



The Diocese of Cloyne

Code of behaviour for Church personnel, staff and volunteers - basics for working with children.

This document, which includes a code of behaviour, complaints procedure and advice on empowering children to speak out, should be read, understood and signed by every worker and volunteer before commencing their role.

The page containing the signature should be copied and retained in the parish files.

Updated December 2014

Cloyne Diocesan Safeguarding Children Committee

The numbering in this document reflects Chapter 3 of the diocesan policy Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne, from which these codes of conduct and basics for working with children are taken.

Code of behaviour for Church personnel, staff and volunteers - basics for working with children.

3.2.1 Code of behaviour for staff and volunteers -basics for working with children

In order to support the Diocesan Policy and Procedures, it is necessary that the following code of conduct be applied as a minimum standard for all those who work with children.

Avoid spending time alone with a child. Should circumstances arise where this is unavoidable, immediately inform another responsible adult -by telephone if necessary. Make a diary note that the meeting with the child took place, including the reasons it took place.

It is inappropriate to spend excessive amounts of time with children away from others or to take a child to your own home.

Observe best practice in relation to travel with children. Workers and volunteers should not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child. If, in certain circumstances, only one adult is available there should be a minimum of two children present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, make a record of this and inform the child's parents or guardians as soon as possible. Inform a colleague at the time if the parents/guardians are not available.

Avoid permitting children to work or remain in churches and parish property unless there are at least two adults present.

Care should be taken to ensure that leaders of mixed gender will work with mixed gender groups. Leaders should treat each other and children with courtesy, respect and dignity.

- Leaders will provide good example of the type of behaviour they wish others to follow.
- Never act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade.
- Treat all children and adults with equal courtesy, respect and dignity.
- Always engage with children in an open manner.
- Do not show favouritism.
- Be cognisant of the imbalance in power inherent in adult-child relationships.
- Do not engage in, or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying.

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- Do not spend a disproportionate amount of time with any particular child or group of children.
- Challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour.
- Develop a culture where children can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly.
- Respect each child's boundaries and help children to develop a sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem.
- Appoint a clearly designated leader within each group with whom children and other leaders can raise concerns.
- Do not use inappropriate language or make sexually suggestive comments, either to each other or to children.
- Physical contact between leaders and children will be of an appropriate nature at all times.
- Do not engage in rough play with each other or with children.
- Leaders should not undertake any task of a personal nature with/for children except in cases of medical necessity or when the welfare of the child depends on it.
- Do not, under any circumstances, give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children.
- Do not use alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs when supervising or working with children.
- Use only age-appropriate language, media products and activities when working with children. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never appropriate.
- Personal details of children should be held only in accordance with diocesan and parish policy.
- Leaders should not give their own personal details to children unless absolutely necessary.
- Children should be contacted via their parents/guardians/carers, except in emergencies, where such contact may not be possible.

The diocese has a specific code of conduct for all away - trips, including pilgrimages, day trips and incentive events. See:

Prevention: Running Safe Activities for Children Section 3.

The Diocesan Code of Conduct, including an anti-bullying policy specific to children will apply (Section 3.7)

The diocese has a Diocesan Designated Officer, to whose immediate attention all concerns and/or complaints should be brought. The diocesan designated officer will respond promptly to all child protection concerns and liaise with the required civil and Church authorities in accordance with established guidelines. All concerns and/or complaints will be followed through in a timely and efficient manner in accordance with the guidelines.

3.2.2 Prevention: code for meetings with children.

If the pastoral care of a child necessitates the arrangement of a meeting alone with them, do not meet in isolated environments.

Schedule meetings at times and at designated locations that allow for transparency and accountability for example, rooms that have a clear glass panel or window, an open door, and in buildings where other people are present.

Scheduling meetings by text messaging should be done by texting parents/carers.

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Limit both the length and number of meetings.

Inform parents or guardians that the meeting(s) is/are taking place, except in circumstances where doing so might place the child in danger. In that case, inform a colleague and fill in an incident form.

Do not encourage visits to, or conduct meetings in, private homes or personal living quarters. When the need for a visit to the home of a child arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.

3.2.3 Prevention: discipline

Corporal punishment of children is never permitted.

Discipline problems should be handled in partnership with parents and guardians and in a positive way. (See Dealing with Bullying and Complaints Procedure Section 3.)

3.2.4 Prevention: respect for physical integrity

Respect the physical integrity of children and young people at all times.

Do not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind, including rough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling, etc).

This should not prevent appropriate contact, with the permission of the child, in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of a child, but where the child expresses discomfort or resistance, then this contact should cease.

3.2.5 Prevention: respect for privacy

Respect the privacy of children and young people at all times.

Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when young people are in locations such as, changing areas, swimming pools, showers and toilets.

Never take photographs of children or young people while they are in changing areas (e.g. in a locker room or bathing facility).

Never do things of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) for children that they can do themselves.

3.2.6 Prevention - guidance re. personal/intimate care of children with disabilities

Don't be rushed into taking on intimate care tasks- never take responsibility without the permission of parent and child.

Treat every child with dignity and respect.

Ensure that the degree of privacy is appropriate.

Involve the child as far as possible in his/her own intimate care.

Make sure intimate care is as consistent as possible.

If you are concerned about anything during intimate care, report it.

Intimate care - definition

Intimate care is defined as any procedure involving touching, or carrying out what could be described as an invasive procedure. Apart from helping someone to eat and drink, the following list contains the major areas of intimate care:

- Dressing or undressing.
- Assisting a disabled child to use toilet facilities.

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- Cleaning up after a child has soiled.
- Washing, bathing or showering.
- Invasive procedures, e.g. colostomy bags or administering medication via the rectum.

For all types of intimate care the main points to consider are:

Intimate care - staff issues

- only staff who have been vetted and trained are to be assigned
- the child should be involved in selecting the carer where possible
- in cases where a substitute carer needs to be brought in, only properly vetted and trained staff should be used
- the carer should be the same sex as the child to ensure the dignity of child is respected
- particularly for toileting, one person of the same sex will attend the child unless two persons are needed and then reasons must be clearly documented
- staff will be monitored and proper records kept

Intimate care - best practice

- prior permission should be gained after discussion with both parent and child and agreement reached on how the specific tasks will be conducted
- an intimate care plan needs to be drawn up explaining in detail how specific tasks will be conducted
- roles and expectations are clearly understood by all concerned (parents, child and carer)
- the child's reaction to a situation needs to be accepted as the guide to the child's wishes
- only appropriate terminology is acceptable to be used to name private parts
- where there are speech, language, hearing or cognitive difficulties, an agreed method of communication is arrived at beforehand and time taken to familiarise the child with the method
- built into the intimate care plan should be the aim of working towards independence for the child, as far as is possible
- the child's attempts to help with tasks should be encouraged and they should be allowed to do any task that they are capable of doing

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- if drugs are to be administered by any method, a medical plan must be drawn up and directed by a physician and written consent given. Strict attention must be paid to doctors' directions and proper records kept

The points above are not exhaustive, however if adhered to and the paramountcy of the child principle is observed, then the intimate care needs of the child should be met appropriately.

Intimate care – appropriate and inappropriate touch

Touching should always be appropriate to the type of care being administered.

3.2.7 Prevention: photography, film and use of I.T. equipment

3.10.10 Prevention: photography, video, film mobile phones and use of I.T. equipment

(i) Children will be made aware of the guidelines regarding photography, video, film outlined below.

Children will be clearly advised of the relevance of the guidelines to pictures taken **by any type of camera including mobile phone cameras.**

(ii) The underlying principles that should be addressed in relation to use of photography include:

6.1 Consent and Permission

The written consent of parents/carers (and children/young people of appropriate age) should be sought before any photographs are taken. An organisation may seek overall consent from its members for photography; however the guidelines should be clear about the reason and purpose for that decision. There should be explicit consent to display photographs in Church/Church Buildings.

6.2 Reason and Purpose

Photographs should only be taken by an authorised person who has a valid suitable reason related to the child or organisation.

6.3 Appropriateness of Images

No images of children to be taken, which capture them in what are commonly understood as non public activities like toileting or changing clothes, or which show body parts not usually

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visible in public settings. Children should be fully clothed. Images involving groups should be about that activity, not the individual child.

