

Section 3:

Children and Young People

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Introduction

As a church community, we recognise the importance of providing a safe and caring environment for our children and young people. The church as a whole desires that children and young people are able to take a full and active part in the life of the church in an environment which helps them to grow spiritually and cares responsibly for them.

‘The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to have their say and to be listened to, properly cared for and protected from violence, abuse and neglect. All organisations that work with children should do what is best for them.’

UNCRC Articles 12, 19 and 3

Policy statement

It is the policy of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Union of Welsh Independents and the Baptist Union of Wales to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional harm. As churches, we are fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of our members and those entrusted to our care. Members of the church, paid staff and volunteers will at all times show respect for and understanding of children’s rights, promoting an ethos of listening to children and ensuring their safety, conducting themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the Christian church.

The church will care for children and young people, and will safeguard them by way of good practice in relation to:

- Safe recruitment of workers (section 2)
- Promoting good working practice when working with children and young people (section 3.1)
- Training and supporting their workers in their role and in child protection (section 3.2)

The procedures and guidelines included in this document should be freely available to all workers and leaders and members within the church.

For clarity, any reference to child/children includes children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

Values

All human beings are made by God in His image. The image of God is His gift to us in childhood as well as adulthood.

We have a caring and compassionate God and we too are called to show His love and compassion as we work with others especially the most vulnerable.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Jesus' birth, growth and nurture within a family as well as his behaviour towards children during his ministry affirm the dignity and value conferred by God on children and young people. A child is a whole person with rights and needs, to be honoured and respected by us all. Indeed, children possess qualities which show adults the way to God's kingdom (Matthew 18:3).

Children, therefore, are valued, yet vulnerable members of the Christian community, who need our special care. We take seriously the charge given by Jesus to welcome children, to protect them and to allow them free access to Him.

Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. (Luke 9:48)

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these ... And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)

Churches today have a unique opportunity to obey these commands of Jesus. Every church should model in its worship, fellowship and mission a community where:

- children are listened to, given a sense of belonging, nurtured, and kept safe;
- parents are supported and encouraged;
- those who work with children and young people are supported.

The church recognises the right of children and young people to be treated as individuals and to be encouraged to participate in the life of the church. It declares that threatening, violent or degrading behaviour is never acceptable.

The church wishes to promote good working practice, to create a safe and positive environment for children and young people in our churches and communities and for those working and volunteering in our midst.

3.1 Good practice when working with children and young people

Within our churches we have many skilled and compassionate people who share their time, gifts and faith as they work with children and young people.

Although much of the following section may appear to be “common sense” it is important that, across our different teams and churches, we are all working towards the same stated high standards in our work with children and young people. This is also useful to enable us to share expectations of roles with new workers and volunteers.

A. GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

1. Treat each child and young person with dignity and respect.
2. Empower children to safeguard themselves – through listening to them, giving them choices, believing them and giving them relevant advice and information (as befitting their age and understanding).
3. Always be mindful of the language you use, the tone of your voice, and your body language.
4. Touch is an essential part of everyday life and a way of communicating affection, warmth and reassurance. It should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child or young person, rather than the worker. It should be related to the child, young person’s needs, not the worker’s. Holding a child’s hand or offering a hug when they are upset is often a good way to reassure or comfort a child but always ask “Would you like a hug?” rather than assume. We all have different boundaries and these should be respected. Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is different from a hug behind closed doors.
5. Be open and transparent as a team. Team members should monitor one another in the area of behaviour or physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
6. As well as being mindful of the children’s safety at all times also be mindful of your own safety and protect yourself from allegations. Behaviour should be open, transparent and accountable.
7. Learn how to control and discipline children without resorting to corporal punishment. NEVER smack or hit anyone and don’t shout. Change voice tone if necessary. Don’t be reluctant to call on support from other leaders if you are unable to cope with a situation.
8. Get to know the children you work with and find out what works for them as individuals and a group. Make age appropriate group agreements (ground rules) with the children and young people on what is acceptable behaviour (e.g. no hitting, shouting, name calling etc.) which you can review regularly together.
9. Agree some basic guidelines as workers for each activity so that you are all behaving in a consistent way and expectations are clear. Consider creating a booklet detailing who is responsible for each activity and how you will deal with discipline, so that you can share it with new workers or parents. (See example document at appendix 2)
10. Where possible avoid working alone with a child or a group. In church premises, this could mean leaving doors open, or arranging for two groups to undertake activities in the same room. This enables you to support each other and remain accountable to each other as a team. There will be exceptions or times when this is not possible and this is why we go through a safe recruitment process.
11. Respect the privacy of children but do not promise to keep secrets and generally do not enter into private or intimate conversations with children and young people on your own. We do want to be able to offer appropriate care and support so, in listening to a young person’s problem or offering advice, be wise about the location and setting of the discussion. Where possible, ensure that other leaders are aware of the meeting and others are around.

12. Do not play games which are unduly physical or sexually provocative and never make suggestive sexual remarks about an individual, or to him/her, even when it is part of 'banter'. Resist being drawn in when a young person seeks attention by way of means which are clearly sexual or physical by nature.
13. Do not invite children or young people into your home when you are alone; invite a group, or make sure that another adult is in the house. Make sure that a parent/guardian is aware of the child/ young person's whereabouts.
14. Don't go into a home if a parent or carer is absent unless the child would be at risk of significant harm if you do not do so.
15. Avoid transporting a child/young person on your own. Try to ensure that another leader/helper accompanies you in the vehicle, or that other children/young people are present with you. If circumstances dictate that you have to transport a child/young person on your own, ensure that other leaders/helpers are aware of what is happening, and that the individual is in the rear seat of the vehicle.
16. Be wise in your use of social media and mobile phones with children and young people (see further guidance in section 3.3 E).
17. Never be afraid to ask for help and advice from your leaders or more experienced staff if you are unsure. The Interdenominational Protection Panel's Training and Safeguarding Officer is also available to give advice (See Appendix 1 for more sources of support)

B. GENERAL PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

Also see section 3.3 Guidelines for specific activities

1) In planning and preparing activities, please be aware of the following:

- Ensure that you have consent for each child or young person under 18 to take part in an activity.
- Organisations have a responsibility to **assess the risk** involved in the activities that are provided. A risk assessment template (see Form 10) works as a checklist to help you to consider the possible problems and risks involved in an activity. We do informal risk assessments all the time without even thinking about it. For example, we say, "It's dangerous to climb up on the chair – I'll go and get a stepladder". Often it is sufficient to assess risk informally at the beginning of a session or activity but for organised group activities it is usually good practice to have a formal paper copy that can be shared with members of the team and reviewed. (Further guidelines in Appendix 4)
- If possible, each activity should include someone who has a **First Aid** qualification. Where possible, **medication** should be administered by the child's parent or guardian. If it is essential that medication is administered during an activity, written consent and instruction by a parent/guardian or doctor should be obtained. Medication should be clearly marked and kept in a secure place, out of the reach of children.
- When planning games or 'ice breakers', be aware of the risks of physical injury, and guard against it.
 - Make sure that there is a means of **calling for help** in the event of any emergency during an activity – either a mobile phone with a good signal or access to a land line.

2) Safe locations:

- Ensure that all sites/locations used by the church are safe to carry out any activity.
- Buildings being used for groups or activities should be properly maintained. The external fabric of the building, plus all internal fixtures, fittings, lighting, fire exits and equipment should meet the required safety standards. An annual review should also be carried out and, where necessary, action taken. All electrical equipment should have undergone an electrical safety test. In the UK these are known as PAT (Portable Appliance Testing). Outside play areas should be appropriately fenced off with secure gates to prevent small children from straying from the premises.

- Always be aware of potential dangers or risks in the building and the equipment and activities. Complete risk assessments regularly. In a building, the following may be considered hazardous: loose-fitting carpets, uneven floors, over-filled cupboards, very high shelves, blocked fire exits, glass doors, missing light bulbs, overloaded power points, trailing electrical cables, loose window fastenings.
- Move items which could cause injury during the activity, or avoid them.
- Young people must be supervised at all times by a helper/leader whilst in a kitchen area.
- Be aware of the location of fire exits, and ensure that they are clear. 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 the evacuation procedure to follow in the event of fire. It is helpful to have a record of these.
- Don't use any area where maintenance work is taking place, and 'screen off' such areas where possible.

