirms that the post is "exempt" from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978 and is a "prescribed" position as set out in paragraph 9 of Statutory Instrument 2009 No. 2495 (see www.opsi.gov.uk). The post must involve (i) working with children or vulnerable adults in a "regulated" activity, as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, or (ii) regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children and/or vulnerable adults and/or advising or counselling children.

The type of work will involve "regulated activity", as defined in the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups \(NI\) Order 2007](#) and amended in September 2012. Regulated activity relating to children includes regular unsupervised activities (e.g. teaching, training, caring for or supervising, or driving a vehicle only for children) and activities involving personal care (including washing, dressing or supervised health care).

A regulated position implies that:

- The post involves one-to-one access to children
- The circumstances of contact are unsupervised
- Situations may be isolated
- The contact occurs either once a week or more often, on four or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight (that is, even once between 2am and 6am).

The following posts have been identified as requiring AccessNI checks:

- Superintendent of the Sunday School
- Sunday School Teacher
- BB Captain
- BB Officers and Helpers
- GB Captain
- GB Officers and Helpers
- Youth Leaders
- Crèche Workers
- Pastor
- Assistant Pastor
- Other Church employees

Contacting AccessNI

Access to AccessNI is through the following public body:

Access Northern Ireland
PO Box 1085, Belfast
BT5 9BD
0300 200 7888
accessni@ani.x.gsi.gov.uk

Use of Personal Information

As an organisation using AccessNI to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Ballymena Baptist Church complies fully with AccessNI's Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage retention and disposal of Disclosure Applications and Disclosure information. The Church also complies with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information.

Storage and Access

Disclosure information is be kept securely, in a lockable, fireproof storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties (i.e. members of the Child Protection Committee appointed by the membership).

Handling

In accordance with section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a decision for recruitment (or for some other relevant reason, e.g. for regulatory or licensing purposes) has been taken, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is necessary. Information will not be retained but destroyed once a decision, recruitment or otherwise, has been made.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any unsecured receptacle (e.g. waste-bin or confidential sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure or any other relevant non-conviction information supplied by police but not included on the Disclosure. However, despite the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position for which the Disclosure was requested, the AccessNI unique reference number of the Disclosure Certificate and the details of the recruitment decision taken. In addition there is a requirement to retain for 90 days, following receipt of Disclosure Certificate reports, three items of identity for each leader. Following the 90 day period, these documents will be securely disposed.

Periodic Review of Child Protection Policy by Office Bearers

It is recommended that the Child Protection Policy should be reviewed at least every three years. The purpose of the review is to assess the effectiveness of its implementation at congregational level, and to address any practical difficulties arising from such implementation. The review will normally be carried out by the Child Protection Committee. However, the elders may request the review to be undertaken by another nominated individual.

It is important that the review is not perceived as an inspection but rather as an opportunity for the Elders to demonstrate their interest in the life of the youth organisations in general and in the child protection arrangement in particular. The following matters should be reviewed in particular:

- **Recruitment Practices**
Are recruitment procedures being adhered to?
How is the performance of new leaders appraised after 6 months? How are they supported and encouraged, especially during this critical period?
- **Discipline**
What ongoing help is available to leaders concerning issues of discipline with children and young people?
What particular difficulties have arisen in the areas of discipline and how satisfactorily have they been dealt with?
- **Parental Consent Forms**
What particular difficulties are experienced in the completion and storing of parental consent forms? How are such difficulties dealt with?

- **Feedback from Young People / Parents / Carers**
The Review should include some comments from young people and parents. A sample group could be used for this purpose.
- **Team-Building**
What arrangements are in place to enable organisation leaders to meet so that they may periodically review their work?
- **Reporting of Concerns**
What concerns or complaints have been brought to the attention of the leader? If concerns or complaints have surfaced, are you satisfied that these have been dealt with properly or are there issues still outstanding?
- **Child Protection Committee**
What consultation has taken place with the Child Protection Committee? Has this been beneficial?
- **Staff/Child Ratios**
What difficulties have been experienced in adhering to the recommended staff/child ratios?
- **Training**
When was child protection training of leaders last carried out? Have all leaders undertaken child protection training?

It is suggested that a short report of the review be presented to the elders. It will be encouraging for the organisation leaders to be assured by the elders that they are satisfied with the implementation of the Child Protection Policy. Even where areas are identified for improvement, the elders should affirm the good work that is taking place.

Adherence to the Church's Child Protection Guidelines

Adherence to the Church's Child Protection Guidelines is an ongoing process and can only be achieved by the commitment of all youth workers. In this, all workers have a personal responsibility. However, there is a particular responsibility placed upon each organisation leader to ensure that compliance with the guidelines is achieved. Support and guidance is available from the Child Protection Committee.

Should an issue of non-compliance be detected, it will be the responsibility of the organisation leader to address this issue. Where this has not been resolved, the Child Protection Committee may assist in resolution of the difficulty. Ultimately it will be the responsibility of the elders to ensure compliance with the guidelines is achieved. Where this reaches eldership level, each situation will be considered and addressed taking into account all relevant information.

Register of Leaders

It is good practice for the Elders to have access to a register of current youth leaders and date of resignation of previous leaders. This register should be provided by the organisation leader at the beginning of each new session and given to the Child Protection Committee. The church will also be required to supply the names of individuals appointed to some external organisations, such as GB or BB, and confirm that new appointees have been subject to AccessNI checks and found suitable. Should

such organisations have concerns about practices, they may withdraw affiliation of the churches concerned.