6.4 Identification of Subjects

A photograph should not allow an unauthorised person to identify a child or their whereabouts. If the full name of a child or young person is used, there should be no photograph; if a photograph is being used the full name should not be given. Children in vulnerable circumstances, e.g., those in care should not be photographed at all unless there is clear consent of their legal guardian.

6.5. Photography for Public Display

You can decide whether you will allow publicity photographs and if so you should inform the press of your policies before they arrive. It is worth noting that it is not illegal to take photographs at a public event even if asked not to do so, but if your event is private then you can insist that your own policy is followed. Photographs of children in activities should try to include groups of children, and not show them in breach of rules, or behaving in a reckless or dangerous fashion. Images should never be stored on personal computers.

(iii) Using images/photographs of children

Ensure that:

- Parents and children consent to the use of an image and that this is recorded.
- Uploading of photographs or video/film onto the web or social networking sites without the consent of parents and children is strictly forbidden
- Photographs/ images likely to be published in press or on the Internet and for which the consent of parents and children has been given are not used in conjunction with the children's full names (first name and surname) and detailed addresses
- Parents and children are aware of the way the image will be used to represent the Church group, organisation or activity
- Images of a child will not be used for any other reason without the consent of the parent/carer.

(iv) We cannot guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public liturgies/events (For further information refer to Section 3 -Photographs and Film Section of the Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers).

Always ensure that:

The content of the photo/ film is appropriate.

One-to-one photo sessions with children are supervised.

Parents and children consent to the use of an image and that this is recorded.

Photographs/images likely to be published in press or on the Internet are not accompanied by children's full names (first name and surname) and detailed addresses.

Parents and children are aware of the way the image will be used to represent the Church group, organisation or activity.

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3.10.11 Policy and guidelines on the use of mobile phones.

Mobile Phones - guidance on use

- Many mobile phones have a facility to take photographs and videos which can be immediately uploaded onto the web or social networking sites without permission. Therefore, group leaders should discourage the use of mobile phones during church activities. Each particular group may wish to produce its own mobile phone code of conduct to ensure safe usage.
- Mobile phones with photographic and video facilities are not to be used in changing facilities or residential accommodation.
- Contacting children by phone or text should never be undertaken without parental knowledge or consent. Additional communication should be directed to the child's parent/guardian.
- Other than in agreed exceptional circumstances, phones must be switched off/put on silent and calls and texts must not be taken or made during gatherings of children and young people within the church context.
- Any child or young person who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face appropriate sanctions as pre-determined by the particular activity code of conduct.
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the group leader is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the particular group leader may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí. Hence, children/young people with mobile phones must not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person, via SMS messages/chat rooms/social network sites, taking/sending/uploading photos, phone calls.
- Circulating objectionable images will also be treated as a serious disciplinary issue.
- Children/young people using mobile phones to bully others will face appropriate sanctions as pre-determined by the particular activity code of conduct.
- Appropriate sanctions for breaking with code of conduct will include confiscation of mobile phone until group activity is completed and informing the parent/guardian. Illegal activity will result in the matter being referred to the Gardaí.

(3.10.12) Online activity: (See Part 2 of this document for extensive guidance on I.T.)

The diocese will assess the possible ways that children communicate with Church personnel, volunteers and each other using digital and online systems such as via the internet, mobile phones, and email.

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It is important to develop guidance to reduce the risk to children associated with online activity when they are involved in an activity, group or event to prevent them:

- being groomed online by paedophiles
- experiencing online bullying
- accessing or being exposed to inappropriate or harmful material
- personal contact details not being secure
- personal images being uploaded and used without consent.

3.3 Running safe activities for children

Parental consent

Signed consent must be obtained from parents or guardians of each child prior to their participation in events, activities and groups. The normal routine activities of the group, altar servers, choir, etc. should be specified in the application form, which should include a Parental Consent Section.

It should only be necessary to obtain separate Parental Consent for specific activities, outside of the routine activities e.g. a tour.

Establish from parents or guardians whether the child has any specific dietary requirements or medical or special needs.

3.3.1 Prevention: trips away from home

(All trips must be risk assessed in advance)

Trips away from home include but are not limited to pilgrimages, day trips, overnight stays and holidays.

All trips need careful advance planning including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities, and emergencies. Adequate insurance should be in place.

Training must be provided for all leaders.