3) Adequate supervision

Children should be supervised at all times. Children should never be left unsupervised, whether inside or out in the open air. A leader should ensure that there are sufficient staff to meet recommended ratios (see below) and also adequate supervision of additional or dangerous equipment. In the case of certain apparatus, e.g. bouncy castles, adequate supervision by suitably trained individuals is essential. It may be that specialist/additional insurance cover is required for higher risk activities.

These are the ratios recommended by the NSPCC¹¹ in relation to supervision of children in voluntary organisations:-

0 - 2 years	at least 1 adult to 3 children.
2 - 3 years	at least 1 adult to 4 children.
4 - 8 years	at least 1 adult to 6 children.
9 - 12 years	at least 1 adult to 6 children
13 -18 years	at least 1 adult to 8 children

These are general minimum guidelines but they should be increased where circumstances require; for example, to offer appropriate support to a child with additional needs. Generally activities should be conducted by a minimum of two adults.

4) Documents

- When a child becomes involved in an activity run by an organisation, it is important at the outset that a general information and consent form is completed by their parent or guardian. This should give contact information, permission to seek medical help in an emergency and details of any allergies or reactions to certain foods. This form should be renewed annually. (Form 5 or 6: General Information and Consent)
- If you are planning on communicating with young people electronically or using social media it is important to have written permission. (See form 6 and 3.3 E)
- Additional consent should be obtained in relation to any activity which is over and above the regular activities. This could be an occasional 'high risk' activity; for example, climbing, or a trip or residential course. (Form 7: Additional Activity Consent Form)
- A register of attendance at the club or activity should also be maintained, together with a register of workers and volunteers at each session. It is also good practice to keep parents/carers informed of the nature of activities.

¹¹ NSPCC recommended ratios
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/briefings/adult-child-ratios_wda95200.html

5) Food and drink

If food and drink are provided during an activity, the following should be considered:

- Workers should follow good hand washing and hygiene principles.
- All food and drink is stored appropriately.
- Hot drinks should not be carried through an activity area and not placed within the reach of young children.
- Snacks and mealtimes should be appropriately supervised.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Systems are in place to ensure that children and young people do not have access to food/drinks to which they are allergic. Typically this can be nuts, milk, eggs, fish, shell fish and gluten.
- If meals are being prepared, the person responsible should possess a Basic Food Hygiene Certificate or equivalent and be knowledgeable in areas such as food preparation, handling, storage, disposal of waste, etc.

6) First Aid Box

Under the Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations it is the duty of every employer to provide at least one First Aid container for each work location. Its contents should be stored in a waterproof container and the designated worker should regularly check the contents.

7) Accident and Incident Record

Any accident, 'near miss' or incident should be recorded, including the date of the incident, details of witnesses and any further action required. (See Form 9: Accident/Incident Form)

8) Insurance

You must ensure that any activity is covered by an Insurance Policy held either by the local church or the relevant department of the denomination. Good practice clearly minimises risk, however, adequate insurance cover should also be in place for each and every activity. In the event of an accident, incident or if abuse is detected or suspected, it is important to notify the insurance company immediately, otherwise the insurance cover could be adversely affected.

3.2 Child Protection

A. How might a child suffer abuse?

Children can suffer abuse by being harmed by someone, by someone failing to prevent a child from being harmed, or by being neglected.

Abuse can happen within a family, within institutional premises, or in the community at large. They can be abused by someone whom they know or, more infrequently, by a stranger.

It's important that those who work with children and young people are able to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse because often children and young people are unable or unwilling to ask for help directly. However, it may be that other factors account for the child's behaviour, so that the person working with him/her should never take it upon himself to decide that abuse has taken place.

B. Who abuses children?

- An abuser is often someone known to the child. They may be a parent, sibling, other relation, family friend or neighbour.
- Sometimes, the abuser may be an adult who holds a position of authority or trust over children; this could apply within the church.
- The abuser can be of any background.
- An abuser may be male or female.
- There is no certain way of identifying a potential abuser; they don't appear different from the rest of society.
- Some adult abusers may have been abused themselves as children.

