

1st Donegore Presbyterian Church
Parkgate

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Our guiding principles are:

- Everyone involved with 1st Donegore Presbyterian Church Parkgate and Jump Youth Club is concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone.
- We seek to safeguard all members of the church and the wider community.
- We operate an "Open Door Policy" in relation to membership of our community based activities; we are open to all for all regardless of race, religion, disability or gender.
- It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children or young people.
- It is the duty of any person working with children and young people to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

To accommodate our code of conduct we have incorporated the following practices:

- Adherence to Child Protection Guidelines as set out by the DHSS and the adoption of best practice/policies as documented in the "Non Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults" (NSPCI Guidelines) (approved by the General Synod in June 2006).
- Sharing information concerning child protection and encouraging and supporting volunteers to develop their training and awareness in this field.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and what constitutes good practice at regular intervals and annually.

CODE OF PRACTICE

Organisational Structure

- The Youth Club will have a properly appointed and trained Leader in charge. This person is responsible for the smooth running of the Club according to the Codes of Practice.
- The Youth Club is required to maintain a complete and up-to-date list of Leaders, Helpers and Members of the Club. The Members list should contain the name, address, parent or guardian and a contact telephone number in case of an emergency.
- The recognition of the legal requirements for the ratio of children/young people to Leaders during activities is paramount. All Leaders are required to adhere to the stated supervision ratios quoted in Appendix 5 of the NSPCI Guidelines.

Recruitment of Volunteers

- In order to prevent persons with a propensity for the abuse of children from gaining access to children it is important to have a well ordered recruitment procedures. The procedures are outlined in detail in Appendix 2 of the NSPCI Guidelines.
- The approved application form, see Appendix 3 of the NSPCI Guidelines, should be completed by everyone seeking to work with children.
- When considered appropriate, two references should be obtained from people who are not family members. These references should be taken up before the applicant is permitted substantial contact with children and vulnerable adults.
- It is recommended that all applicants for the Youth Club be interviewed by at least two existing Leaders of the Club.
- All applicants for Leaders within the Club and involved in working with children must be vetted by the appropriate authorities (Access NI Disclosure Certificate Application and Annual Declaration) at the earliest opportunity.

Health& Safety (H&S) Practices

It is vital for the protection of children from physical harm that the Leaders of the Youth Club ensure that the premises and practices of the Club conform to standard H&S criteria. A review of the Premises, Fire Precautions, First Aid Equipment and Risk Assessment(s) are to be carried out on a regular basis in order to meet Insurance standards. Further information regarding H&S is contained in Appendix 7 of the NSPCI Guidelines.

Behavioural Standards

It is essential for everyone involved (this includes children, parents, volunteers and Helpers) in the Club to be made aware of the Behavioural Standards in place within the Youth Club. Further information is contained within the NSPCI Guidelines: Appendix 8 – Advice for Leaders on Contact with Children, Appendix 9 – A Code of Good Behaviour for Children and Appendix 10 – Anti Bullying Policy. The key elements of each of these standards are located below:

1. Advice for Leaders on Contact with Children

- It is advisable for all child workers to avoid physical contact with children.
- However, if it is deemed necessary to offer comfort to a distressed child or vulnerable adult then this should be done carefully and in the presence of other Leaders in order that no question can be raised about inappropriate touching or comments. Children and vulnerable adults should be informed that no such contact is permitted unless another adult is present in order that they do not accept any hugging or kissing in private.
- Volunteers should always be careful that their language in front of children must be positive and not derogatory of that child or anyone else.

Volunteers must never engage in any sexually explicit or suggestive language with children or allow such comments from another adult or child to pass without challenge.

- When taking children or vulnerable adults to the toilet there should, where possible, be two adults present with the children or vulnerable adults. In an unusual case where only one adult is present then the adult should stand at the open door of a toilet or outside a single toilet where other people can see them.
- It is important that volunteers do not develop too close a relationship with a child or children under his/her care. This does not preclude a genuine friendship or concern for the members of the Club. If a child wishes to engage with a Leader on a confidential basis then this should be encouraged but should be conducted with the knowledge and preferably under the observation of another Leader. Under no circumstances should a Leader be alone with a child in the Leader's own home.

2. A code of Behaviour for Children

- It is important for children to listen to their Leaders' advice and instructions so that they can carry out activities correctly without any risk of injury/danger to themselves or anyone else.
- Children should not display prejudice on the grounds of disability. Sectarianism, sexism or racism against other children.
- When speaking to other children or adults, children should use positive language and should never be insolent, aggressive or obscene in anyway or in what they say.
- Physical contact with other children should be restricted to normal play and should avoid aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Children should not go anywhere that a Leader is not present and should never be alone with an adult that they do not know.
- Children should never do anything to other children, or allow anything to be done to themselves, that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- When children join the Club and at the beginning of each year they should be reminded of what is and what is not acceptable in terms of behaviour.
- Everyone, children, Leaders, parents, Helpers should be aware of the steps which will be taken if an incident of bullying is observed or disclosed.

3. Anti Bullying Policy

- The Club wishes to promote an ethics in which positive attitudes and achievements are recognised, valued, respected and rewarded.
- A high profile anti bullying code which stresses the unacceptability of bullying behaviour is to be operated and should be understood by all children.
- Identify if, when and where bullying occurs with the Club.
- Ensure adequate supervision of all areas is undertaken by Leaders during activities and by children at leisure.
- Provide appropriate training for all Leaders & Helpers in recognising and combating bullying behaviour.

- Develop clear guidelines for dealing with bullying incidents and communicate these guidelines Leaders & Helpers, parents and children in order to provide a consistency of approach.
- Monitor and record all incidents of bullying in the Incident Book.
- Counsel bullies and help them to recognise that their behaviour is unacceptable and assist them to effect change.
- Enlist the aid of parent and external agencies when appropriate.

Dealing with Allegations and the Procedures to Follow

- Responding to incidents of alleged or suspected abuse must be based upon clearly defined procedures. Knowing what to do, whom to contact and who needs to know, will ensure that people are prepared to share their knowledge of suspected abuse. Appendix 11 of the NSPCI Guidelines outlines how an adult should deal with disclosure of the alleged abuse from a child.
- It is vital that accurate records be kept of any disclosure of alleged or suspected abuse; a sample Report of Concern Form is included in Appendix 12 of the NSPCI Guidelines.
- The Leader in charge of the Youth Club must be fully conversant with the referral procedure in a suspected case of abuse.
- A Designated Person within the congregation is to be appointed by the Kirk Session. The purpose of the post is to provide consultation and advice to the Session and Club on Child protection and contacting Statutory Agencies when necessary.
- All reports of suspicions of abuse should be considered by a Child protection Group within the congregation. This Group may consist of the minister, the Clerk of Session (or Chairperson of the Committee), the designated Person and another appropriate person. The leader in charge of the Club should also be involved in any Group discussion, unless he or she is the subject of the complaint. This Group is to meet within one week of receiving a Report of Concern to decide upon the appropriate action to be taken. Such action may involve one or more of the following:
 - Simply retaining the Report of Concern on file.
 - Referring the matter back to the Club Leader for appropriate action.
 - Referring the matter to the Minister for action.
 - Referring the matter to an outside agency. Appendix 3 of the NSPCI Guidelines lays out the procedure for referral in a staged format.

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Please detach and return to:

1st Donegore Presbyterian Church – Jump Youth Club

I have received and read a copy of the 1st Donegore Presbyterian Church – Youth Club Child Protection Policy.

Signed (Parent/ Guardian):

Childs Name: Date: