



Safeguarding Policy

and

**Guidelines for Workers
with
Children and Adults**

Revised and updated October 2019

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION TO THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND GUIDELINES (VERSION FOR WORKERS)

Harm or abuse of children and vulnerable adults is rare but does happen. It is not something new, although there may be more awareness of it now than there has been in the past. Harm or abuse can happen anywhere, including within a Church community and amongst the wider community of individuals who come into contact with the Church and its services and activities. We therefore have a duty to ensure that the Free Church of Scotland and its activities and services are safe for all who come into contact with them. In particular, those who are vulnerable – both children and adults at risk – must be protected, or safeguarded, from harm.

While it is recognised that the risk of harm or abuse occurring cannot be eliminated, the Church seeks to prevent it wherever possible and to minimise the effects of it wherever it is recognised. This can best be achieved if all within the Church, but particularly those with specific roles and responsibilities, including those working with vulnerable groups, are equipped to recognise harm or abuse and know how to report it appropriately and timeously. This can, in some cases, include involving the statutory agencies – police and social work services.

The terms child protection and protecting vulnerable adults have been used previously to describe the way in which the Church seeks to protect both of these vulnerable groups. The single term “safeguarding” is used in this document to describe the protection of both children and adults in the Church.

The full “Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Adults” aims to provide guidelines covering the protection of both children and adults. This abbreviated version (Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines for Workers with Children and Adults) is for all those who work, on behalf of the Church, with children or vulnerable adults, either as paid workers or volunteers, to provide them with the information they need in order to recognise harm or abuse and report it appropriately, whether they suspect it, or witness it, or it is reported to them. Also included is information on good and safe working practices specifically relating to working with children in the Church. The full version of the Guidelines contains additional information of more particular relevance to those with other specific responsibilities in the Church – Safeguarding Coordinators, Depute Safeguarding Coordinators, Ministers and Kirk Sessions. The full version is also available on the Free Church website.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT 2019

The Free Church of Scotland has a Christian care for the welfare of each individual and seeks to make the Church a safe place for all. In particular, the Church seeks to protect and safeguard all those who are especially vulnerable, both children and vulnerable adults, with whom it comes into contact through its activities and services.

It is the responsibility of everyone in the Church, including those working with vulnerable groups, to seek to prevent harm or abuse, whether physical, sexual or emotional.

The Church seeks to safeguard these vulnerable groups through its congregations, committees and advisers and, where appropriate, in cooperation with the statutory agencies, police and social services.

To this end, the Church is committed to inform those who work on its behalf, both paid workers and volunteers, with children and vulnerable adults how to recognise and report harm or abuse. The Church is also committed to operate safe recruitment and working practices and procedures with respect to all such workers and to offer them appropriate support, supervision and training.

The Church also undertakes to offer pastoral support to individuals in the Church who have been affected by harm or abuse.

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SECTION 2: CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTION IN THE CHURCH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Abuse or neglect of, or harm to, children and adults may be an issue that Church workers do not often have to deal with. Notwithstanding this, and indeed perhaps because of this, it is important to recognise that abuse, neglect and harm do occur and can do so in all sectors of society, including within the Church community. Child protection, and the protection of adults at risk, is not just a matter for the statutory agencies such as police and social services – on the contrary, all who work with children or adults at risk, as well as members of the public in general, have an important role to play in child and adult protection.

There are various ways in which concerns about actual or potential abuse, harm or neglect may arise. They may arise gradually over a period of time or as a result of one particular incident; they may arise as a result of something which is observed or witnessed; they may arise as a result of information given or a disclosure made by the child or adult at risk themselves; or they may arise by reason of information received from a third party.

This section of the Safeguarding Guidelines is intended for all volunteers and paid workers in the Church, including Safeguarding Coordinators, who work, on behalf of the Church, with children or vulnerable adults/adults at risk. It is intended to give some basic information about what abuse or harm is, how to recognise it and how to report it appropriately in the event that it is suspected, or observed or witnessed, or reported by a third party. Some basic definitions are now given:

2.2 DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

The first 4 definitions, which are in relation to children, are taken from “The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2010” issued by the Scottish Government:

2.2.1 Child

A child can be defined differently in different legal contexts. However, under the PVG Scheme a child is a person under the age of 18.