2.5 General Safety

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. That is not only the responsibility of the leader in charge but of every leader/helper. They should be aware of the following:

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. You may also require special insurance to cover these higher-risk activities. Be aware of the physical environment and remove/avoid items that may cause injury.

If an organisation is undertaking activities deemed to be high-risk, the leaders/helpers must seek written permission from parents/guardians in advance. Activities deemed high-risk should be supervised by an appropriately qualified person – see Church Insurance section, below.

3. If at all possible, aim to have a trained first aider present. Leaders/helpers will be aware (from the information on Consent Forms) of any medication that children are currently taking – but note that this should not be given without written consent from parents or doctors. Similarly, leaders/helpers will have information about each child’s allergies and reactions to foods, e.g. peanuts. Medications for allergies should be clearly marked and securely locked away, out of the reach of children.
4. 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. Occasionally, fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all young people know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire. It is helpful to have a record of these.
5. During games or “ice-breakers”, be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these.
6. Young people must be supervised at all times by a leader/helper while in the kitchen area.
7. Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used and, where possible, should be screened off. Office-bearers should keep organisation leaders informed about maintenance work.
8. A telephone should, where possible, be installed on the premises for safety purposes, especially in locations where mobile phone networks are poor.
9. Each organisation should have access to an Accident/Incident Form, on which to record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses/date, etc.

2.6 Transport

All youth work will involve transporting young people at some stage, whether this is on a club night or to and from a residential programme. Increasingly, more church organisations are travelling by train, boat and aeroplane. This demands a higher level of organisation and warrants maximum levels of supervision.

Planning Outings

Leaders of organisations must exercise discretion as to who is permitted to drive cars or minibuses. The following should be considered at all times:

- All vehicles must have adequate and up-to-date insurance cover and, if required, a valid MOT certificate.
- All drivers must hold a full driving licence, and no longer be on “R” plates.
- Drivers need to be sufficiently aware of their responsibility towards their passengers.
- The benefits and also the dangers of driving in convoy should be highlighted.
- Speed limits should never be exceeded.
- Drivers need to know what to do in the event of a breakdown or accident.

In addition, leaders/helpers should observe the guidelines below, which will help ensure protection both for them and for the young people.

Private Cars Driven on Outings by Leaders, Helpers, Parents or Others on Behalf of Organisations

- Drivers should be aware of the limitations of third-party insurance.
- Private cars may be used so long as they are not used for hire or for carrying passengers for reward.
- Seat-belts should be worn by each passenger at all times.
- Children under 12 years of age or less than 135 cm tall should normally use a child’s car seat. If the correct child seat is not available, a child over 3 years of age can use an adult seat belt – but only for journeys that are unexpected, necessary and short. Children under 3 years of age cannot travel in vehicles without the correct car seat (except taxis).
- Avoid transporting a child or young person on your own. Try to ensure that another leader/helper or other children/young people are with you. If a situation occurs when you have to transport a child alone, ensure that other leaders/helpers know that this is happening, and that the child is in the rear seat.
- Ideally, the same driver should transport the same children to and from an event, to reduce the possibility of a child being left behind at the end of an activity.

Minibuses / Coaches

A “minibus” is a vehicle constructed or adapted to carry up to 16 seated passengers.

A “coach” is a bus which can carry more than 16 seated passengers.

- Drivers of coaches must have a PCV (Passenger Carrying Vehicle) licence.
- Drivers of minibuses can drive on their ordinary car licences provided they are at least 21 years of age, have held a full driving licence for at least 2 years and they are *not* driving for hire or reward.
- If driving a church-owned minibus, drivers must be named on the church’s insurance policy.
- Privately hired minibuses or coaches, including those hired on a self-drive basis, must be maintained in good condition, roadworthy and fully insured. They should be hired only from an operator who has an appropriate, valid and current operator’s licence. To that end, the office-bearers will compile and maintain a list of approved transport providers, and organisation leaders should ensure that transport is hired only from providers whose names appear on that list.
- Minibus drivers and companies do not have to provide child car seats, but where they are fitted, children aged between 3 and 12 years and less than 135 cms tall must use them. Otherwise, if child seats are not fitted or are unsuitable, they must use an adult seat belt. And if neither child seats nor adult seat belts are fitted, all children must travel in rear seats (i.e. behind the driver).

Note: It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure that these seating requirements are complied with.

Supervision on Transport

Leaders/helpers who accompany young people in minibuses should, where possible, sit among the young people. Preferably, a leader/helper should sit near the exit points of the vehicle.

Where possible, leaders must be equally dispersed throughout a vehicle. Group members must be within sight of a leader at all times. An acceptable gender mix of leaders is essential with a mixed gender group.

Children and leaders should remain seated for the duration of the journey. To attend to an emergency, the leader should ask the driver to pull up.

Children should be supervised when waiting for or leaving a vehicle, and escorted safely across roads.

2.7 Parental Consent Forms

Multi-Purpose Parental Consent Forms can be found in Section 3. (There are two of these – one for organisations catering for preschool children only, and the other for all other organisations).

These should be completed at the start of each year, for the involvement of children in youth organisations. The benefit of this is that each organisation will have valuable

information throughout the time the young person is with them. Copies of completed consent forms should be circulated to all organisations attended by each child.

If you go on a day trip or special activity, a Consent Form for Special Outings / Activities / Residential should be completed for each child. A copy of this form is also presented in Section 3.