C. Categories of Abuse and possible signs

Type	Definition	Possible signs
<p>PHYSICAL ABUSE</p>	<p>Physical abuse can mean striking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, scalding with fire or water, drowning, choking or other form of causing physical injury to a child. It can also happen when a parent or carer pretends that a child is displaying certain symptoms, or intentionally causes a child to become ill. This is often described by using terms such as ‘imaginary illness by proxy’ or ‘Munchausen Syndrome by proxy’.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them • Injuries in places on the body not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc. • Injuries that have not received medical attention • Reluctance to change for, or participate in games or swimming • Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains • Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures, etc. which do not have an accidental explanation • Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*
<p>SEXUAL ABUSE</p>	<p>Sexual abuse means forcing or encouraging a child or young person to participate in sexual activity, whether the child is aware of what is happening or otherwise. This can involve touching the child, including penetration or activity which does not involve penetration.</p> <p>This can include non contact activities involving children in the production of pornography, encouraging them to watch pornography or sexual activity, or prompting them to behave in an inappropriate sexual manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse • Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour • Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing • Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults • Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home • Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares • Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia*

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

This involves abusing a child emotionally on a regular basis, causing the child's emotional development to be seriously and permanently affected. It can include telling a child that he is useless, that no one loves him, that he is deficient in certain ways, or that his only use in life is to satisfy the needs of others. It can mean having unreasonable expectations of a child in light of his age and development. It can mean causing a child to be afraid or to think that he is in danger, or using/corrupting a child.

Every case of abusing a child involves some degree of emotional abuse, but it can also 'stand alone'.

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, nervousness, obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

NEGLECT

This means constantly failing to satisfy the basic physical and psychological needs of a child which is likely to seriously affect the child's health or development. It can involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or accommodation, failing to protect a child from harm or physical danger, or failing to facilitate access to adequate medical care or treatment. It can also include neglecting the basic emotional needs of a child, or failing to respond to those needs.

- Undernourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food
- Untreated illnesses
- Inadequate care
- Regularly being inappropriately dressed for the weather

* These may also indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

D. Initial Response to a Concern or Allegation

If there is concern that a child or young person may have been abused, or a direct allegation of abuse has been made, it is important the person receiving this information does the following:

1) Make notes as soon as possible:

- Write down exactly what has been said, when s/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of an activity). Keep it factual and do not express your opinion. Your report/notes could be used at a later date in a court of law (You can use Form 11 in section 7 if you wish).
- Describe any injury: its size and a drawing of its location and shape on the child's body.
- Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
- Write down any action taken and keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed up.
- These notes should be passed on to the church safeguarding co-ordinator to assist them should the matter need to be referred to Children's Social Services or the Police. Any referral should be confirmed in writing within 48 hours and you should expect an acknowledgement of your written referral within one working day of receiving it.
- If the church does not have a safeguarding co-ordinator, or deputy, or they are not contactable or they are the subject of the concerns, the statutory agencies should be contacted directly

2) Seek advice:

- If your church does not have a safeguarding co-ordinator you can contact the IPP Safeguarding Officer¹² or the denominational General Secretary for advice.
- The Churches Child Protection Advisory service (CCPAS)¹³ can also offer independent advice and operates a 24 hour confidential helpline and an in depth website.

3) In urgent cases:

- If there are concerns that a child may have been deliberately hurt, is at risk of 'significant harm' or is afraid to return home, contact the local Children's Social Services or the Police straight away. Do not tell the parents/carers in such circumstances.
- If a child needs urgent medical attention, an ambulance should be called or they should be taken to hospital, informing the parents/carers afterwards of the action that was taken. The hospital staff should be informed of any child protection concerns. They have a responsibility to pass these concerns on to the statutory authorities.

4) DO NOT: Investigate any circumstances, assertions or disclosures yourself. It is not your role or that of the church to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. Your responsibility is to report the matter to the appropriate person.

5) Concerns about possible poor parenting or neglect

- If the concerns for the child centre around poor parenting, it may be appropriate to speak to the parent/carer. You could offer practical domestic help and suggest, for example, a chat with the health visitor, doctor or Children's Social Services.
- If a parent/carer is unwilling or frightened to seek help, then offer to accompany them. If they still fail to acknowledge the need for action, it is possible to informally discuss the situation with Children's Social Services without divulging their personal details (such as names and addresses) unless, of course, Children's Social Services consider the situation to be serious enough to do so. In

¹² Interdenominational Protection Panel 01745 817584

¹³ CCPAS (The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service) is the only independent Christian safeguarding charity 08451204550 <http://www.ccpas.co.uk/About.html>

these circumstances it is important to realise there may be a bigger picture. Information may have come to light that might be a vital missing piece in the jigsaw.

E. How to respond to a child who discloses abuse

- Be patient and sympathetic.
- Listen carefully – Be attentive and look at the child.
- If the child is sharing information with you, take it seriously. Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used.
- Do not question the child about what has happened or press the child to disclose further information.
- Stress to the child that he/she is not to blame.
- Reassure the child that he/she is doing the right thing by disclosing the information to you, and that you are treating the information seriously.
- If you think that the child is in serious or immediate danger, contact the Police or Social Services immediately.

Do:

- Let the child know what you intend doing, with whom you will share the information and why, and – in simple terms – what will happen next.
- Make detailed notes as soon as possible after the disclosure and date and sign them. Make sure they are factual and not expressing your opinion.

Do not:

- Promise to keep secret any kind of abuse which is drawn to your attention. For example do not say, “This will never happen to you again” or “I won’t mention it to anyone else”.
- Express shock or disbelief to the child.
- Discuss the matter with the individual who is accused or suspected of committing the abuse.
- Question or challenge anyone who has been named as a possible abuser. Your responsibility is to report the matter to the appropriate person.

F. WHAT TO DO IF YOU: HEAR, SEE OR SUSPECT SOMETHING?



You have heard, seen or suspect that a child or young person has suffered or is suffering abuse or neglect

Make a careful note of what you have been told or what you have seen or suspect (See form 11)

ARE THEY IN IMMEDIATE DANGER?

Yes

Contact the emergency services or Social Services duty team without delay

No

Seek advice from your church safeguarding officer or the IPP Safeguarding Officer

Or
Contact your local social services children's team directly
Numbers will be shown on the Local Authority website or in a telephone directory

If in doubt call to get advice

At any point you may contact the IPP Safeguarding Officer for help or advice on 01745 817584 07957 510346 Or contact your denominational General Secretary

3.3 Guidelines for specific activities

A. Filming and taking photographs

Taking photographs of children, or filming them, is often a good way to record a positive event or advertise a club, but certain protocols must be followed to comply with data protection legislation as well as to safeguard children and/or young people. You must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and consideration must be given to how the images are to be stored and used.

- The written consent of the parent/guardian must be obtained prior to filming or taking a photograph of a child during church activities. The relevant form must explain the purpose for making the film/taking the photograph e.g. for the church website, information boards, the press etc. It is perfectly acceptable to ask parents/guardian to let the organisation know if they do NOT want their child photographed or filmed.(See form 8)
- Never place a photograph/film of the child(ren) on a website without the written consent of the parent/guardian.
- In publicity documents, do not include names or any information which will identify the children. The same precaution should be adhered to when sending photographs to the press. There will be some obvious exceptions such as celebrating an award or achievement but always get written permission first.
- Photographs of children should be kept in a safe place, to be decided upon by the church trustees. Their decision should be recorded.
- Workers should not store images on their personal phones or computers.
- It is an offence to keep, distribute or show indecent pictures of children.

B. Safety when Transporting

Most youth work will involve transporting young people at some stage, whether on a club night or to and from a residential course or activity. The good practice guidelines below, will help safeguard both young people and their leaders. All drivers must abide by the usual recruitment and checking procedures.

a) Private Cars

- Drivers should be aware of the limitations of third party insurance for transporting young people. Private cars can be used provided they are not used for hire or for carrying passengers for reward.
- Drivers must check with their insurance company regarding the adequacy of passenger liability. In particular, ministers/paid staff must ensure that their policy covers business use to ensure cover whilst driving during the course of their working activities and not simply social and domestic purposes and commuting to work.
- Avoid transporting a child/young person on your own where possible. Try to ensure that another leader/helper accompanies you in the vehicle, or that other children/young people are present with you. If circumstances dictate that you have to transport a child/young person on your own, ensure that other leaders/helpers are aware of what is happening, and that the individual is in the rear seat of the vehicle.
- Never overcrowd the vehicle; otherwise any insurance cover will be invalidated.
- Seat belts must always be worn.

b) Minibuses

Current regulations must be observed. You may be able to drive a minibus if you hold a car driving licence and follow certain conditions – otherwise you'll need to apply for a minibus licence.

Please check with the DVLA for up to date information. The regulations listed here could change at any time.¹⁴

You may be able to drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats using your current car driving licence as long as it's **not for 'hire or reward'** – i.e. there's no payment from or on behalf of the passengers. If you need to charge, you will need a Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) licence.