2.2.2 Child protection

Child protection means protecting a child from abuse or neglect. Abuse or neglect need not have taken place; it is sufficient for there to be a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect.

2.2.3 Child abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. In a child protection context, there are three key different types of abuse that can be identified. **Physical abuse** is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. **Emotional abuse** is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. **Sexual abuse** is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented.

It should be noted that disabled children may be particularly vulnerable to abuse or harm.

2.2.4 Child neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing: to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing; to protect a child from physical harm or danger; to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; or to provide a child's basic emotional needs.

Accordingly, in simple terms, abuse, neglect or harm of a child is any conduct that you suspect or know or have been told is having a seriously bad or adverse effect on the child.

2.2.5 Adults at risk

In 1997 the Scottish Law Commission published recommendations and a draft Bill in respect of "vulnerable adults". Since then policy in this area has developed considerably, resulting in The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. The provisions of this Act are intended to protect those adults who are unable to safeguard their own interests, such as those affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, and who are at risk of harm or self-harm, including neglect. Section 3 of the Act defines "**adults at risk**" as follows:

"1. "Adults at risk" are adults who:

- a) are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests,
- b) are at risk of harm, and
- c) because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

2. *An adult is at risk of harm for the purposes of subsection (1) if:*
- a) *another person's conduct is causing (or is likely to cause) the adult to be harmed, or*
 - b) *the adult is engaging (or is likely to engage) in conduct which causes (or is likely to cause) self-harm."*

So, this means that an adult at risk is an adult who is affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity that you suspect or know, is being, or is at risk of being, harmed or exploited by another person, or is harming themselves, and is unable to protect themselves.

2.2.6 Harm or abuse of adults at risk

Although the terms can be interchangeable, the term "harm" is more commonly used than "abuse" in relation to adults. "Harm" and "risk of harm" in relation to both children and protected adults have been described earlier, in Section 3 of the Guidelines, in relation to the legal obligation on Kirk Sessions to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland in respect of any worker who has been removed or dismissed or who has left their post, where the grounds for making such a referral have been met.

Harm or abuse is referred to here in a more general context. However, the definitions of harm and risk of harm used in the specific context of referrals of former workers to Disclosure Scotland are also useful in this more general context.

The types of conduct that could be deemed harmful in this context are things such as any kind of actual physical harm, assault or restraint; psychological harm, such as threats or verbal abuse/ bullying; sexual harm, being any sexual activity that the person does not understand or want (including verbal suggestive or sexual abuse or intimidation); neglect, such as deprivation of sufficient food or heating and failure to ensure appropriate care or treatment, including medical treatment; and financial harm, such as theft and fraud.

In summary, and in simple terms, harm or abuse of adults is any conduct that you suspect or know or have been told is, or could be, having a bad or adverse effect on an adult who is vulnerable by reason of illness or disability and is unable to protect themselves.

2.2.7 Adult protection

Adult protection means protecting a vulnerable adult or adult at risk from harm or neglect.

There is an important difference to remember between child protection and adult protection, which is that it is not *always* appropriate for social work services or police to take action to protect an adult against the wishes of the adult

concerned. In contrast, in a child protection case social work services or police would almost always take action to protect a child whether or not the child or the child's parent(s) or carer(s) agree.

Sometimes, even where they may be in a situation where we think that some form of outside intervention would be justified as being for their own good, an adult may not want action to be taken by any outside agency to protect them from harm. The provisions contained in The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 for the protection of adults who are unable to safeguard their own interests are made subject to the underlying principles that any intervention must provide benefit to the adult that could not be reasonably achieved without intervention and that any intervention is the least restrictive option to the adult's freedom. It is expressly stated that any intervention must be reasonable and proportionate, and it is important to strike a balance between an individual's right to freedom of choice on the one hand and the risk of harm to that individual on the other. These principles must always be taken into account when considering any potential adult protection situation.

Some factors to take into account in a potential adult protection situation are: whether or not the adult has the mental capacity to make informed choices; whether or not the adult is being pressurised by the individual who is under suspicion of causing the alleged harm or risk of harm; and whether or not the adult either lives in a care home or receives care in their own home (in which case if it is a carer who is suspected of causing harm then others may be at risk of harm also).

If you are in any doubt as to what to do in a particular situation you should report your concerns to your Safeguarding Coordinator, who may wish to discuss with the Compliance Officer.

2.2.8 Some examples of where harm or abuse may be recognised

Harm or abuse may be recognised by or be brought to the attention of a Church worker (or indeed may be recognised by or be brought to the attention of any individual within the Church community) in a number of ways. Often, although not always, the harm will have occurred or be occurring outwith the Church and will be perpetrated by a person not connected with the Church. The following are some examples (it is not intended to be an exhaustive list) of circumstances and places in which harm or abuse may occur or be recognised by workers or other individuals:

- A child may be harmed by an adult belonging to the congregation.
- A child may be harmed by another child, either at a Church activity in Church premises or at a Church activity outwith Church premises, such as an outing or at a Camp.
- A child may be harmed outwith Church premises or activities by a relative, a friend or any other person.

- A child or adult at risk may be harmed by a volunteer or paid member of Church staff;
- An adult at risk living in a care home or receiving a care service in their own home may be harmed by a carer or relative and this may be disclosed to, or recognised by, a visitor from the Church who is there either in a personal or official capacity.
- A child or adult at risk not belonging to the Church may be harmed in the community and this may be reported by a person in the congregation.
- A child or adult at risk attending an activity in the Church, such as a lunch club, a bible study group or a drop-in café may be harmed, and the harm may be recognised at this activity.

2.3 RECOGNISING AND REPORTING POSSIBLE ABUSE OR HARM - GUIDANCE FOR WORKERS AND OTHERS IN THE CHURCH

2.3.1 If you suspect harm or abuse

Because harm or abuse does not come to our attention regularly or often, it is all the more important that all those who work with vulnerable groups have sufficient safeguarding awareness to be able to recognise it where it does occur. The aim of safeguarding in the Church is to prevent harm or abuse where possible and to minimise the effects of harm or abuse by acting appropriately whenever it is suspected, witnessed or reported, either by the person who is allegedly being harmed or by a third party.

A child who has been abused, harmed or neglected may show obvious physical signs of injury or maltreatment. There may also be other indicators, for example in a child's behaviour or development. There are various typical ways in which abuse or harm can sometimes be recognised. For example, you may notice something which causes you concern about a child or adult's apparent injury, appearance, behaviour or conversation, or you may notice inappropriate comments, conversation, play or drawing by a child.

However, it is not always easy to recognise harm or abuse and, in the absence of clear evidence, if you do suspect that harm or abuse may have occurred or be occurring, a good first test is to use your intuition or "gut feeling" about the situation. If a situation appears to be, or sounds or feels, wrong then abuse or harm may well be occurring. Even if it turns out that you are mistaken, it is nevertheless better to err on the side of caution. Remember that it is not up to you to decide whether or not harm or abuse has occurred or is occurring – your responsibility is simply to report any concerns and it is then the job of others, who are trained to do so, to investigate and make decisions.

If you suspect harm or abuse, report your concerns to your Safeguarding Coordinator, Depute Coordinator or line manager immediately. Even if it turns out that there is no harm or abuse it is better to err on the side of caution. As soon as possible, write down your suspicions and the reasons for them. Do not investigate (i.e. look for evidence about) the matter yourself - this is the responsibility of the police or social work services

However, in an emergency, or where there is any element of immediacy or urgency, you should immediately contact the appropriate emergency service (police/ social services/ambulance) yourself and inform your Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager as soon as possible thereafter.

2.3.2 If you witness harm or abuse

This is if you see or hear behaviour or an incident of harm or abuse, such as a person behaving inappropriately towards a child or adult at risk.