Before taking children on a residential programme it is important to have a parental/guardian consent form signed. This will include space to give medical information/allergies, etc, and consent to medical treatment, if necessary.

It is important that consent forms can be accessed by the leader in charge, particularly in an emergency. A leader in charge may therefore be the most appropriate person to store the completed forms.

Current consent forms will be stored in line with Data Protection guidance. Forms providing consent for the use of photographs will be retained for as long as the photographs are in use.

2.8 Residential Programmes / Outings

Residential programmes often become the highlight of any congregation's youth programme, offering a whole new world of relationships and events. While recognising the tremendous impact residential trips can have on a young person's emotional, physical and spiritual development, the leader in charge ought to note the following:

The Residential Centre

Check your location and accommodation, ensuring it is adequate for your group and activity.

1. The Centre must have adequate insurance cover for your group and the activities it hopes to engage in. Insurance should especially cover high-risk activities, such as canoeing, rock-climbing etc.
2. The Centre should inform you of its rules and regulations. Make every effort to be aware of its timetable e.g. whether it has a lights-out time, meal-times, the time it expects the group to arrive and to depart, etc.
3. The Centre must provide access to first-aid / GP in the event of an emergency.
4. The Centre must also provide separate sleeping accommodation for males/females

Parents

5. The consent of parents/guardians must be obtained when taking any young people away for a residential experience. A form must be signed by the parent/guardian and it should also give any relevant medical information, e.g. allergies, special diets, etc.
6. Before taking a group away, ensure that parents/guardians are aware of the following:

- The programme/activities their child is encouraged/expected to participate in, especially high-risk activities, e.g. bouldering, canoeing, etc.
- If there will be shopping trips and the level of supervision.
- The names and numbers of leaders/helpers accompanying the group. (Where possible it is advisable to arrange a pre-residential briefing for the parents, giving information and allowing them a chance to meet the leaders/helpers).
- The Centre telephone number and address.
- The group's "contract" (i.e. what rules the young people will be asked to abide by, and possible consequences if these are broken).
- What clothes and other items the young people might be expected to need.
- How much pocket money might be sufficient. (It is advisable to set a limit on this.)

Young People

7. The young people should be fully informed of the nature of the residential programme, i.e. what is expected from them.
8. They should never be coerced/forced into any activity with which they are uncomfortable.
9. They should be involved in the drawing up of rules and a contract for behaviour and be made aware of sanctions in the event of them being broken.

NB: A list of the names and contact details of all young people and leaders attending a residential/camp, etc, should be left with either the chair/elder or another member of the Child Protection Committee.

Using Church Halls for Accommodation

In addition, if church premises are being used for accommodation the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

1. There should be appropriate male/female segregation and supervision.
2. There should be at least two separate routes leading from the sleeping accommodation and out of the building.
3. Doors should be checked for ease of opening in an emergency. Exits should be clearly marked and unblocked. Clear instructions in the event of fire should be given to both young people and leaders/helpers.
4. Portable heating appliances should not impede exits and should be turned off during sleeping hours. The use of these should be minimised.
5. Leader/helpers should have torches in case of power failure.
6. There should be a "no smoking", "no alcohol", "drug-free" rule applied to the premises.

7. If there is a telephone in the church, the leaders/helpers should have access to it. If not, they should ensure they have access to a mobile phone and that network coverage has been checked.
8. Leaders/helpers should avoid staying on their own with a young person. Always be sure that there are other leaders/helpers or young people present.
9. Sleeping accommodation for leaders/helpers and young people, where possible, should be separate but the young people's accommodation ought to be easily accessible.

Planning Outings

Churches are now offering a wide range of activities outside church premises. It is essential that parents are informed of any proposed outing and any plan to leave their son/daughter unaccompanied without direct adult supervision, e.g. in a shopping centre.

1. Is the place you are visiting suitable for the age range you are taking?
2. Is the proposed outing age appropriate, e.g. is the film or theatre show suitable?
3. What is the best time to go – time of the year, time of the week? Are there busy sessions, discounted days?
4. Check that the venue can cater for anyone with special needs.
5. Make sure you have adequate numbers of leaders before booking.
6. Does the outing warrant additional insurance?
7. Has consent been given by the parents/guardians?
8. Is there an area for eating packed lunches and for the group to let off steam?
9. Do you have an alternative plan if it rains or your venue is closed because of an emergency?
10. How will you get there?
11. How much will it cost?
12. Have you informed a nominated person of your exact location and contact mobile phone number?
13. Have you completed a contact sheet and left it with the nominated person?

Review

Carry out a review of the residential/outing with all concerned – what really went well and what could be improved upon.

2.9 Training

Leaders/helpers who work with children and young people are a valuable resource to the Church. They should have appropriate training, which must include some basic Child Protection Awareness Training along with knowledge of agencies which can provide

further training, resources and advice. Training, however, needs to be ongoing and not simply a one-off event.

All leaders and helpers must complete initial Child Protection training in Ballymena Baptist Church within six months of taking up their post, and at least 3-yearly thereafter.

It is recommended that a record be kept of all training that has been undertaken and who has attended.

2.10 Legal/Insurance Matters

Relevant Legislation - Northern Ireland

The main relevant legislation relating to child protection in Northern Ireland includes:

- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998
- The Criminal Justice (Children) NI Order 1998
- The Sex Offenders Act 1997
- The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- Part V of the Police Act - Sections 112 to 127 of the Police Act 1997

Insurance

The provision of insurance protection for churches remains a complex issue. The three main areas of cover relate to offsetting legal expenses in the event of a claim; public liability cover relating to claims for inadequate supervision, negligence, etc; and professional indemnity to cover error, omissions or negligent advice. The office-bearers should satisfy themselves that the proper insurance protection is in place and they may require more detailed and up-to-date information on these insurances.

Data Protection

If you are holding information on a computer you need to register with the Data Protection Registrar. The address is Data Protection Registrar, Springfield House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AX.

Please note the eight data protection principles under the Data Protection Act (1998) (UK only): Registered organisations should -

1. Obtain and process personal data fairly and lawfully.
2. Hold data only for the purposes specified on the register entry.
3. Use the data only for the purposes, and disclose it only to the people listed in the register entry.

4. Only hold data which is adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is held.
5. Ensure personal data is accurate and where necessary, kept up-to-date.
6. Hold data for no longer than is necessary.
7. Allow individuals access to information about them and, where appropriate, correct or erase it.
8. Take security measures to prevent unauthorised or accidental access to, alteration, disclosure or loss and destruction of information.

Section 3: Policy and Forms

Child Protection Policy

Ballymena Baptist Church

Creating a safe environment for children, young people and leaders in
Ballymena Baptist Church

Policy Statement

This policy statement is aimed at providing a safe environment where children and young people may enjoy social contact, personal and spiritual development. Adults selected to work within youth ministries should be secure in the knowledge that they have the full support of the Office Bearers.

1. Adoption of Child Protection Guidelines

Ballymena Baptist Church have adopted Child Protection Guidelines approved by the NSPCC. All organisations are expected to adhere to these Guidelines. The implementation of the Guidelines will be reviewed annually.

2. Designated Person(s)

On the recommendation of the Elders, the membership will appoint a Child Protection Committee who will provide consultation, advice and support to organisations and to the Elders on matters concerning the welfare of children and young people. The Elders will keep organisation leaders updated with the names of the members of the Child Protection Committee. Any matter brought to the attention of the Committee will be treated in strict confidence. Information will be divulged only where there is a legitimate need to know.

3. Leadership

We believe that the selection procedures outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines greatly assist the assessment of a person's suitability to work with children and young people. As a result of implementing such procedures, leaders and helpers within this congregation will be more assured of their position and of the confidence placed in them by the membership.

The following procedures must be followed for the appointment of leaders/helpers who will be 18 years and over.

- i) All leaders and helpers will be required to complete an Application Form.
- ii) Applicants will be required to provide 2 references, by persons who are not relatives and at least one of these independent of Ballymena Baptist Church. (All

confidential records e.g. applications and references will be stored safely by the Child Protection Committee).

- iii) Members of the Child Protection Committee will meet informally with the candidate.
- iv) At this meeting the Committee will ensure the candidate understands their role within the terms of the Child Protection Policy and arrange for an enhanced disclosure AccessNI check to be completed if the role is deemed a regulated activity.
- v) All leaders and helpers are required to attend regular child protection training.

4. **Reporting of Concerns**

The leaders in each of our organisations will be fully conversant with the referral procedure where there is concern about the welfare of a child, as outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines.

5. **Code of Practice**

Each organisation will be expected to comply with the Good Standards of Practice outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines.

6. **Parental Consent Forms**

Organisation leaders are responsible for ensuring that Parental Consent Forms are completed for each child attending organisations at the commencement of each year, as well as Special Consent Forms for any “off the premises” activities and residentials.

7. **Health and Safety**

The Elders expect organisations to adhere to the guidance on safety matters outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines.

8. **Transport**

Organisations are expected to adhere to the guidance of the Child Protection Guidelines relating to use of private cars and other hired vehicles for transporting children to and from youth activities.

9. **Residentials**

Guidance on residential trips is provided in the Child Protection Guidelines and will be followed on all residential trips organised by Ballymena Baptist Church.

10. **Implementation and Review**

The Elders are responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, and will review it every three years with the leaders in charge of youth organisations, led by the Child Protection Committee.

Signed: _____ (Elder) Date: _____

_____ (Secretary) Date: _____

Application Form for Leaders/Helpers in Youth and Children's Work

Position applied for
I understand that this role requires me to work directly with children and/or vulnerable adults.

Full name

Any previous surname

Date and place of birth

National Insurance Number

Address

Postcode Telephone Number

Any previous addresses in the past five years:

1

2.....

(If more than 2 previous addresses please continue overleaf)

Name of any previous Church you attended

Name and address of previous Pastor.....

.....

Please give details of previous experience of working with children and/or young people:

.....

.....

.....

Please describe your reasons for working with children and include comment on your Christian development:

.....

.....

Are you prepared to attend regular Safeguarding training in Ballymena Baptist Church? YES / NO

Have you had treatment for any illness during the past 5 years which may have a bearing on your ability to work with children and young people? YES / NO

If yes, please state:

.....

As part of the application process, an Access NI enhanced disclosure will be required to assist with decision making. BBC has a policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure information. BBC adheres to the Access NI code of practice and a copy is available on request.

Due to the nature of work for which you are applying, you are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978, as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order (NI) 1987 you should declare all convictions including spent convictions including any reason why you cannot work with children or vulnerable adults. If the post you are applying for allows you access to vulnerable adults or children, by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order NI 1979, you are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which would otherwise be considered as spent. BBC has a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders. Please refer to BBC safeguarding policy available on the church website for further information.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or are you at present the subject of any investigation or criminal charges? YES / NO

If yes, please state the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):

.....