If you held a driving licence before 1 January 1997

You can drive a minibus in the UK and on temporary visits abroad. When your car licence is next renewed at the age of 70, you'll need to re-apply for your entitlement and meet higher medical standards.

If you obtained your driving licence after 1 January 1997

You can drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats within the UK as long as the following conditions apply:-

- you're 21 or older
- the minibus is used for social purposes by a non-commercial body
- you've had your driving licence for at least 2 years
- you're driving on a voluntary basis and the minibus is used for social purposes by a non-commercial body
- the maximum weight of the minibus is not more than 3.5 tones (or 4.25 tonnes including specialist equipment for disabled passengers, e.g. a wheelchair ramp)
- you're not towing a trailer

(From DVLA website sourced Oct 2013)

Contact the DVLA or visit the website for further information about driving a minibus if you are not sure.

- If driving the congregation's minibus, drivers must be named on the congregation's insurance policy.
- The law states that it is the driver's responsibility to make sure that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition before use. Failure to do so may result in the driver being legally liable in the event of any accident.

IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT DRIVE THE VEHICLE.

When hiring a minibus or larger bus, it is the responsibility of the user group to verify the legality and insurance cover of the operator prior to the use of the vehicle. If in doubt, ask to see a copy of the operator's insurance cover and operator's licence.

- Seat belts must be worn for any journey, no matter how short, and again it is the driver/leader's responsibility to enforce this.
- Leaders/helpers who accompany young people in minibuses should, where possible, sit amongst the young people. Preferably, a leader/helper should sit near the exit points of the vehicle.
- An accident report book/breakdown log book should be carried in church minibuses, and kept up to date.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/driving-a-minibus>

- Ensure that there is a First Aid Kit and Fire Extinguisher on the vehicle and familiarise yourself with them.
- Please note that the maximum speed for a minibus is 50 mph on single carriageway roads, 60 mph on dual carriageways, and 70 mph on motorways.

C. Residential Courses

When organising a residential course the leader in charge should note the following:

1) The Residential Centre

- The Centre must have adequate insurance cover for your group, and be licenced for the activities you undertake. Insurance should especially cover high risk activities such as canoeing, rock climbing, etc.
- The premises should comply with current Health & Safety legislation.
- The Centre should inform you about its rules and regulations. Make every effort to be aware of its timetable; examples would be whether the lights are turned off at a particular time, meal times, and what time the group is expected to arrive and depart.
- The Centre must provide access to First Aid/GP in the event of an emergency.
- The Centre must also provide separate sleeping accommodation for males and females.
- A strategy should be in place to inform parents/guardians in the case of emergency or unexpected or unavoidable changes to the programme or the venue. Ensure that a phone is accessible.

2) Parents

The consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) is a pre-requisite when taking a young person away for a residential experience. A registration form must be completed and signed by them, and should include any relevant medical information such as allergies, special diets, etc.

Before taking a group away, ensure that parents/guardians are aware of the following:

- The programme/activities in which their child will participate;
- The names and numbers of leaders/helpers accompanying the group. Where possible it is advisable to arrange a pre-residential briefing for parents, giving information and allowing them the opportunity to meet the leaders/helpers;
- The address and telephone number of the Centre;
- The group's 'contract', that is, the rules the young people will be asked to observe, and the possible consequences if they are broken;
- What clothes and other items the young people will need;
- How much pocket money is likely to be sufficient (it is advisable to set a limit on the amount taken).

3) The Young People

- They must have parental/guardian consent to participate in the residential course and its activities.
- They should be fully informed of the nature of the residential course and what is expected of them.
- They should never be coerced/forced into any activity with which they are uncomfortable.
- They should be allowed to 'negotiate' rules and a contract for behaviour, and be made aware of the sanctions in the event of the rules being broken.
- Children and young people should have access to a telephone. Childline and NSPCC numbers should be displayed.

D. Using church premises for accommodation

Church premises should only be used for accommodation if they comply with health & safety, fire and food regulations. If they are used for that purpose, certain factors need to be taken into consideration:-

- Try to use ground floor accommodation for sleeping.
- There should be appropriate male/female segregation and supervision.
- There should be at least two separate routes leading from the sleeping accommodation and out of the building.
- Doors should be checked for ease of opening in an emergency. Exits should be clearly marked and not blocked. Clear instructions in the event of a fire should be given to both young people and leaders/helpers.
- Portable heating appliances should not impede exits, and should be turned off during sleeping hours.
- Leaders/helpers should have torches in case of power failure.
- Make sure that there is a means to call for assistance. Check mobile phone coverage in advance. If there is a 'land-line' phone in the church building, the leaders/helpers should have access to it.
- Leaders/helpers should avoid staying on their own with a young person. Make sure that there are other leaders/helpers or a young person present.
- Sleeping accommodation for leaders/helpers and young people should, where possible, be separate, but the young people's accommodation ought to be easily accessible.

E. 'ON-LINE' SAFEGUARDING

In the past the church's responsibility for safeguarding and protecting children and young people has meant preparing procedures dealing with safe activities and buildings, with good practice for its workers. Today, however, we must also take into consideration 'on-line' safeguarding.

The church can play its part in minimising the risks involved with using IT, mobile phones etc by:

Supporting children and their families to remain safe when 'on-line' by making them aware of the some of the dangers and means to use IT safely.

Guiding its workers and volunteers to use safe principles and practices when using IT within churches and as a means of communication with young people.

1. SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES TO REMAIN SAFE ON-LINE

The Internet is an excellent resource, and an integral part of modern life, but here are some of the problems that can occur.

- Cyber-bullying and 'fighting' on line, threats, 'sexting'.
- Meeting someone 'on-line', and the danger of being enticed/groomed.
- Failing to protect digital information, leading to breaches of privacy, identity theft, misuse of information and fraud.
- Sharing files and breaches of copyright legislation, insufficient computer protection (viruses etc.)
- Access to dangerous material such as pornography, sites which promote hatred and those which encourage self-harm, drugs, suicide or gambling.
- Over-use of the Internet, text messaging, mobile phones, video games – becoming dependent or addicted to technology.

Although the church does not hold itself out to be an expert in this field, it can encourage and assist children and their families to be aware of ‘on-line’ dangers. This includes prompting families to discuss the dangers with their children, installing ‘firewalls’ on home computers, and ensuring that children take appropriate steps to protect themselves.

With the help of local experts, churches can arrange training sessions to help parents and guardians better understand the subject. Churches’ youth workers can take simple steps such as informing children and their families about schemes such as:

The ‘Click Clever Click Safe’ Scheme

This was created by UKCCIS (UK Council for Child Internet Safety), and encourages children and young people to:



Zip it: get children to keep their passwords private maintain the privacy of personal information and consider carefully which information is appropriate to be shared on-line. The following should not be shared: full name, pictures, home and e-mail address, phone numbers, details of popular meeting places for young people etc.



Block It: Make sure your children know how to block people that upset them, block those who send ‘hate-mail’, delete suspicious e-mails, and not open anonymous links or attachments. It encourages young people to install adequate protection software.



Flag It: Ask your kids regularly if they have seen or done anything on-line that has upset them. Inform an appropriate individual if someone asks the young person ‘on-line’ to meet with him/her in person, or if any ‘on-line’ activity gives cause for concern.

A number of organisations offer detailed advice and training on internet safety:

<p>CEOP Child Exploitation & On-line Protection Centre – internet safety Advice and education Report inappropriate on-line behaviour</p>	<p>http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/</p>
<p>WISEKIDS Promoting safe internet use</p>	<p>www.wisekids.org.uk 40 Wood Crescent, Newport NP10 0AL Email: info @ wisekids.org.uk. Tel: 01633 673339/07540707258</p>
<p>BBC Webwise – advice for parents CBBC stay safe (for children)</p>	<p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/topics/safety-and-privacy/internet-safety-for-kids http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/topics/stay-safe</p>
<p>Action for Children’s Net Smart Rules to help you to be safe and on-line.</p>	<p>http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/our-services/family-support/parenting-support/netsmart</p>

2. GUIDING WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS to use safe principles and practices when using IT within churches and as a means of communication with young people.

a) Computers belonging to the church:

- If the church allows children and others to use its computers, it is a pre-requisite that the prior written consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) is obtained.
- Ensure that appropriate restrictions (e.g. parental supervision or safe search engines) are in place if children are to be allowed access to computers belonging to the church.
- Ensure that any 'on-line' activity, or the use of personal programmes, which may endanger the computer by way of viruses, etc, is avoided.