If you witness harm or abuse, report your concerns to your Safeguarding Coordinator, Depute Coordinator or line manager immediately and then write down what you have seen and/or heard as soon as possible after the event. Include time(s) and date(s) and details of any other witnesses. Do not investigate the matter yourself.

However, in an emergency, or where there is any element of immediacy or urgency, you should immediately contact the appropriate emergency service (police/ social services/ambulance) yourself and inform your Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager as soon as possible thereafter.

2.3.3 If harm or abuse is reported to you

This can be if another person tells you or alleges that a child or adult at risk is being abused or harmed or put at risk of harm or complains about the conduct of a worker towards a child or adult at risk. It can also be when a child or adult at risk themselves tells you about or alleges harm or abuse or reports feeling unsafe.

If harm or abuse is disclosed directly to you by a child or adult at risk, you should:

- Listen carefully to what the person has to say and give them plenty of time to say it **in their own words**.
- Only ask open questions, not “leading” ones. In other words, do not make suggestions or put words into the person’s mouth. It is fine to ask the person to describe what happened in their own words and to ask when and where something happened and who was there. However, do not however ask “why” something happened.
- Be honest - tell the child or adult at risk that you cannot promise to keep a secret and that you will have to tell someone else. Confidentiality is not the same as secrecy.
- Not try to investigate, i.e. not try and find evidence or find out why something happened – this is the responsibility of the police or social work services (**Note:** asking for facts is not investigating).
- Be reassuring that the person has done the right thing by telling you.
- Say what you are going to do next.
- Report what you have been told to your Safeguarding Coordinator, Depute Coordinator or line manager immediately.
- Write down everything you have been told, in the person’s own words or as near as you can remember them, as soon as possible afterwards.

If harm or abuse is reported to you by a third party, as with a direct disclosure by the individual concerned do not investigate the matter yourself, immediately report what you have been told to your Safeguarding Coordinator, Depute Coordinator or line manager and then as soon as possible after the report or allegation of harm or abuse has been made write down what you have been told in as much detail as you can.

However, whether the disclosure or report is made to you by the individual concerned or by a third party, in an emergency, or where there is any element of immediacy or urgency, you should immediately contact the appropriate emergency service (police/ social services/ambulance) yourself and inform your Safeguarding Coordinator or line manager as soon as possible thereafter.

A ***pro forma for Workers recording allegations or suspicions of abuse or harm*** is available for use by any worker who suspects or witnesses harm or abuse or to whom an allegation of harm or abuse is made, the use of which is optional but may be helpful.

2.4 REPORTING AND REFERRALS - GUIDANCE FOR SAFEGUARDING COORDINATORS

2.4.1 General

Any worker who suspects or witnesses any harm or abuse, or who receives information about alleged harm or abuse, either from an alleged victim or from a third party, must report this to you immediately. They must also give you a written report on their suspicions and/or what they have seen or been told. You are then responsible for the safe storage of this written information for as long as necessary in accordance with Data Protection legislation and the guidance on this which is available on the Free Church website.

If you receive a report from a worker, or any other individual, of suspected, witnessed or disclosed harm or abuse of a child or adult at risk you should:

- When required, ensure that a referral has been, or is, made to the appropriate agency, i.e. social services or the police.
- If the situation is not urgent you may wish to liaise with the Compliance Officer for advice as to whether you should refer the matter on to the police or social work services.
- As for workers, in an emergency situation, or where there is any element of immediacy or urgency, you should immediately contact the appropriate emergency service yourself.
- Ensure that support is available for the worker or other person who has made the report.
- **Not** inform parents or carers prior to making a referral.
- If necessary, ask for advice from the relevant agency (social services or the police) at the point of making the referral as to what, if anything, to say to parents or carers of a child who is the subject of a report. In cases of alleged sexual or physical abuse it would normally be a matter for social work services or the police to inform the parents.
- If you are concerned about a child being allowed to return home when an allegation or suspicion of abuse has implicated a parent or carer, ask for advice on this from social work services or the police.
- **Not** investigate the matter yourself.
- Record details of the report and any action taken by you and retain this written record for as long as necessary as referred to above. A **pro forma for Coordinators recording allegations or suspicions of abuse or harm** is available for this, the use of which is optional but may be helpful.
- Inform the Free Church Offices in writing of any such report and action taken as soon as possible, using the **Form for reporting an allegation or suspicion of abuse or harm to Offices**.