(NB The disclosure of an offence or criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position)

Have you ever been held liable by a court for a civil wrong such as an order made against you by a matrimonial or family court? YES / NO

If yes, please give details:

.....

I confirm that I have read Ballymena Baptist Church Child Protection Guidelines. This policy is available on the Church website.

Signed Date

In signing this form you agree to undergo any check which may be required by the Church, or under law, in respect of your suitability to do this work and understand that any appointment will be subject to those checks being made.

Please give the names, addresses, email and positions of two people who know you well (not members of your family). One should have first-hand knowledge of your work with children / young people and one referee should be from outside the Church.

First Referee Name: Second Referee:

Address: Address:

.....

Email Email.....

Date received by CPC.....

Signed

Reference Request Form

Reference for

The above named person has volunteered for the position of:

.....

in Ballymena Baptist Church.

1. How long have you known the applicant?years
2. In what capacity do you know the applicant?
3. How would you rate him/her as suitable for the above position?

6 = Excellent 5 = Very Good 4 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 2 = Poor 1 = Unknown

	6	5	4	3	2	1
Relationship with children and young people						
Experience in working with children and young people						
Ability to relate to other leaders						
Energy/commitment						
Flexibility and approach						
Self motivation						
Ability to act on own initiative						
Ability to act as part of a team						

Any additional information including other church involvement and Christian commitment which you feel may be relevant:

.....

.....

Are you aware of any reason/concern which should bar this person from working with children or vulnerable adults? Information provided will be dealt with in the strictest confidence:

.....

.....

Name:

Signature: Date:

Ballymena Baptist Church
Mount Street
Ballymena

Dear

Please find overleaf a reference request form. The person indicated is seeking to volunteer in a position within Ballymena Baptist Church which will place them in a responsible role overseeing children and/or young people. Ballymena Baptist Church Child Protection Guidelines highlight that references ought to be sought on behalf of such individuals, to determine their suitability for working with children and/or young people.

We would kindly ask that you answer all questions honestly in the knowledge that any information shared will be treated in the strictest of confidence. It should be noted, however, that where an individual requests access to any information held under a Freedom of Information application, any references held may need to be shared.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

.....

Child Protection Committee

Multi-Purpose Parental Consent Form (General)

Ballymena Baptist Church: Year _____ - _____

Please circle ALL organisations within Ballymena Baptist Church attended by your child:

Sunday School Boys' Brigade Kids Club Deep BBFC
Bible Class Girls' Brigade Whizz Kids Other (specify):.....

Anything written on this form will be held in confidence. The leaders need to know these details in order to meet the specific needs of your child.

I give permission for my child to attend the organisations which I have marked above at their usual meeting places and to participate in all their activities.

Child's full name: DOB:

Name by which he/she is usually known:

Address:

Phone number where I can be contacted in an emergency: Home:

Work: Mobile:

If unavailable contact: Name:

Phone No (including code):

Relationship to child:

Name and phone number of GP:

Details of any known conditions, allergies, etc. (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) and any medication being taken:

.....

Any other special needs, requirements or directions that would be helpful for the leaders to know about:

.....

I will inform the leaders of any important changes to my child's health, medication or needs and also of any changes to our address or to any of the phone numbers given above.

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered, where considered necessary, by a trained first aider (if available) or for medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

During the time your child will spend with us, photographs may be taken for general church purposes and for this we need your permission.

Should you not wish to have photographs of your child taken, please indicate this by ticking the following box:

I **do not** give permission for photographs of my child to be taken

On occasions we may wish to place photographs on the church website or on social media sites. Careful consideration will be given to the location of the photograph and the pose of the children and young people. Photographs of children and young people in swimwear will not be used. We commit to the sensitive use of photographs, most of which will be of group activities. Children will not be named where photographs are displayed.

Should you not wish to have photographs of your child placed on the website please indicate this by ticking the statement below:

I **do not** give permission for photographs of my child to be placed on the church website or on social media

Please note that the church cannot accept responsibility for photographs taken by young people themselves and posted on social media pages.

We would like to advise you of forthcoming events. If, however, you do not wish to receive such information, please indicate this by ticking the statement below:

I **do not** wish to receive information about forthcoming events

On occasions children/young people will require transportation to and from venues by car. If you are unhappy with your child being transported in this way please indicate by ticking the following box.

(NOTE: this applies only to DEEP and certain BB/GB events).

I confirm that the above details are correct to the best of my knowledge.

NB: Consent must be provided by an adult with parental responsibility

Signature: (Parent/Guardian) Date:

Name printed in full:

Multi-Purpose Parental Consent Form (Creche)

Ballymena Baptist Church: Year _____ - _____

Please circle ALL organisations within Ballymena Baptist Church attended by your child:

Creche Other (please specify):

Anything written on this form will be held in confidence. The leaders need to know these details in order to meet the specific needs of your child.

I give permission for my child to attend the organisations which I have marked above at their usual meeting places and to participate in all their activities.

Child's full name: DOB:

Name by which he/she is usually known:

Address:

Phone number where I can be contacted in an emergency: Home:

Work: Mobile:

If unavailable contact: Name:

Phone No (including code):

Relationship to child:

Name and phone number of GP:

Details of any known conditions, allergies, etc (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) and any medication being taken:

.....

I will inform the leaders of any important changes to my child's health, medication or needs and also of any changes to our address or to any of the phone numbers given above.

Has your child a special comforter?.....

When your child is unsettled, what do you do?.....

In the event of prolonged unsettlement you will be contacted.

Any other special needs, requirements or directions that would be helpful for the leaders to know about:

.....

.....

Children will only be changed if soiled. Do we have permission to change your child? Yes / No

If your child has a toileting accident, do we have permission to change them? Yes / No

In either case if the answer is No, you will be contacted.

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered, where considered necessary, by a trained first aider (if available) or for medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

During the time your child will spend with us, photographs may be taken for general church purposes and for this we need your permission.

Should you not wish to have photographs of your child taken, please indicate this by ticking the following box:

I **do not** give permission for photographs of my child to be taken

On occasions we may wish to place photographs on the church website or on social media sites. Careful consideration will be given to the location of the photograph and the pose of the children and young people. Photographs of children and young people in swimwear will not be used. We commit to the sensitive use of photographs, most of which will be of group activities. Children will not be named where photographs are displayed.

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Please note that the church cannot accept responsibility for photographs taken by young people themselves and posted on social media pages.

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I **do not** wish to receive information about forthcoming events

I confirm that the above details are correct to the best of my knowledge.

NB: Consent must be provided by an adult with parental responsibility

Signature: (Parent/Guardian) Date:

Name printed in full:

ID VALIDATION FORM



It is standard good recruitment practice for employers to satisfy themselves as to the identity of those applying for positions. Although AccessNI may in some cases conduct its own checks to confirm identity, there is no substitute for thorough identity checks by employers. Larger Registered Bodies that delegate responsibility for ID checking, or Umbrella Bodies who are assisting smaller organisations through the checking process, should ensure documentary evidence is validated, and that they indicate on the Disclosure Application Form (Part H), the checks have been made. Employers should seek to comply with the Guidance below. Organisations must also ensure they comply with Section 3 of the AccessNI Code of Practice.

Valid Identification Documents

In accordance with AccessNI Circular 1/2012 (issued in December 2012), ideally three documents must be produced in the name of the applicant; **one from Group 1 and two from Group 2 (see overleaf)**. If this is not possible, then **four documents from Group 2** must be produced, one of which must be a birth certificate issued after the time of birth. It is preferred that **at least** one of these documents includes photographic identification.

Please use the attached form and tick the appropriate boxes to indicate what ID has been checked. Approved Counter Signatories must ensure that box H9 of the Disclosure Application Form is completed. This ID Validation Form should be made available to AccessNI on request.

Name of Applicant :

Date ID Check carried out :

I confirm I have seen the original ID documents as indicated on the attached sheet

Signed :

Name (Capitals) :

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE RETAINED WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION
PLEASE DO NOT SEND IT TO ACCESSNI**

THIS FORM HAS BEEN CREATED TO ASSIST YOUR ORGANISATION WITH ROBUST IDENTITY CHECKS

GROUP 1

- Current Passport (any Nationality)
- Biometric Residence Permit (UK)
- Current Driving Licence (UK, ROI, Isle of Man, Channel Islands or any EU country)
- Original Birth Certificate (UK, Isle of Man or Channels) issue at time of birth
- Original Long Form Irish Birth Certificate – issued at time of registration of birth
- Adoption Certificate (UK, Isle of Man or Channel Islands)

* documentation must be less than 3 months old

** documentation must be issued within the last 12 months

GROUP 2

- Birth Certificate (UK, ROI, Isle of Man or Channel Islands) issued after time of birth
- Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate (UK, Isle of Man or Channel Islands)
- HM Forces ID Card (UK)
- National Insurance Card or notification letter with NI number (UK)
- Firearms Licence (UK and Channel Islands)
- Bank / Building Society Account Confirmation Letter
- Electoral ID Card (NI only)
- EU National ID Card
- Cards carrying the PASS Accreditation logo (UK and Channel Islands)
- Senior SmartPass (Translink) (NI only)
- Current UK Driving Licence (old paper version)
- Examination certificates (16-18 year olds only)
- Bank/Building Society Statement (UK or EEA)*
- Credit Card Statement (UK or EEA)*
- Utility Bill (UK or ROI)* – not mobile phone
- Benefit Statement (UK)*
- Addressed payslip*
- Mortgage Statement (UK or EEA)**
- Financial statement (UK)**
- P45/60 Statement(UK and Channel Islands)**
- Land and Property Services Agency rates demand (NI only)**
- Work Permit/Visa (UK) (UK Residence Permit)**.
- Letter from a Head Teacher or Further Education College Principal (16-18 year olds in full time education – only to be used when other documentation routes are exhausted) **

THIS FORM HAS BEEN CREATED TO ASSIST YOUR ORGANISATION WITH ROBUST IDENTITY CHECKS

Consent Form for Special Outings / Activities / Residentials

Ballymena Baptist Church: Year _____ - _____

Organisation:

Details of trip/outing/activity:

.....

Date: Time:

Method of Transport:

Cost (if any):

Collection Arrangements:

.....

I note the arrangements and give permission for my child to take part in this activity:

Name of child:

Please indicate details of any known medical conditions, allergies, special needs or requirements.

.....

.....

.....

.....

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a trained first aider, if available, or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult leader to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

During the time your child will spend with us, photographs may be taken for general church purposes and for this we need your permission.

Should you not wish to have photographs of your child taken, please indicate this by ticking the following box:

I **do not** give permission for photographs of my child to be taken

On occasions we may wish to place photographs on the church website or on social media sites. Careful consideration will be given to the location of the photograph and the pose of the children and young people. Photographs of children and young people in swimwear will not be used. We commit to the sensitive use of photographs, most of which will be of group activities. Children will not be named where photographs are displayed.

Should you not wish to have photographs of your child placed on the website please indicate this by ticking the statement below:

I **do not** give permission for photographs of my child to be placed on the church website or on social media

Please note that the church cannot accept responsibility for photographs taken by young people themselves and posted on social media pages.

NB: Consent must be provided by an adult with parental responsibility

Signed:

Relationship to Child:

Contact Telephone Numbers: Home:

Mobile:

Accident/Incident Form

Ballymena Baptist Church

This form should be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident. The worker should discuss with the organisation leader what follow-up action is needed.

Day: Date: Time:

Name, contact details and ages of those involved in the incident:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Where did this incident take place?
.....

Name of church and organisation:

Name of the group:

Who is normally responsible for group? (Name, address and telephone number)

Name:

Address:

..... Tel No:

Who was responsible for the group at the time of the incident (if different)?

Name:

Address:

..... Tel No:

Who witnessed the incident? (Normally only two witnesses would be needed.)

Name: Name:

Address: Address:

.....

Tel No: Tel No:

Age (if under 16): Age (if under 16):

Describe the accident/incident (include injuries received and any first aid or medical treatment given) continue on separate sheet if necessary.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Have you retained any defective equipment?

YES NO NONE INVOLVED (please tick)

If so, where is it being kept and by whom?

.....
.....

What action have you taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident?

.....
.....

Is the site or premises still safe for your group to use? YES NO

Is the equipment still safe for your group to use? YES NO

Have the parents/carers been informed? YES NO

Date: Time:

Has CPC been informed? (where applicable) YES NO

Has Leader in charge been informed? YES NO

Signature of person in charge of group at time of accident/incident:

Signed: Print Name:

Date:

Form passed to Safety Officer:

Signed: Print Name:

Date:

Report of Concern About a Child

Ballymena Baptist Church

Please use this form to record any concern you have about a child. If you need help in completing this form please talk to the leader in charge of your organisation or the Child Protection Committee. The completed form will be given by the organisation leader to the Child Protection Committee.

Child's Name:

Address:

.....

Age DOB..... Tel.No.

State as clearly as possible **why** you are concerned, **from whom** you received the information and **when**. If possible include the details of the person(s) causing concern in relation to the child. Continue overleaf if necessary.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Details of person reporting concerns:

Name:

Address:

.....

Telephone Number:

Signed: Organisation:

Date:

**Acknowledgement by Child Protection Committee
of a Report of Concern About a Child**

Ballymena Baptist Church

Acknowledgement

To:

Organisation:

Child's Name:

Address:

.....

.....

I acknowledge receipt of your report in respect of the above named child

Name of CPC Member:.....

Signature:

Date:

Photography Copyright Waiver Form

Ballymena Baptist Church

Date:	
Event:	
Venue:	

Name of Photographer:	
Business Name:	
Contact Address:	
Tel No:	

I agree that the sole copyright of all images that I take here today will belong to Ballymena Baptist Church.

I will not use any images that I take here today for any purpose* without express written permission of Ballymena Baptist Church.

I agree that once the final image to be supplied to the church has been selected, all other images taken at this event will either be destroyed or given to the church and not stored by myself.

** The term "any purpose" means including but not limited to copying, publication (including the internet), storage in a retrieved system and manipulation (digital or otherwise)*

Signed:	
Name in Print:	
Date:	

Checklist for Developing Safe Practices in a Group or Organisation

Ballymena Baptist Church

Know the children:

- Have defined criteria for membership of the organisation
- Have a registration system for each child
- Keep a record on each child, including medical details, any special needs and emergency contact numbers.

Keep records of:

- Attendance
- Accidents - keep an incident book
- Consent given for various activities
- Any complaints or grievances

Pay attention to health and safety matters making sure that:

- Any buildings being used are safe and meet required standards
- There is sufficient heating and ventilation
- Toilets, shower areas and washing facilities are up to standard
- Fire precautions are in place
- There is access to a phone
- Equipment is checked regularly
- Insurance cover is adequate

It is important to ensure that:

- Children are not left unattended
- Adequate numbers of leaders of both sexes are available to supervise the activities
- Leaders know at all times where the children are and what they are doing
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment has constant adult supervision
- Dangerous behaviour is prohibited

If the activities involve staying away from home overnight, attention should be also paid to the following:

- Safe methods of transport
- Adequate insurance, to cover all aspects of the trip
- Written parental consent
- Any information about the children which may be relevant staying away overnight, like allergies, medical problems, or special needs
- Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements
- Respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets

Discipline and challenging behaviour:

Leaders need to be trained and prepared for coping with disruptive behaviour. It is recommended that:

- More than one leader is present when challenging behaviour is being dealt with
- A record is kept, describing what happened, the circumstances, who was involved, any injury to a person or to property and how the situation was resolved

Providing training, including:

- Induction training
- Particular skills training, to raise awareness and provide information about how to respond to suspicions or incidents of child abuse
- An annual review or 'staff appraisal' to assess general performance and review any changes that have happened or that you need to make

Ballymena Baptist Church

Register of all Leaders and Helpers Working with Children and Young People 20...../20.....

Name of Organisation

Name	Address	Contact Tel Number	Date of Commencement	Date of Resignation within Last Year	Position in Organisation (e.g. Captain, Leader)

Verified by Organisation Leader – Signature: Date:

Ballymena Baptist Church
Residential/Day Outing - Parent/Carer Contact Numbers

To be completed prior to any Residential/Camp and left with either the chair/elder or another member of the Child Protection Committee

Name of Organisation.....

Location:.....

Date:.....

Name and Contact Number of Leader in Charge of Event:.....

Name of Young Person	Contact Tel Number	Second Contact Tel Number

Ballymena Baptist Church: Recruitment Management Record

Name of Applicant	Role / Organisation	Date Application Form Received	Date References Requested	Dates References Returned	Date of Interview with CPC	Outcome of Interview with CPC

Date of ID Validation	Date AccessNI Certificate Received	Date of AccessNI Disclosure	AccessNI Certificate Number	Type of Check	Outcome of AccessNI Check
				Enhanced	

Recruitment Recommendation of CPC Member	Date of CPC Member Recruitment Recommendation	Recruitment Decision of CPC Elder	Date of CPC Elder Recruitment Decision

Section 4: Resources and Insurance

Resources/Select Bibliography

Publications and Resources

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	UNICEF, PO Box 621, York House, Wetherby Road, York YO26 0EX
An Abuse of Trust – The Martin Huston Report	DHSS, Block C, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3SF
Pre-Employment Consultancy Service	Child Care Unit, DHSSPS, Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3SQ
Our Duty to Care	Volunteer Development Agency 129 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 1SH
Keep Them Safe	Department of Youth and Children’s Work, Aldersgate House, 13 University Road, Belfast BT7 1NA
Keeping Safe – A Practical Guide to Talking with Children	Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1 0DH
NSPCC have a wide selection of resources and booklets	NSPCC Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH
CCPAS (the Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service) provide a 24-hour confidential helpline	CCPAS, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ (Tel: 01322 517817) (Helpline: 0845 120 4550)
NIABF (Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum) – for resources on bullying	NIABF, C/o NCB NI, Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria St, Belfast BT2 7AF

Books

- Maxine Hancock and Karen Burton Mains. *Child Sex Abuse: A Hope for Healing* (Highland Books), 1988
- Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. *Time for Action: Sexual Abuse, the Churches and a New Dawn for Survivors* (CTBI), 2002

Support Groups

Domestic Violence	Women’s Aid Federation NI 129 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP
Victims of Sexual Abuse	Nexus NI 119 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP
Victims of Sexual Abuse	The Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre 29 Donegal Street, Belfast BT1 2FH

Church Insurance

A Church represents a complex risk to the diversity of activity that goes on within and without its walls.

Public Liability

This section of cover is the main area under which most claims for bodily injury or loss 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, weekend retreats etc. etc. **It is not** designed to automatically include hazardous activities such as rock climbing, canoeing, and as otherwise indicated below.

Boys Brigade and Girls 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 its 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 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, Boys Brigade, Girls 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 **unpaid** 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. Other exclusions are as follows:

- Flying or taking part in other aerial activities except whilst travelling in an aircraft as passengers and not as aircrew
- Taking part in rock climbing necessitating the use of ropes or guides, potholing, caving, racing of any kind other than on foot or whilst yachting on inland or territorial waters or winter sports other than curling or skating
- Wilful exposure to needless peril (except in an attempt to save human life)

"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 pursuits centres that provide their own equipment, leadership and insurance. This assumes that supervision of a person qualified in that discipline will be provided.

For the activities listed in the other categories cover may be included following discussion with insurers and may incur the payment of an additional premium.

For those activities that are referred to the insurers often the following additional information may be required:

- Leader numbers, experience & qualification
- 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

Use of firearms including Clay Pigeon Shooting

Rifle shooting

Use power driven machinery

Winter Sports

Physical Contact Sports (e.g. boxing, fencing,)

Overseas Building Projects

Mountain Biking

Rugby

American Football

Skateboarding

Medium-Risk Activities:

Bouncy Castles/Bungy Runs & other inflatable equipment
Gymkana/pony rides/Rodeo Bull
Archery/Rifle Shooting/Crockery Smashes/Darts Stall
Mini Assault Courses, indoor and out Fairground Rides
Building Projects deemed to go beyond routine maintenance
Ice Skating
Overseas Travel
Pony trekking at approved Centres
Fireworks and bonfires

Low-Risk Activities:

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

The list should not be considered exhaustive. 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. This would include the use of tractors for tractor rides etc. 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. Accidents arising out of the use of motor vehicles is specially excluded from the Church insurance policy.

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 therefore beyond the protection afforded by your insurance policy.

Ages

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 Caring in Practice.

Cover Away from Church

Non-hazardous events undertaken at Church Fetes are normally 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 Insurance may be required. Refer to insurers for specific advice.

Child Protection

The 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 and 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 the Office Bearers 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. The Church will therefore have a formal reporting procedure for incidents that result in injury, loss or damage. Such incidents should then be reported to the insurers in order to protect church interests should a formal claim be taken at some time in the future.

Legal expenses cover is also provided under the Church policy by DAS. This provides cover for all the employees and youth works of the church excluding the Pastor. DAS also provides a free counselling and legal advice helpline (Tel: 0117 934 0163)

The Baptist Insurance Company
Beaufort House
Brunswick Road
Gloucester
GL1 1JZ