b) Websites:

- It is the responsibility of the church to ensure that its websites are safe and appropriate. A suitably qualified/experienced adult should be appointed to oversee the website.
- The church bears responsibility for the full contents of its websites forums, blogs, Twitter or other social networking sites. Inadequate monitoring can lead to the church's reputation being tarnished, and even financial repercussions. Consider very carefully the benefits/pitfalls of expanding a website to include message boards/forums/blogs etc.
- If you propose to include the names and telephone numbers of officers, their prior consent must be obtained.
- If a child's picture is to be shown on a website, the written consent of a parent/guardian must be obtained beforehand. Bear in mind that sex offenders use the internet to locate children or to communicate with them.
- Install the 'app' named 'Report Abuse' prepared by CEOP (Child Exploitation and On-line Protection) on your church website.

c) Communicating with children and young people electronically and using social media:

'On-line' social networking is not just a fad. It constitutes a fundamental change in the way in which we communicate with each other.

Facebook, Twitter, Beebo, e-mailing, text messaging, MySpace, Piczo and Skype, to name just a few, are all means whereby we can communicate with each other. Churches, ministers and workers can utilise this media to great affect but good practice and adequate care are essential.

Individual churches should discuss and record their agreed approach to electronic communication and 'on-line' social networking with children and young people. They should decide whether to allow young church members to be an 'electronic friend' with a member of staff or volunteer. **This decision should be minuted.**

Advantages – enabling the setting up of contemporary contacts and easy immediate contact.

Disadvantages – for a member of staff, clouding the boundary between his/her role as a mentor and his/her position of authority.

The following are good practice principles in relation to internet activity and communication

- Only those members of staff/individuals who have been recruited safely should communicate electronically on behalf of the church.
- ‘On-line’ activity should be undertaken responsibly and courteously. Staff and other workers should be mindful of the language/words used when communicating electronically to avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation.
- Do not contact children electronically without appropriate consent. (Consent can be obtained on a separate form or included in general information and consent form – see Form 6).
- Never pressurise a child to disclose his/her personal details – e-mail address, mobile phone number, etc.
- The **minimum age** requirements stipulated by various networking sites should be observed. For example, children under 13 are not allowed to use Facebook, and the written consent of parents/ guardians is required in respect of young people over the age of 13.
- **Electronic communication with a child of primary school age is inappropriate – communicate through the parent(s)/ guardian(s).**
- Arranging an ‘**accountability system**’ is good practice, asking a colleague to monitor any communication with children/young people. This is especially important with private means of communication such as text messaging on mobile phones. Consider carefully if this is an appropriate means of communication and if so keep messages short and for arrangements only.
- If a church agrees that its workers can include child members as ‘friends’, it should consider creating a separate list/category of ‘friends’ in respect of a particular church group. This means that only restricted information can be seen by that group. Another option is to create a ‘Fan Page’, which allows information to be shared, but does not have a ‘chatting’ facility.
- Church workers who communicate by means of social networking sites must check carefully the **privacy aspects of their ‘profile’**. They must ensure that the content of their site is appropriate to be seen by children, including photographs. Bear in mind that children can also see photographs/ messages/information provided by others who are linked in (e.g. Facebook ‘friends’).
- Workers should refrain from sharing personal information with children and young people and should not respond to, or request personal information over and above that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their work.
- Electronic communications should generally only be used for the purpose of sharing information, not for ‘chatting’/social networking.
- Communications with children and young people should be kept in the public domain, to minimise the possibility of dubious situations arising. The biggest risk of Facebook is the private functions; messages cannot be seen by anyone but yourself and the recipient, so avoid sending messages. If

sending a message is essential, then send to multiple people on Facebook and include other leaders in the message. If the conversation is too private for this then arrange to meet face to face applying normal safeguarding principles.

- Other children/ workers should not be discussed on social network sites.
- If a child communicates electronically when facing a crisis, or when in need, we recommend that you save this information and proceed as per a child protection concern (see section 3.2 above). When supporting a child in need, it is preferable to arrange 'face to face' meetings in accordance with good practice and safeguarding procedures.
- Electronic communications should be restricted to the hours between 8.00am - 10.00pm
- If an email is an official communication on behalf of the church display the church logo if possible
- Church workers should not keep photographs of children on their mobile phones.