2.4.2 If it is alleged that a child or protected adult has been harmed or put at risk of harm by a Church worker

As explained above, in section 3.4 of the Guidelines, there is a legal obligation to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland in respect of a worker **where that worker has been removed from their position and the grounds for making a referral have been met**. This is the responsibility of the Kirk Session as the “employer”, but the Compliance Officer should be consulted as soon as possible about any such prospective referral.

However, as any referral to Disclosure Scotland will only take place *after* a worker has been dismissed or otherwise removed permanently from their position, it is important to consider the initial procedure to be followed if a complaint is received about a worker.

If a complaint is received about a worker which is considered to be of a minor nature, then issues of training and supervision require to be considered to address the issues raised.

If, on the other hand, a complaint is received about a worker which is considered to be of a serious nature, you will need to consider whether it is a Safeguarding issue or not. If it is not, the Kirk Session should manage the concern as a disciplinary matter. If, however there is a Safeguarding issue then you should proceed as follows:

- Notify the Minister so that the worker can be suspended until the matter has been investigated and the discipline process completed, remembering that all matters should be kept confidential with as few individuals as possible being involved. It is suggested that the matter could be investigated by the Minister and the 2 Safeguarding Coordinators, or by the Minister, the Safeguarding Coordinator and one other designated person, possibly the Session Clerk. The Kirk Session as a whole need only be told that an investigation is proceeding without being told who or what it is about. This is for reasons of maintaining confidentiality. In particular, if it is found to be appropriate to reinstate the worker this may be difficult in practice if confidentiality has been breached.
- When required, ensure that a referral has been, or is, made to the appropriate agency, i.e. social services or the police.
- If the situation is not urgent you may wish to liaise with the Compliance Officer for advice as to whether you should refer the matter on to the police or social work services.
- In an emergency situation or where there is any element of immediacy or urgency, you should immediately contact the appropriate emergency service yourself.

2.4.3 If an allegation or complaint of harm or abuse is made against a Minister, Safeguarding Coordinator or Depute

Against a Minister – the Safeguarding Coordinator should notify the Presbytery Clerk for the Minister to be suspended if appropriate and the matter to be investigated by a small sub-committee appointed by the Presbytery. In addition, the Coordinator should follow the procedure of referral to the appropriate statutory agencies as detailed above.

Against a Safeguarding Coordinator or Depute – the person making the allegation or complaint should notify the Minister so that the Coordinator or Depute may be suspended if appropriate until the matter has been investigated and the discipline process completed, remembering that all matters should be kept confidential with as few individuals as possible being involved. It is suggested that the matter could be investigated by the Minister, the other Coordinator and one other designated person, possibly the Session Clerk. The Kirk Session as a whole need only be told that an investigation is proceeding without being told who or what it is about. This is for reasons of maintaining confidentiality. In particular, if it is found to be appropriate to reinstate the Coordinator this may be difficult in practice if confidentiality has been breached;

When required, the Minister should ensure that a referral has been, or is, made to the appropriate agency, i.e. social services or the police;

If the situation is not urgent the Minister may wish to liaise with the Compliance Officer for advice as to whether he should refer the matter on to the police or social work services; and

In an emergency situation or where there is any element of immediacy or urgency, the Minister should immediately contact the appropriate emergency service.

2.5 WHAT TO DO IF IT IS KNOWN OR SUSPECTED THAT THERE IS A CONVICTED SEX OFFENDER IN YOUR CONGREGATION

If you know or suspect that there is a convicted sex offender in your congregation who is attending Church services or any other Church activities, this should be reported without delay to the Minister, the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Compliance Officer.

Advice will then be given, usually with input from the police and/or social services, as to what measures can and should be taken to allow that person to continue to attend worship while at the same time affording protection to others who may be at risk of harm from that person. This may involve setting up a written agreement, called a "Covenant of Responsibilities" between the individual and the congregation.

