**NATIONAL POLICIES ON CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

**1.** **Statement of Principles**

Everyone in the Church has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of those who worship in our Church or who join us for any activity facilitated by Church members.

**The Purpose of the Safe Environment Procedures**

When Church activities are organised well, with regard for the safety and wellbeing of all, we reduce the risk of avoidable harm

Church activities may take place on church premises or in various other environments such as residential events, home visiting or trips out.

The procedures are not exhaustive.

**2.** **Safer Recruitment**

This is covered separately in the safer recruitment policy. It is not easy to identify those who are likely to abuse children, young people or vulnerable adults. Any procedure that helps to clarify details of a person's background and experience can help with identification and can raise awareness levels in the organisation generally.

**3.** **Good Relationships**

Children and adults should always be treated with respect and consideration. Those working in ministry with the young and the vulnerable should portray at all times a positive role model by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, courtesy, tact and maturity.

**Physical Contact – Respectful Touch**

Appropriate affection between adults and between adults and children is important for development, in the case of children, as well as being a positive part of ministry.

Touching is an essential part of life and necessary for:

* Basic care;
* Showing love and reassurance;
* Praise and communication.

It should be safe, appropriate and not overdone. It should be remembered that touch can be perceived as a sign of warmth and friendliness or as a sign of dominance.

Touch should always be related to the recipient in terms of:

* Their needs at the time;
* Limited duration;
* Appropriateness given age, stage of development, gender, disability and culture.

All people have the right to decide how much or how little physical contact they have with others. Except in exceptional circumstances, such as when they are in need of immediate medical attention

Good practice guidance:

* It may be appropriate to hold and comfort a distressed child but be aware how this contact may be interpreted by the child;
* Everything should be in public. A hug or a touch in a group or openly, visible to others is very different from that done behind closed doors or in an unobservable place;
* Physical contact is an essential element of some ministries (sports, music, dance etc). All those involved in such ministries should practice safe touch, asking permission, explaining and defining the reason for the physical contact.
* When ground rules for activities or events are being discussed, event leaders or those supervising activities should introduce the idea of safe touch;
* Providing care for those with additional needs or disabilities may require levels of physical contact. In some circumstances consultation with the individual, their parents, carers etc is essential to fully understand the requirements and abilities of the person being cared for;
* Children and adults with additional needs, may require higher levels of personal support in such areas as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding and mobility. Special arrangements may have to be made in these circumstances and agreed and supported by the individual, their parents, carers, care workers etc;
As far as possible support the person in their own care. Always avoid doing things for them if they are able to do it alone or for themselves. If they are able to help, this should be encouraged. Where the person is dependent upon your help, try and offer choices;
* In a group, team members, as part of good practice, should monitor one another in relation to physical contact. They should be able to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misunderstood or uncomfortable for a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
* If an adult engages in inappropriate touch with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, this must be challenged. If there are any concerns about an adult’s contact then this must be reported to the Safeguarding Representative or Safeguarding Office for advice.

**Managing Challenging Behaviour**

Children, young people and vulnerable adults need to feel safe and be prevented from harming themselves or others, or getting into situations where this may happen.

**Good Practice**

* Event/activity leaders set and maintain safe, consistent and understandable boundaries;
* Expectations regarding behaviour are explained, discussed and negotiated between leaders and participants to develop an ethos of care and control within activities;
* Each individual’s circumstances are taken into account in deciding measures to be taken in responding to them in relation to what is appropriate touch and any physical restraint;
* Positive behaviour will be rewarded.

**Sanctions**

Sanctions must always be the final resort after instruction and problem solving.

**Under no circumstances is physical chastisement acceptable.**

**Anti-Bullying**

**Objectives of This Policy**

* Bullying will not be tolerated;
* All adults involved in the activity/event as well as children and young people should have an understanding of what bullying is;
* Children, young people and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

**Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children and young people so they can develop in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parish/group (name activity). If bullying does occur, all children and young people should be able to tell and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the group leaders.

Bullying can be:

* Emotional: (being unfriendly);
* Physical: (pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use or threat of violence including via emails or text messaging);
* Racist: (racial taunts, graffiti, gestures);
* Sexual: (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments);
* Homophobic (because of, or focusing on the issue of sexual orientation);
* Verbal (name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing including via emails or text messaging);
* Related to a person's impairment or disability may include name calling or ridiculing;
* Directed at an adult as well as a child or young person.

**Prevention**

Strategies can be adopted to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

* Writing a set of group rules;
* Signing a behaviour contract;
* Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying;
* Reading stories about bullying or having them read to the group;
* Making up role-plays;
* Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

**Procedures**

1. Report bullying to staff, event or activity leaders or organisers as appropriate;
2. In cases of serious or persistent bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff, event or activity leaders or organisers;
3. In serious or persistent cases parents will be informed and asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem;
4. If it is thought that an offence has been committed, contact the police;
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and all bullying stopped quickly;
6. An attempt will be made to help the bullies change their behaviour.

**Outcomes**

1. Wherever possible, the children/young people will be reconciled;
2. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place;
3. After the incident/incidents have been investigated parents/carers should be informed of the action taken;
4. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.

**Do’s & Don’ts**

**You must:**

* Operate within the Church's principles and guidance and any particular procedures of the Diocese, Religious Congregation, Parish or Club;
* Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults equally and with respect;
* Engage and interact appropriately with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
* Respect a child, young person's or vulnerable adult’s right to personal privacy;
* Challenge unacceptable behaviour and provide an example of good conduct you wish others to follow - an environment which allows bullying, inappropriate shouting or any form of discrimination is unacceptable;
* Recognise that particular care is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children, young people and vulnerable adults e.g. maintain appropriate boundaries;
* Avoid situations that compromise your relationship with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust. This rule should apply to all such behaviours including those which would not constitute an illegal act.

**You must not:**

* Discuss topics or use vocabulary with children, young people and vulnerable adults which could not be used comfortably in the presence of parents or another adult;
* Arrange an overnight trip with a child, young person or vulnerable adult without ensuring that another approved person will be present and parental consent has been given;
* Take a chance when common sense suggests another more prudent approach;
* Physically, emotionally or sexually abuse, maltreat or exploit any child, young person or vulnerable adult.

**4.** **Parish Activities**

Every parish has a responsibility to make their premises as safe and secure an environment as is possible, while making the best use of it. All risks cannot be removed, and users should be expected to behave responsibly, according to age and ability.

**Purpose, Policy and Procedure**

The government health and safety legislation applies to church premises because they are classed as public places. The same principles apply to other types of church setting, such as religious houses, convents, monasteries; pastoral centres and retreat houses.

**Making ‘Safe Places’**

Risk Assessments are an integral part of creating ‘Safe Places.

 Consider appointing a volunteer who is willing to oversee health and safety within the Church and premises (it is advisable to seek health and safety accreditation for the volunteer).

**Health and Safety**

The named person responsible for the activity/event must ensure that:

1. The premises are appropriate for the event;
2. A risk assessment is undertaken
3. Fire evacuation procedures are explained at the start of the event. Appropriate signage should be in place. If possible, walk through the escape route with those present;
4. For residential outings ensure that all children, young people and vulnerable adults are briefed on arrival as to what to do in the event of a fire including assembly point;
5. Ensure all children, young people and vulnerable adults are aware of who to contact in an emergency;
6. Leaders should have access to a full list of all those attending the activity/event in case a roll call is required;
7. There should be a designated leader who will oversee health and safety issues. This person must:
	1. Be familiar with the requirements of health and safety;
	2. Brief all leaders prior to the activity/event;
	3. Ensure leaders complete regular head counts;
	4. In the event of an accident or incident, ensure that an incident report form is completed within 24 hours by the relevant person(s).

General expectations of behaviour should be explained at the start of the event [1].

**During the Event**

The person responsible for the activity/event should monitor risks throughout the event and take appropriate action if necessary.

The leader should:

1. Introduce themselves to the children, young people and vulnerable adults present.
2. Ensure that no unauthorised person can gain access to the activity/event.
3. Ensure that arrangements for “dropping off” and “collecting” children, young people and vulnerable adults are adhered to.
4. Allow no child, young person or vulnerable adult to leave with someone unknown to the leaders.

**Good Practice**

Creating a ‘Safe Place’ is always unique to a particular environment; however the following procedures are examples of good practice.

* Where a presbytery is used for parish activities and as a private residence, the two functions should be kept separate;
* Any meeting with children, young people or vulnerable adults should take place in an area which is either visually accessible or is frequented by other people. At least two authorised adults should be present. For specific guidance relating to the Sacrament of Reconciliation see Link to Sacrament of Reconciliation;
* Activities should only take place in premises which are suitable for those activities;
* Premises (and fire fighting equipment) should be regularly inspected to assess their condition and suitability, and necessary maintenance carried out. Fire fighting equipment should be in plain sight, readily accessible and clearly labelled;
* Areas must be kept tidy. Any equipment used by a particular group should be stored away neatly or kept in a safe place when the premises are not being used by that group;
* A first aid kit fully stocked for use in public places must be available, and its whereabouts must be clearly labelled;
* Emergency exits should be clearly marked.

**Accessibility -** Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably because they are disabled, even if this is unintentional. Therefore accessibility potentially impacts upon every activity within the church; it is a legal requirement to ensure every person has safe and easy access to every service.

**Accessibility in Practice**

The following examples highlight general adjustments that can be made to aid access to services.

* Priority seating for wheelchair users and their helper/buggies;
* Wider benches, without kneeler for those who have difficulty moving but do not require a wheel chair;
* Alternate media for mass booklets/newsletters. i.e. Braille. Or providing alternate copies with a larger print size. Providing clearer signage, notices, posters etc. for people with impaired vision;
* Ensuring that there are accessible toilets;
* Providing signed masses or a sign language interpreter at services;
* Installing a ‘T-loop’ for people who are hearing impaired;
* Installing ramps in areas with steps, i.e. altar;
* Providing disability awareness training.

Accessibility is not just about physical access; it also applies to accessing all aspects of a service, for example if a church volunteer group operates a website and one of its members has a visual impairment then reasonable adjustment should be made to the website. Similarly, if the parish has a website it should be accessible to all allowing for adjustments to contrast, size of print or offer an audible alternative.

**Equipment**

**Principle**

To ensure that measures are in place, for the safe use of equipment, to aid and protect church users.

**Purpose, Policy and Procedure**

The following are examples of the procedures that should be adhered to with regard to any equipment. (This list is not exhaustive).

1. Electrical safety – portable appliance testing (PAT) must take place yearly by an approved individual;
2. Documented evidence of these dates and indications for re-wiring in place;
3. Adequate training for individuals who use this equipment, with a log of who facilitated the training and when it took place.

Fire safety - Ensure that a fire risk assessment is completed to highlight potential problems.

1. Ensure that equipment to help combat a fire is visible;
2. Ensure that the church users are aware of the fire procedures. For example, just before a service begins;
3. Exits and fire exits are clearly identified;
4. Fire alarms and detectors are in place;
5. Emergency lighting is in place, in case the lighting goes off;
6. Lights are flashed for the deaf, so that they are aware that there is a problem;
7. Fire doors have a specific noise so that blind people can identify which way to go;
8. Candles are placed in safe places, so as to prevent them from being knocked over.

**Supervision and Ratios**

It is important to have an appropriate ratio of adult volunteers to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The factors to consider are:

1. Age and gender of group members;
2. Children with special needs;
3. First aid cover;
4. Nature of the activity;
5. Accommodation arrangements.

There must always be a minimum of two adults linked to every group for all activities or events.

A general guide for minimum supervision ratios provided by the DfE is:

1. One adult leader for every 3 children under 5;
2. One adult leader for every 6 children under 8;
3. One adult leader for every 10-15 children aged 8-11;
4. One adult leader for every 15-20 children aged over 11.

Supervision ratios for vulnerable adults should be based on the assessment of need. For example if vulnerable adults are infirm or wheelchair bound, the ratio should be a minimum of one to one.

Young people under eighteen are welcome and encouraged to assist with outings or activities; their involvement must be monitored so that they do not have the responsibility of a group leader or are used to meet the supervision criteria above.

**First Aid**

The activity/event must have a designated and qualified first aid leader who will possess a current certificate of competence to oversee medical issues. Prior to leaving for the outing, the first aid leader must familiarise themselves with the medical information contained in the participants’ consent forms, and meet with all children, young people and vulnerable adults who have brought prescribed medication with them. The first aid leader will take possession of all medication, recording the times it is to be taken and making the necessary arrangements for it to be administered. Children, young people and vulnerable adults are not permitted to keep or carry medication, except for inhalers and epipens – reserves of these medications should be held by the first aid leader. All medicines must be kept in a secure locked cabinet. The first aid leader must maintain a record of all medicines issued.

A first aid kit and medical details should be accessible to the leaders at all times. The Health and Safety Executive recommends the following minimum contents for a first-aid box where no special risk has been identified.

1. A leaflet giving general advice on first aid;
2. 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings;
3. Two sterile eye pads;
4. One large sterile un-medicated wound dressing (approximately 18cm x 18cm);
5. Two triangular bandages;
6. Two safety pins;
7. Individually wrapped moist cleaning wipes;
8. A packet of disposable gloves;
9. A resusciade (for hygienic mouth to mouth resuscitation) would also be useful.

**Visitors to Parish Centre, Hall or Grounds**

Whenever there are non-parish activities involving children and young people on church premises, the Safeguarding Representative must be informed.

1. Where a non-parish group uses church premises on a regular basis:

a. The Parish Administrator or Safeguarding Representative must ensure that the group has a Safeguarding Policy in place, including proper recruitment procedures for their leaders and helpers and that references and DBS checks have been obtained;

b. Evidence of this must be provided and continued use of the premises is subject to this condition.

When any adult (e.g. children’s entertainer) has contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults during a single event organised by the parish:

a. The Parish Administrator or Safeguarding Representative must ensure that the person responsible for the event manages the situation so that the adult does not have unsupervised contact with children/young people or vulnerable adults;

b. The adult must adhere to the Code of Conduct provided to them.

 3. If church premises are used on a casual basis for non-parish events that include children, young people or vulnerable adults (e.g. parties), a written agreement is required that states:

 a. It is a private booking;

 b. The adults/parents organising the event will exercise a supervisory function and are responsible for safeguarding the children/young people who attend.

**5.** **Trips Out**

**Brief Scope**

This provides guidance and advice for the benefit of parish groups and Church organisations in the planning of outings, day outings and residential events. Examples include:

* Outing to the cinema;
* Day trip to the seaside;
* Youth residential and holidays;
* Children's camps;
* Retreats;
* Pilgrimages.

**Purpose, Policy and Procedure**

The following section should be consulted before organising any outings, residential events or such activities.

**Preparing for Outings / Residential Outings**

Organisation of the outing / residential trip can be shared amongst a small group of people; however one person, the group leader, should have overall responsibility for the planning, supervision and conduct of the event. After due discussion and consultation with other team members, the group leader is responsible for ensuring that all reasonable preparation has been made for the event, and must:

1. Ensure that appropriate approval is obtained and a consent form is completed (see diocesan website) with the Parish Priest or leader of organisation;
2. Ensure that all leaders for the event have been appointed in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Policies and procedures and that their DBS Disclosures are valid;
3. Ensure that there is an appropriate gender balance of leaders to group members;
4. Check with the venue to ensure that their policies and procedures can be adhered to (for example, the capacity at the venue is compatible with the numbers attending);
5. Ensure that suitable insurance cover for the outing and activities (including high risk activities such as rock climbing / canoeing) are in place prior to leaving;
6. Check that the event and transport arrangements are covered by insurance. Insurance should include public liability, personal accident / injury;
7. For visits involving an overnight stay, ensure that the residential venue has a current building and fire certificate;
8. Ensure that the residential venue can meet the needs of all group members.
9. Ensure that a programme of activities is prepared prior to leaving;
10. Ensure that a risk assessment for the visit is completed and that it is brought to the attention of all leaders, who should also be made aware of their areas of responsibility. (see diocesan website)
11. All adults wishing to be involved in a residential event must have a specific role, be accountable to the event leader and should have been recruited according to the church’s policy;
12. Appoint an event co-leader of the opposite sex for co-educational outings;
13. Ensure that any instructors or workshop leaders within the group or at the event venue are suitably qualified for specialised activities;
14. Ensure that all leaders are aware of the safeguarding and health and safety procedures relevant to the event;
15. Ensure that one leader is trained in first aid;
16. Ensure regular and ongoing discussion and consultation takes place with other team leaders;
17. Draw up rotas to ensure that sufficient leaders are available so that participants are adequately supervised at all times.
18. Ensure that all children, young people & vulnerable adults contact details are available in case of emergency. Details should be kept securely;
19. Ensure that the person with parental / carer responsibility is informed of the date and time of the event and is given a contact number and address of the event venue;
20. Ensure a system of liaison between the event leader parents / carers;
21. Ensure that the person with parental / carer responsibility understands the arrangements for collecting the children, young people and vulnerable adults at the end of the event;
22. Brief the children/young people & vulnerable adults at the start of the event and wherever possible involve them in setting any general behavioural guidelines;
23. Be aware that although mobile phones are useful means of communication, the signal cannot always be relied upon. This should be taken into account when conducting a risk assessment;
24. The event leader must ensure that all risk assessments and consent forms travel with the group;
25. Call a post-event evaluation meeting within two months of the event, compile a report on the event and make recommendations to aid learning and development.

**Specialist Activities**

Specialist activities (e.g. abseiling, swimming, canoeing etc.) must always take place under the supervision of suitably qualified staff and explored in the risk assessment. The provider is responsible for the safe running of an activity whilst the group leader and other activity leaders retain responsibility for the children, young people and vulnerable adults at all times during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff.

**Overnight Arrangements**

Having a suitable ratio of adult leaders is essential in ensuring that appropriate and safe levels of supervision are maintained. Factors to take into consideration in the assessment will include:

* Gender, age and ability of group;
* Additional support or medical needs;
* Nature of activities;
* Experience of adults in off-site supervision;
* Duration and nature of the experience;
* Type of any accommodation;
* Competence of staff;
* Requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
* Competence and behaviour of participants.

The following guidelines apply to residential outings at night-time, once the children, young people and vulnerable adults have gone to bed:

1. Accommodation must be gender specific and careful consideration should be given when allocating;
2. The adults supervising the children, young people and vulnerable adults must reflect the gender of the group;
3. Principles of good practice apply to evening and night time supervision. For this reason, any monitoring arrangement must always involve two adults and no adult should be alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
4. It is unacceptable that one leader shares a bedroom with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Children and young people may be allocated bedrooms together. This includes year 13 pupils who have passed their 18th birthday. However, it is advisable to group children together within a similar age range. Also, in the case of a child with a profound disability or a specific medical condition, whose parents think that it is necessary for one leader to share with the child in a twin room, special care must be taken. Those with parental responsibility must give specific and detailed permission for this arrangement. In addition, the matter should be referred to the activity leader and the Safeguarding Representative. In cases of any doubt the Safeguarding Representative should refer the matter to the Safeguarding Office for advice;
5. Additional leaders should be assigned to assist with supervision on the first and last night and at other times as identified in the risk assessment;
6. Leaders must ensure that they have access to any medical records and parental consent form, which should be kept securely;
7. There must always be a sufficient number of leaders on duty to supervise the activity and appropriate cover available to supervise the children, young people and vulnerable adults should the leaders on duty be called away in an emergency e.g. to take a child to hospital;
8. Alcohol can only be available to leaders off duty and only in an area designated by the leader. Only social drinking is acceptable and then in moderation. (Consider zero alcohol consumption when away with young children);
9. Leaders must only smoke in smoking areas designated by the event leader and not in the presence of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