Written parental consent specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance. Contact details for the duration of the trip are necessary. Written permission for leaders to make decisions of an emergency nature should be obtained in case of accidents.

A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers should be made available to parents or guardians.

There must be adequate, gender-appropriate, supervision for boys and girls.

Arrangements and procedures must be put in place to ensure that rules and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of trips away. These rules and boundaries must be clearly outlined to all leaders during preparation/training for the event.

Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.

Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same sex as the group being supervised.

Under no circumstances should an adult leader share a bedroom with a young person.

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If, in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be alone in a children's dormitory or bedroom without another adult they should (a) immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility and (b) make a diary note of the circumstances and fill in an incident report form.

Other ways to make sure individuals do not get the opportunity to harm children

- Try to use open plan venues/ spaces, where individuals cannot take children away on their own and adults are in sight of other adults.
- Maintain a culture of awareness amongst the adults and children present by ensuring everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities, and people are encouraged to challenge and report any inappropriate conduct with children.
- Inform children how to report concerns.
- Make sure there is good supervision of Church personnel and volunteers.
- Make sure you take feedback and debrief after the event.

Health and safety

Some questions to ask yourself when planning an activity or event:

- How does the venue measure up in terms of health and safety (e.g. fire)?
- Do you have adequate changing areas and toilet facilities?
- Do you have first aid supplies to deal with minor accidents?
- Are all trips away carefully planned, including adequate provision of safe transport?
- Do you have appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements for all overnight trips?
- Is there adequate insurance in place?

Also:

- Adequate and appropriate supervision must be provided in relation to all events and activities organised for children and young people (see below for recommended ratios).
- In places such as changing areas, toilets and showers, separate provision must be made for boys and girls.
- There must be adequate and gender-appropriate supervision of boys and girls in such areas.
- Ensure that buildings and/or facilities used for events and activities are suitable.
- Make sure that fire precautions are in place and that fire extinguishers are checked regularly.
- Make sure a first aid kit is readily available. This should be regularly checked and replenished. It is advisable that first aid training be provided for workers and volunteers.
- Be alert to the risk of injury involved in some contact sports, paying particular attention to the child's age and to any medical condition or disability.
- Access to a telephone at all times is essential in case of emergency.
- Adequate insurance must be obtained to cover all activities. In cases of uncertainty about the level of cover, check with the relevant insurance provider.
- Where transport is being provided by the parish or parish activity, make sure that drivers and vehicles meet legal requirements. Where transport is being hired, check with the service provider that drivers and vehicles conform to legal requirements. Always inform parents/guardians about transport being used.
- A clear policy should be agreed with parents and guardians regarding taking photographs and the making of video recordings of children involved in parish-related activities or events.
- There should be regular health and safety reviews of facilities, procedures and practices.

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3.3.2 Prevention: Recommended Supervision Ratios

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 (ideally 1 of each gender) for up to 20 children.

There should be one additional staff member for every ten extra children. The ratio of staff and volunteers to children with disabilities is dependent on the individual needs.

3.4 Prevention: record keeping – activities

The group leader has overall responsibility for the record keeping of the group and activities.

Each Parish Group will be responsible for storing in a confidential way an accurate record for each activity involving children in accordance with parish policy and in compliance with the confidentiality and record keeping of the diocese. (See Section 2).

This record should include a copy of the signed parental/guardian consent form with contact details for parents/guardians and should include necessary medical information.

A written record of organisers and supervisors in attendance at events should also be kept.

Ensure that an Accident/Incident Report Form is completed in the event of any accident or incident relating to a child or young person. Complete an attendance register for each group where children are involved.

Make records available to the Parish Priest/Administrator, upon the winding up of the group or when requested.

3.5 Prevention: Complaints Procedure

Resolving conflict

The approach to resolving conflict should always be one of open dialogue in a safe space and in a friendly and informal atmosphere.

Parish Procedures

- Develop a clear and transparent complaints procedure and appeals process to be used by children, staff, workers, volunteers, or by parents who are dissatisfied with any aspect of activities or services provided.
- Make sure that a copy of the complaints procedure is available to children, their parents or guardians and to all staff and volunteers.
- All complaints should be recorded.