SECTION 3: WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH – SOME SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR ALL

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This Section contains brief guidelines covering various areas where good and safe working practices should be followed and adhered to by all who are involved in working with children on behalf of the Church. In general terms, all such workers should remember always to:

- Treat all children and young people with respect.
- Provide an example of good conduct and practice you would wish others to follow.
- Respect the right of children and young people to personal privacy.
- Ensure that where possible there is always another adult present during activities, or at least within sight or hearing.
- Safeguard against any possible misinterpretation of your actions.
- Avoid *inappropriate* physical contact with children and young people.
- Be alert for signs of bullying in any group, either verbal or physical, and seek advice in dealing with it.
- Avoid being drawn into attention seeking behaviour or showing favouritism.
- Familiarise yourself with and follow the Church's Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.
- Be familiar with and follow the Church's **Safeguarding Policy for Social Media**.

3.2 PHYSICAL CONTACT

It is sometimes thought that any physical contact between an adult and a child is unacceptable and not permitted. However, this is a misapprehension. It is important to remember that it is *inappropriate and unwanted* physical contact that must be avoided. If a child comes to you for a hug, then it is appropriate to reciprocate to show care and reassurance. Likewise, if a child falls it is appropriate to pick them up. As a general rule, any hugs or touching of children should be appropriate to the particular situation and this would normally only be the case if initiated by the child and not where there is no-one else present.

The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) should be appropriate and related to the age of the child - accepting that some children have special needs. The needs of individual children should be discussed with the child's parents or carers in situations where these need to be met during Church activities.

You must not administer medication to any child during Church activities, except in the case of residential activities and then only when specific written consent has been given by the parents/carers.

3.3 BULLYING

Unlike child abuse, bullying can occur frequently, particularly in schools. Bullying can also occur during Church activities and this may be more likely where children attend the same school. Bullying is the use of aggressive behaviour (which is not necessarily physical) with the intention of hurting another person. It involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim, who feels powerless to stop it, and is therefore not the same as a simple fight or quarrel between children. As bullying can take different forms, we need to be vigilant to spot the non-physical types which can often cause as much, if not more, distress than actual physical aggression. The following are some examples of bullying behaviour, some of which a Church worker may be more likely to come across than others:

- The most obvious and perhaps easily recognised type of bullying is physical aggression, such as hitting, punching, pinching, pushing and shoving or any other use of violence.
- Being unfriendly.
- Excluding someone or taking their friends away from them.
- Name calling.
- Making up stories to get another child into trouble.
- Damaging, hiding or stealing another child's belongings.
- Threats and intimidation.
- Aggressive teasing.
- Spreading rumours.
- Sending offensive text messages, emails or making offensive telephone calls or the like.

Bullying of any kind should not be tolerated in any Church run activity. If it does occur, it should be dealt with promptly and effectively. If you suspect that bullying is happening, or if you witness it or if it is reported to you, you should report it to the Safeguarding Coordinator. Severe bullying can become a child protection issue and the Coordinator may have to involve the police and/or social work services.

In many cases it will not come to that, but the bully should be spoken to and asked to apologise in a sincere manner, the aim being for better relationships to be established in the group. Parents may be informed and invited to discuss the issue. If the conduct justifies it the bully may be asked to leave the group. If an incident of

bullying has occurred and the bully remains in the group, then his or her ongoing conduct should be closely monitored.

If behaviour in general is an issue in the group then all the children who attend could be asked to sign a good conduct undertaking, making it clear that this is for the benefit of the whole group, to make the group activity beneficial and enjoyable for all. Bullying as an issue in general terms could also be discussed within the group so that the children understand what it is.

Ensuring an awareness of bullying issues among workers and a sufficient number of workers for adequate supervision are also good preventative steps to take. Be aware of the potential issues and be prepared to deal with them.

