

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE PARISH
MERRION ROAD, DUBLIN 4, D04 X2W6
TEL: 01-269 1825, www.merrionroadchurch.ie



**SAFEGUARDING
AND
CHILD PROTECTION
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**



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Commitment to Child Protection

We in the parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace recognize the dignity and rights of all children and young people and are committed to their protection and support. They are the future of the Church and so we actively encourage their participation in parish life and in activities that enhance their supernatural, spiritual, physical, emotional and social development.

We are committed to implementing best practice in relation to working with children and young people and accordingly place at the core of our policy the importance of

- Listening to them
- Valuing and respecting them as individuals
- Rewarding their efforts as well as achievements
- Involving them in decision making (where appropriate)
- Encouraging and praising them.

In keeping with this we are committed to doing all in our power to create a safe environment for children and young people—one that secures their protection and enables them to participate fully in the life of the Church.

These guidelines are based on the principles contained in ‘Our Children Our Church’



Glossary of Terms

Child

A person under the age of 18.

Worker

Clergy, parish staff, children's and youth group leaders and all volunteers and temporary workers who at any time share in the parish's ministry with children.

Parish

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Merrion Road, Dublin 4

Diocesan Designated Person

In the Archdiocese of Dublin, the a Director of Child Protection and Designated Person is appointed to liaise effectively with and provide information and support to all parishes within the diocese on all issues relating to child protection and child welfare and to ensure that appropriate steps are taken.

Parish Child Protection Representative (CPR)

As part of our policy the Parish is committed to nominating one or more Child Protection Representatives in accordance with 'Our Children Our Church'.

:

- To promote awareness of the Church's child protection policies.
- To ensure that the public has ready access to contact details for the Diocesan Designated Person
- To ensure appropriate records are obtained and maintained.
- To facilitate anyone in the parish in bringing an allegation or suspicion of child abuse to the attention of the Diocesan Designated Person.
- To report all allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the appropriate civil authorities and to inform the Diocesan Designated Person.
- To review this policy document from time to time.



The Principles Underlying our Document

The Principles are derived from:

- Gospel Values
- International Law
- Domestic Legislation

These Principles include the following:

Principles derived from Gospel values:

- Each child shall be cherished and affirmed as a gift from God with an inherent right to dignity of life and bodily integrity which shall be respected, nurtured and protected by all.
- Everyone in the Church has an obligation to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected.
- A child's right to safety and care is inalienable.
- Children have a right to an environment free from abuse or neglect.
- Children have a fundamental right to justice and freedom; they have a right to be listened to and to be heard.
- Children have a right to good role models whom they can fully trust, who will respect them and nurture their spiritual, physical and emotional development.
- Those who have suffered child abuse by Church personnel should receive a compassionate and just response and should be offered appropriate pastoral care as they seek to rebuild their lives.

The principles derived from civil sources are:

- All adults have a duty to report allegations or suspicions of child abuse, where reasonable grounds for concern exist, irrespective of the status of the person suspected or their relationship to them or to the child.
- Due regard must be given to the criminal dimension of any action.
- It is the statutory duty of the civil authorities, not individuals or organisations, to investigate reports of child abuse.
- A proper balance must be maintained between protecting children and respecting the needs and rights of carers and adults' however, where there is a conflict, the welfare of the child must be paramount.
- Actions taken to protect a child should not in themselves be abusive or cause the child unnecessary distress. Every action and procedure should consider the overall needs of the child.
- Organisations have a corporate responsibility to operate effective systems to assure the protection of children. They should ensure best practice in relation to recruitment and selection processes, provide appropriate training and ensure that all personnel are aware of their responsibility both to prevent child abuse and to report concerns about child abuse.
- All agencies and disciplines concerned with the protection and welfare of children must work cooperatively in the best interests of children.

REF. *OUR CHILDREN OUR CHURCH*



Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child or young person abuses that power and causes harm to that child or young person.

The common denominator of all child abuse is that it makes children and young people feel diminished or threatened and that it causes them harm.

Child abuse may be categorised as follows:

1. Emotional abuse
2. Physical Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

Emotional abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Emotional abuse is normally found in the relationship between a care-giver and child.

Physical abuse:

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child; e.g. shaking a child, excessive force.

Sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse occurs where a child is used by another person for his or her gratification for sexual arousal or for that of others.

Indirect abuse of children occurs where children have been photographed, videotaped or filmed for pornographic purposes or subjected to gross and obscene language or indecent images.

Definition of Neglect:

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and medical care.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs that is likely to result in significant harm.

Examples of neglect include:

- Where a child suffers a series of minor injuries as a result of not being properly supervised or protected.
- The consistent failure of a child to gain weight or height may indicate that they are being deprived of adequate nutrition
- Where a child consistently misses school, this may be due to bullying or deprivation of intellectual stimulation and support.

When developing structures to safe-guard children in our Parish, sensitive cognisance is taken of children with special vulnerabilities who may need additional support.

¹For Signs and Symptoms of each type of abuse, see Appendix 1



Making Information Available

To assist the reporting of child protection concerns, the contact details of the *Diocesan Designated Person, the H.S.E. and the Gardaí* will be made widely available at parish level. They will, for example, be displayed in clearly visible and accessible places, such as the entrance to the Church and in other relevant community buildings.

The contact details for the Parish Child Protection Representative may also be made available.

Each volunteer worker, together with the priests and the Parish Pastoral Council, will be given a copy of the Policy document and asked to read it to ensure that everyone knows the Parish Policy on Child Protection.

We recommend that all groups operating in a church setting, including visiting groups, be made aware of the policies and procedures for child protection in operation in the parish and shall be asked to confirm that they will implement these policies and procedures. Responsibility for ensuring that our Policy has the agreement of such groups will fall on the sub-group of the Parish Pastoral Council under whose care they fall.

Best Practice and Code of Behaviour when Working with Children and Young People

Code of Good Practice

All parish-based organisations or groups working with children must develop a customised Code of Good Practice that encompasses all the ethical guidelines of the Parish Child Protection Policy. The aim of this Code is to ensure the safety of children and young people, to enhance the work practices of Church personnel, and to reassure parents and guardians, as well as children themselves, that there is a commitment to best practice. It must encourage mutual respect and respond to breaches of discipline and disruptive behaviour. These codes will be ratified by the CPR.

The Code should include positive child-centred statements about the importance of:

- Listening to children and young people
- Valuing and respecting them as individuals
- Rewarding their efforts as well as achievements
- Involving them in decision making (where appropriate);
- Encouraging and praising them.

Prior to commencing work with children

- All workers must complete and sign the appropriate volunteer forms prior to commencing work with children.
- Every person appointed to a role or responsibility with children will be briefed on the contents of this policy document.

General Conduct in dealing with children

The following code should be observed by all personnel working with children/young people in the parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace:

- Workers should set the standard of behaviour for the group by providing an example of appropriate behaviour in dealing with children.
- Physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstances.



- Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of children can never be acceptable. Great care should be taken if it is necessary to have a conversation regarding sexual matters with a child or young person.
- Being alone with a child or young person may not always be wise or appropriate practice. If a situation arises where it is necessary to be alone with a child, another responsible adult should be informed immediately, by telephone if necessary. A diary note that the meeting with the young person took place, including the reasons for it, should be made.
- Best practice in relation to travel with children and young people should be observed. Personnel should not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a child or young person. If, in certain circumstances, only one adult is available, there be a minimum of two children or young people present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, a record of this should be made and the child's parent or guardian should be informed as soon as possible.
- Children and young people should not be permitted to work or remain in churches, parish property or schools unless there are at least two adults present.
- All children and young people must be treated with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable.
- Personnel should not engage in or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying or abusive.
- A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular child or group of children.
- Under no circumstances should Church personnel give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.
- Alcohol, tobacco or drugs must not be used by personnel who are supervising or working with children or young people.
- Only age-appropriate language, material on media products (such as camera phones, internet, video) and activities should be used when working with children and young people. Sexually explicit or pornographic material is never acceptable.

Respect for Physical Integrity

- The physical integrity of children and young people must be respected at all times.
- Personnel must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind – including tough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling). This should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a child (for example, where a child is distressed).

Respect for Privacy

- The right to privacy of children and young people must be respected 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.
- A clear policy should be agreed with parents/guardians on the taking of photographs and making of video recordings of children involved in church related activities. Children's names and photos must never be displayed together without parental consent. Photographs of children or young people must never be taken while they are in changing areas (for example, in a locker room or bathing facility).



- Tasks of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) should not be done for children or young people if they can undertake these tasks themselves.

Meetings with Children and Young People

- If the pastoral care of a child or young person necessitates meeting alone with them, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment. The times and designated locations for meetings should allow for transparency and accountability (for example, be held in rooms with a clear glass panel or window, in buildings where other people are present, and with the door of the room left open).
- Both the length and number of meetings should be limited.
- Parents or guardians should be informed that the meeting(s) took place, except in circumstances where to do so might place the child in danger.
- Visits to the home or private living quarters of Church personnel should not be encouraged, nor should meetings be conducted in such locations.
- When the need for a visit to the home of a child or young person arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.

Children with Special Needs or Disabilities

- Child with special needs or disability may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, and so sensitivity and clear communication are particularly important.
- Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child with special needs, this should be done with the full understanding and consent of parents or guardians.
- In carrying out such personal care tasks, sensitivity must be shown to the child and the tasks should be undertaken with the utmost discretion.
- Any care task of a personal nature which a child or young person can do for themselves should not be undertaken by a worker.
- In an emergency situation where this type of help is required, parents should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

Vulnerable Children and Adults

- Since especially vulnerable children may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance.
- Workers should be aware that vulnerable children may be more likely than other children to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.
- It is particularly important that vulnerable children should be carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty in expressing their concerns and in order that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.

Trips away from Home

- All trips, including day trips, overnight stays and holidays, need careful advance planning, including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance must be in place.
- Written consent from a parent or guardian specifically for each trip and related activities must be obtained well in advance.



- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers must be made available to parents and guardians.
- There must be adequate, sex-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.
- Particular attention should be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.
- The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements should be ensured in advance of the trip.
- Sleeping areas for boys and girls should be separate and supervised by two adults of the same sex as the group being supervised.
- At least two adults should be present in dormitories in which children or young people are sleeping. Under no circumstances should an adult share a bedroom with a young person.
- If, in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be in a children's dormitory or bedroom without another adult being present they should
 - (a) immediately inform another adult in a position of responsibility and
 - (b) make a diary note of the circumstances.



BEST PRACTICE PROCEDURES

In order to implement the Parish Policy the parish will put the following procedures in place:

1. Parental Consent

Ensure that a signed consent form from parents or guardians is obtained prior to the participation of children and young people in events, activities and groups.

2. Responsibility of Parents and Guardians

Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish takes very seriously its responsibilities and obligations with regard to ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, the safety and security of all children and young people participating in Parish activities.

Notwithstanding this, succeeding in this goal requires the partnership of the Parish (through its priests, religious, employees and volunteers) and the parents/guardians of the children and young people working together to live up to our individual responsibilities.

Thus, whereas the Parish will make every possible effort to ensure the safety and security of children and young people, parents and guardians must similarly accept and discharge their responsibilities both to their children and young people and to the Parish at large.

3. Record Keeping

- Parental consent will be obtained for participation in all parish based youth activities.
- It is advisable to keep a record of all adults present at any parish organized youth activity.
- Accident/incident forms will be maintained.
- Volunteer application/declaration forms will be used in the selection process for all workers.

4. Dealing with a Disclosure by a Child or Young Person

Where a child or young person disclose abuse to an adult, the following guidelines should be followed. Whenever possible a second adult should be present.

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked.
- Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosure can be very difficult for the child.
- Remember the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child has to say. Do not pressurise the child. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in his or her own words.



- Be careful when asking questions. Avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else could have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate a later official investigation.
- Assure the child that you believe him or her. Remember, false disclosures are very rare.
- Do not promise to keep secrets. At the earliest opportunity tell the child that you acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you and that there are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further ongoing hurt. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything or indeed anything, there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the child will return to you at another time. Do not make a promise to a child that cannot be kept.
- It is important that the adult differentiates in his/her own mind between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child, quite possibly, may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to him/her.
- It is important to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards, the alleged perpetrator, while talking with the child.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what she/he has disclosed.

4. Reporting Procedure in respect of a Child or Young Person

Every adult working with children and who suspects that a child participating in a Parish activity has been *must*:

- Immediately contact the Parish CPR to report concerns/suspicious.
- Keep concerns/suspicious confidential

If a child has disclosed an allegation to an adult, then that adult must record in writing on the incident/accident form what the child has said, including insofar as is possible, the exact words utilised by the child.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be in immediate and serious risk, the volunteer or Parish CPR will contact the Duty Social Worker of the Health Services Executive or An Garda Síochána.

Under no circumstances will a child be left in a dangerous situation without intervention.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. The confidentiality of the child and family should be respected with due regard to the Department of Health Guidelines "Children First" which state that "giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality".



RECRUITMENT & TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

‘Safe practice starts with safe recruitment procedures’. Most people who apply to work with children and young people in the Church are well-motivated and potentially suitable for the various tasks involved. It is most important, however, that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that this is, in fact, the case. As well as enhancing the prospects of identifying the best person for the post, rigorous recruitment procedures can act as a deterrent to unsuitable applicants.

KEY ISSUES IN RECRUITMENT PROCESSES

The safety of recruitment processes can also be enhanced by ensuring that due attention is paid to the key issues outlined below.

- **CLEAR DEFINITION OF ROLE**
- **WRITTEN APPLICATION**
- **INTERVIEWS**
- **DECLARATIONS**
All workers must sign the ‘*Declaration from all staff and volunteers working with children*’
- **REFERENCES**
The parish CPR will check the referees’ names. If there is any doubt as to a person’s suitability the CPR will consult appropriately.
- **GARDA VETTING**
All personnel must sign a ‘Garda Vetting Invitation Form’ which will then be submitted to the Garda Vetting Coordinator for the Archdiocese.



APPENDIX 1: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

Signs and Symptoms of Emotional Child Abuse

- Rejection
- Lack of praise or encouragement
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation
- Lack of continuity of continuity of care
- Serious over-protectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment
- Family conflicts and/or violence
- Inappropriate expectations of a child's behaviour – relative to his or her age and stage of development
- Every child who is abused sexually or physically is also emotionally abused

Signs and Symptoms of Physical Abuse

- Bruises
- Fractures
- Swollen joints
- Burns or scalds
- Abrasions or lacerations
- Haemorrhages
- Damage to body organs
- Poisonings – repeated
- Failure to thrive
- Coma or unconsciousness
- Death

Signs & Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse

- Bleeding from vagina or anus
- Difficulty or pain in passing urine or faeces
- An infection may occur secondary to sexual abuse, which may or may not be a definitive sexually transmitted disease. Professionals should be informed if a child has a persistent vaginal discharge or has warts or a rash in the genital area.
- Noticeable and uncharacteristic change or behaviour
- Hints about sexual activity
- Age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behaviour
- Inappropriate seductive behaviour
- Sexually aggressive behaviour with others uncharacteristic sexual play with peers or with toys
- Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities which involve undressing, for example, games or swimming



Particular behavioural signs and emotional problems suggestive of child abuse in young children (0-10)

- Mood change, for example acting out or the child becomes fearful or withdrawn
- Lack of concentration (change in school performance)
- Bed wetting, soiling
- Psychosomatic complaints: pains, headaches
- Skin disorders
- Nightmares, change in sleep patterns
- School refusal
- Separation anxiety
- Loss of appetite
- Isolation

Particular behavioural signs and emotional problems suggestive of child abuse in older children (over 10)

- Mood change, for example, depression, failure to communicate
- Running away
- Drug, alcohol, or solvent abuse
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide attempts
- Delinquency
- Truancy
- Eating disorders
- Isolation

Signs and Symptoms of Child Neglect

- Abandonment or desertion
- Children persistently left alone without adequate care and supervision.
- Malnourishment, lacking food, inappropriate food or erratic feeding.
- Lack of warmth
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Non-organic failure to thrive, that is, a child not gaining weight, not alone due to malnutrition but also due to emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for a child's medical problems
- Exploited, overworked



APPENDIX 2: Contact Personnel

DUBLIN ARCHDIOCESE

- **Diocesan Child Safeguarding & Protection Service (CSC)**
Holy Cross Diocesan Centre, Clonliffe College, Dublin 3
Web: <http://csps.dublindioocese.ie/>
- **Designated Liaison Person:**
Andrew Fagan (Director) Tel: 01-836 0314 (Mon-Fri: 09.00—17.00)
- **Deputy Designated Liaison Person:**
Ms. Julie McCullagh (Child Protection Officer)

Parish Office Number 01-269 1825

Parish Child Protection Representative:

- Catherine O’Flynn 01-269 1825
- Fiona Loxley 01-269 1825

Local Garda Siochána

- Irishtown 01-666 9600
- Donnybrook 01-666 9200

Tusla Office: Tel: 01-873 8700

Towards Healing (www.towardshealing.ie) 1800 303 416



OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE PARISH
MERRION ROAD, DUBLIN 4, D04 X2W6
TEL: 01-269 1825



Appendix 3: Declaration from all Staff and Volunteers Working with Children



Confidential

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel. No. (Daytime) _____ (Evening) _____

Occupation: _____

Please give details of any previous training/ experience/involvement with young people:



Please supply the names, addresses, telephone number and position of two people (non relatives) that you know well and who can supply us with a reference:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

Tel No: _____

Position: _____

Position: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or of a Bound Over Order?

Yes _____

No _____

If yes please state nature and dates of offences:

Nature of offence

Date of offence

I declare that nothing in my personal or professional background deems me unsuitable for working with children. I will abide by the Parish Child Protection Policy.

Signed: _____

Date _____

FOR PARISH USE ONLY

Checked by

Phone

Visit

Letter

Checked by: _____

Date: _____



OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE PARISH
MERRION ROAD, DUBLIN 4, D04 X2W6
TEL: 01-269 1825



APPENDIX 4: Parental Consent Form

Proposed activity: _____

Coordinator: _____

Contact Number: _____

Name of young person: _____

Name of Parent/guardian: _____

Address: _____

Tel. No. (*Daytime*) _____ (*Evening*) _____

Email: _____

Relevant information (e.g. medical conditions, special needs, dietary requirements)

I have read and understand the activity outline accompanying this parental consent form. I am satisfied that I have been sufficiently informed about the activity, that I have sufficient contact details. I agree to allow the young person named above to take part in the outlined activity.

I am aware that Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish has developed a Child Protection Policy and that it is committed to ensure the safety of children.

I confirm that all details are correct to the best of my knowledge and I am able to give parental consent for my child to participate in the proposed activity:

Signature of parent or guardian: _____

Name in Block Capitals _____

Relationship to young person: _____ *Date:* _____



APPENDIX 5: Accident/Incident Report Form

Date and Time of Incident:

Where incident occurred:

Child/ren

Address

Parents/Guardians

When and to whom incident was reported:

Adults in charge when incident occurred:



Details of Incident:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Signed: _____ Date: ___/___/_____

<i>For office use only</i>		
Parents informed?	Yes/No	Other action Taken:
Parish Child Representative informed?	Yes/No	
Designated person informed?	Yes/No	
Parish Priest informed?	Yes/No	