Making a complaint

What to do if you have a complaint about someone, working on behalf of the parish, at parish activities for children

Communicate immediately with the person in charge of the project /event and complete the General Complaints Form (Form 10).

- Once a communication is received, the leader will try to resolve the issue promptly and fairly.

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- Should the matter not be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction the complainant may discuss the issue with the parish priest who will, similarly, try to resolve the issue promptly and fairly.
- If a satisfactory resolution cannot be arrived at, an external mediator will be invited by the parish priest/administrator to dialogue with all concerned. In this regard advice will be sought from the National Board for Safeguarding Children, should this be deemed necessary.
- The determination of the external mediator, proposed after discussions with all parties, will be final.

Should the issue relate to the parish's safeguarding children procedures, the leader, upon receiving the communication, must contact the Parish Priest to deal with the matter.

All Church personnel, staff and volunteers must adhere to the the parish Safeguarding Children Policy Statement, Guidelines, Roles and Responsibilities.

3.6 Code of behaviour for children and dealing with bullying

Code of behaviour for children

A code of conduct, specific to children, should be drawn up in direct consultation with children. While it is important that each group of children directly contributes to the formation of their code of conduct, the following basics should be included:

- Children will be aware that leaders also have a code of conduct.
- Children will understand that leaders will not work alone with children.
- Children will treat each other and their leaders with courtesy, respect and dignity, taking care to avoid discrimination involving race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.
- Children will not be permitted to engage in substance abuse, to consume alcohol or to smoke, in keeping with Civil Law.
- Inappropriate language or sexually suggestive comments will not be permitted by children.
- Physical contact between children will be of an appropriate nature at all times.
- Rough play will not be permitted at any time.

Children are to be consulted about drawing up an all-inclusive anti-bullying policy.

The following are some examples of bullying. However, this list is not exhaustive and the children will have many other points to list.

Name calling

Fighting/kicking/punching

Making suggestive comments

Intimidation

Threatening

Ignoring/excluding

Damaging property

Spreading rumours

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Sending abusive text messages
Internet bullying

3.7 Dealing with bullying

Information regarding bullying is listed in the Diocesan Policy (Section 3.6). Alleged incidents of bullying, will be recorded on the accident/incident forms. With regard to alleged bullying involving children, group leaders will inform parents of perpetrators and victims orally regarding serious instances of bullying or, where a pattern emerges involving less serious incidents by one or more individuals.

With regard to alleged bullying involving adults bullying adults or adults bullying children, the following may be applied as appropriate:

- The Procedures for Responding to Child Protection Concerns in Section 2.
- Complaints Procedure in 3.5

Empowering children to speak out (Child Friendly Posters and Child Friendly Information Leaflet are on www.safeguardingchildrenclayne.ie)

Q. When I am making children aware of their right to be safe and giving them the confidence to speak out – What should I tell them?

A. Section 5.3 of the diocesan policy *Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Cloyne*, provides specific guidance on this issue -

“At parish level, children should be made aware that:

- they have the right to be safe
- they can raise concerns with specific individuals within the parish church organisation.
- they can contact Diocesan Support, the Diocesan Designated Officer, Gardaí, H.S.E. and that these contact details are on display
- there are contact details for other agencies that they can contact e.g. child safeguarding and children’s help-lines
- the codes of behaviour are on display -

Consideration should be given to how disabled children can communicate their complaints especially if they have verbal communication difficulties.

Remember how vulnerable disabled children are to abuse.”

Additionally, children should be aware of the codes of behaviour including Sections 3.6 & 3.7 of the diocesan policy.

Section 1 of The Parish *Safeguarding Children Policy Statement, Guidelines Roles and Responsibilities* (Dec.2010), is also relevant –

“**Children will be made aware** of the code of behaviour and of the safeguarding procedures, they will also be advised of whom they can speak to if they have a concern, and, made aware

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of the basic rules of the Stay Safe Programme i.e. **“Say No! Get away! Tell someone you
can trust and keep telling them until you are listened to.”**
“

Signed _____ P.P./Administrator

Date_____

I have read and understood the Code of behaviour for Church personnel, staff
and volunteers -basics for working with children and I agree to adhere fully to
all its provisions.

Name of volunteer/staff member _____

Signature of volunteer/staff member _____

Date_____