3.4 ADULT/CHILD RATIOS

Risks for both adults and children can be reduced if there are a sufficient number of adults working with any group of children. The following are suggested adult to child ratio, the first 4 being guidelines for crèche, Sunday School or Bible Class:

- Children under 2 1:3 but may require minimum of 2 if more than one child.
- Children aged 2-3 1:5 but as above if more than one child.
- Children aged 3 and over 1:8.
- If all children are 8 or over 1:10.
- Children's Club 2:10 (mixed, if club mixed).
- Youth Club 2:8 (mixed, if club mixed).
- Outings (under 6s) 2:4.
- Outings (6-16) 2:12 (mixed, if club mixed).
- Other activities the appropriate ratio will depend on the nature of the activity but err on the side of caution.

When considering ratios always take into account what would happen in the event of a child or worker becoming ill or having an accident.

To ensure your own safety as well as that of the children, you should not be regularly left alone with a group. Also, unless absolutely necessary you should avoid being in a room on your own with a child. If for any reason this is unavoidable, perhaps for reasons of confidentiality, you should ensure that other adults are close at hand, for example in an adjoining room with the door open.

Whenever possible have a minimum of two workers present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on church premises. If the group is made into smaller groups with one worker, do this in one large room or adjoining rooms.

Small Sunday School or Bible classes need only have one teacher or leader, but it is wise not to use an isolated part of the building, and to leave an adjoining door open.

Many activities will involve at least an element of risk and it is therefore important that a risk assessment is carried out when planning activities. Things to be considered are the needs of the particular children, the nature of the planned activity (some activities carry more risk than others), the number of adults required, and the level of expertise needed to adequately supervise the activity in question.

3.5 REGISTRATION, PERMISSIONS AND TRANSPORT

The following guidelines should be adhered to in respect of permissions and transport issues:

- Ensure that parents or carers have given permission for children to attend Church run activities. A **Registration/Permission Form** is available for use.
- Always have an emergency contact number for every child or young person attending.
- Ensure that parents and carers are fully aware of the arrangements for transporting or collecting their children and have given permission for any transport arrangements.
- **Drivers should be limited to those aged between 25 and 70 with no more than 3 endorsement points on their licence. If there is any deviation from this policy, then a thorough risk assessment should be carried out and recorded.**
- In the event that it is not possible for 2 adults to be present when transporting children, it is best to try and plan to drop off more than one child together at the last stop. If you have to have a child alone with you in a car then it is advised that the child sits in the rear of the car.
- Keep an attendance register for each activity for every child and leader in attendance at each session.

3.6 HOME VISITS, COMMUNICATIONS, PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Workers should only enter a child's home if a parent or carer is also there.
- A child or children should only be invited to your home if another adult is present and permission has been given by the parent(s) or carer(s) and if approval has been given by your Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Telephoning, texting and emailing children without the knowledge of a parent or carer must not happen.
- Photographing and filming children should only be done with the written permission of a parent or carer and digital images should be deleted once they have been printed. A **Permission Form** is available.

3.7 INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- All workers should know where the First Aid Box is located.
- No worker should attempt a First Aid procedure which they are not trained to carry out.
- Workers should know who the First Aiders are.
- In an emergency call 999.
- In the event of an incident or accident occurring, this should be recorded in the Congregation's Accident Book and the Safeguarding Coordinator should be informed as soon as possible.
- A parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.
- Depending on the nature of the incident or accident, the Safeguarding Coordinator may need to be consulted for advice or further action.

3.8 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Related to the above, general health and safety issues should also be addressed in relation to keeping children safe and minimising any risk to them when attending activities in Church premises. In addition to the matters touched on above, the following should be considered:

- The premises should be checked regularly to ensure that they are safe.
- Are there any parts of the building which are out of bounds to children or where additional supervision may be required?
- Cleaning materials should be safely stored.
- Be aware if any children attending a Church activity have any special needs, e.g. are diabetic, or suffer from any food allergies.
- Monitor who enters and leaves the room and who exits from the building to ensure that children are safe.
- Consider what activities might need to be risk assessed.
- Report any concerns to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

3.9 SOCIAL MEDIA

A full guidance note on the safe use of social media is available on the website. A separate version for use in relation to Camps is available on the FCYC website: <http://www.freechurchoyouthcamps.org/>.