**Recording**

A record of the trip must be maintained and is to include those present, the activities undertaken, outcomes and any other significant happenings during the event, should be kept on file.

 **6.** **Risk Assessment**

**Principle**

* Whilst it is not possible to reduce all risks when working with the young or vulnerable it is possible to do all we can to minimise the risks;
* A risk assessment is a written record of the thought processes that have been invested in the planning and preparation of any activity, whatever the perceived risks may be;
* Risk assessments should be completed well before the event/activity and should be approved by the event leader. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Safeguarding Office.

**General**

Risk assessments should:

* Identify risks and hazards both indoors and outdoors, including equipment, materials and procedures;
* Evaluate the risk or hazard and identify who might be put at risk;
* Identify the action to eliminate or minimise the risk;
* Identify the person responsible for taking that action.

The following factors should be taken into consideration:

* The nature of the event/activity taking place;
* The location, routes and modes of transport;
* The competence and experience of event leaders and helpers;
* Whether safer recruitment practice has been followed for all event leaders and helpers;
* The ratio of event/activity leaders and helpers to participants;
* The group members age, ability, fitness, temperament and the suitability of the activity;
* Any specific medical or health needs of participants;
* Any specific needs of event/activity leaders and helpers;
* Contingency and emergency planning.

Frequent visits or regularly repeated activities may not require a full, comprehensive risk assessment on each occasion.

**Specialist**

Where activities or events of a more specialist nature are being considered e.g. swimming, adventure activities, guidance should be sought form a relevant licensing authority or advisory organisation.

 **7.** **Insurance**

**Purpose, Policy and Procedure**

Key Points for Parish Activities:

* All employees and volunteers participating in the activity / event must have been subject to proper vetting, e.g. references/DBS checks (where appropriate) etc;
* Before hosting an activity, event or taking a trip etc, the parish needs to check that the activity is covered by the diocesan insurance policy;
* Standard parish activities taking place on parish property such as fetes or carol concerts should be covered, but it is always best to check;
* It will usually be a condition of the insurance policy that activities, events and outings are properly risk assessed. This should include a careful check of the location of the event ensuring any hazards are made safe and equipment is tested etc. before the event takes place and should be properly recorded;
* Parishes will certainly need to notify insurers if there will be any unusual or hazardous activities taking place, e.g. rock climbing or fairground rides, or if a trip abroad is planned, because these may require additional insurance cover;
* If a third party is providing a service at the event, e.g. catering or supplying equipment such as a bouncy castle, the parish should ask for evidence of the company’s insurance;
* When outside groups, for example a dance group, martial arts or weightwatchers etc. hire church premises they should have their own insurance cover in place. Groups should show evidence that they have their own Public Liability Insurance. A disclaimer should be provided to the lead person of the activity/event and/or a disclaimer placed in a prominent position stating that the activity/event leader/parents have responsibility for the care of and appropriate behaviour of people present;
* Premises (and fire fighting equipment) should be regularly inspected to assess their condition and suitability. Fire fighting equipment should be in plain sight, readily accessible and clearly labelled;
* Areas must be kept tidy. Any equipment used by a particular group should be stored away neatly or kept in a safe place when the premises are not being used by that group;
* A First Aid Kit fully stocked for use in Public Places must be available, and its whereabouts must be clearly labelled;
* Emergency exits should have clear signage.

 **8.** **Transport**

**Principles**

There are many occasions and events in the life of a parish, diocese or religious congregation which require the use of transport.

Any transport provided must meet the needs of all individuals or groups requiring it.

Use of transport must comply with all relevant legal requirements.

Safety must be a primary consideration.

**Accessibility**

If any individual or member of a group uses a wheelchair, the event leader must ensure that whatever transport is being used has appropriate access and securing facilities. It may be appropriate to use portable ramps.

Further information can be obtained from the [**Department for Transport, GOV.UK website**](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport).

**Licences and Permits**

The event leader is responsible for ensuring that the driver of any vehicle has the correct entitlement on their license. For drivers of minibuses entitlement can be checked by referring to the [**GOV.UK website**](https://www.gov.uk/driving-a-minibus).

The event leader must also ensure that appropriate motor insurance is in force for any vehicle being used and that the drivers conform to the motor insurer’s requirements.

**Supervision on Journeys**

To ensure the safety of all travellers it is important that appropriate levels of supervision are in place throughout any journey.

* The group leader is responsible for ensuring the group is properly supervised while travelling on whatever vehicle;
* The driver must not be responsible for supervision of children or vulnerable adults in the vehicle;
* The driver must ensure all passengers are wearing seatbelts before setting off;
* Once the journey has started the supervisor/s must ensure passengers continue to wear safety belts;
* If the driver considers the behaviour of any passenger is dangerous, he or she should stop as soon as is practicable.

**Use of Private Cars**

Many events rely on either event leaders and/or parents and volunteers using their own cars. In these circumstances it is the event leader who is responsible for passenger safety by ensuring all vehicles used are roadworthy, and that the appropriate licences and insurance covers are held. Parents and volunteers must be informed that they have a legal responsibility for the safety of children, young people or vulnerable adults in their cars.

* The driver is responsible for making sure any passengers wear their seatbelts at all times throughout the journey;
* Parental agreement should be obtained for their children to be carried in other parents/volunteers cars;
* All efforts should be made to avoid parents/volunteers transporting the young or vulnerable being in the position of being alone with them;
* Central dropping off points should be considered rather than individual home drops;
* If a situation arises where it is unavoidable for an adult to transport a single child, young person or vulnerable adult, the passenger should always travel in the back seat and the event should be reported to the event or group leader and recorded;
* If a driver is receiving mileage expenses they will need to have business insurance cover.

**Use of Own Minibus**

Some parishes, Religious Orders or Catholic Charities and organisations have their own minibuses. Where these are used they must comply with regulations about construction, fittings and seat belts for all passengers.

The relevant regulations are the minibus (Conditions of Fitness Equipment and Use) Regulations 1977 and the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986/51 and 1986/1098 schedule 6.

Further information can be obtained at the [**Department for Transport, GOV.UK website**](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport).

**Hiring Vehicles**

Where it is necessary to hire vehicles, it is the event leader’s responsibility to ensure that coaches or buses are hired from a reputable company. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed.

* The event leader must check that the operator has the appropriate Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operator’s licence;
* The event leader must ensure appropriate seat belts are available for all passengers;
* Buses, where seat belts are not legally required, are not appropriate for long journeys.

Further information can be obtained at the [**Department for Transport, GOV.UK website**](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport).

 **9.** **Health Matters**

**Managing Medication**

A large proportion of the population take regular medication and most of them do not require assistance in administering it to themselves. However in the case of children, or adults with reduced capacity, when the parent/guardian or carer is not going to be present, the organisers will assume a role of supervision. They should consult with the parents or regular carers in order to understand the medication requirements of the individuals. The organisers will also have to ensure that the medication is stored securely and that any emergency drugs - such as the “EpiPen”- are always available.

 **10.** **IT/Communication Technology/Photography**

**Principle**

The internet, mobile phones, social networking and other interactive services have transformed the way in which we live. The new technologies offer tremendous opportunities to reach, communicate, evangelise and engage with those involved in the Catholic Church including clergy, parishioners and those in our communities who may have an interest in the church.

The Catholic Church in England and Wales is keen to promote the safe, and responsible, use of communication and interactive communication technologies within all church activities.

These guidelines seek to ensure the message of safe and responsible use of communication and interactive technologies is understood and guidelines are followed within the Catholic Church.

**Photography**

As an aspect both of celebration of faith, of personal achievement and evangelisation it has long been common practice to take and display photographs of children and young people on notice boards, websites and in Diocesan newsletters and newspapers.

We know that the overwhelming majority of images taken are entirely appropriate and are taken in good faith. There are also opportunities however to distort the original intention behind taking such photographs. It is important for this reason to consider potential risks such as:

* The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use on child abuse website on the internet;
* The identification of children when a photograph is accompanied by significant personal information that will assist a third party in identifying the child. This can lead, and has led, to children being ‘groomed.’

In addition under the Data Protection Act 1998 photographs constitute ‘personal data’ and where it is possible to infer a person’s religious beliefs from that photograph, constitute ‘sensitive personal date.’

In view of that the following guidelines should be followed.

**DO**

* Ensure you have parental consent to use photographic images of a child or young person if it is to be used in the public domain e.g. parish noticeboard, websites, newsletters or papers.
* Where possible focus on the activity rather than the individual.
* Ensure that all featured in photographs are appropriately dressed.
* Be general in labelling photographs e.g. Communion Group 2013 rather than naming or tagging each child. A list of names may always be provided separately.
* When commissioning photographers ensure they are clear about what is expected by establishing who will hold the recorded images, what they will be used for, where they will be displayed.

**DON’T**

* Publish or display photographs with the full name of a person or person’s featured unless you have written consent to do so and have informed parents as to how the image will be used;
* Use an image for something other than which you have obtained permission e.g. publish in a Diocesan or local newspaper when initially intended for parish noticeboard.

**Establishing a Website**

Websites or social networking profile pages are the centrepiece of any social media activity. The following are recommended guidelines for the establishment of a site. These can apply to a profile or fan page on social networking sites such as Facebook, a blog, a Twitter account, etc.

* Site administrators should be adults;
* There should be at least two site administrators (preferably more) for each site, to allow rapid response and continuous monitoring of the site;
* Do not use personal sites for diocesan or parish programs. Create separate sites for these;
* Passwords and names of sites should be registered in a central location, and more than one adult should have access to this information;
* Be sure those establishing a site know these key rules:
	1. Abide by Diocesan/parish guidelines;
	2. Appreciate that even personal communication by church personnel reflects the Church. Practice what you preach;
	3. Write in the first person. Do not claim to represent the official position of the organisation or the teachings of the Church, unless authorised to do so;
	4. Identify yourself. Do not use pseudonyms or the name of the parish, program, etc., as your identity, unless authorised to do so;
	5. Abide by copyright;
	6. Do not divulge confidential information about others. Nothing posted on the Internet is private;
	7. Don’t cite others, post photos or videos of them, link to their material, etc. without their permission. Once posted material often becomes property of the site;
	8. Practice Catholic teaching and morals;
	9. Consider adding the Click CEOP Help button [2].

**Social Networking Sites**

Alongside the very beneficial aspects of modern communication technologies we have to recognise that there are also increased risks to children and young people. We must take all reasonable steps to appropriately manage these risks.

If a group, parish or other body decides that the most effective way of communicating to children or young people is via a social networking site them it is advisable to set up an account in the name of that group, parish or body. It should also be made explicit as to how that site should be used and for what purpose.

The following is best practice in relation to social networking.

**DO**

* Ensure all the privacy settings are located so that pages are only used for their intended purpose and not for meeting, sharing personal details or having private conversations;
* Nominate a named individual to monitor the networking page regularly and report on any content that causes concern and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately;
* Make sure that this person is known to all parties using the social network and how they may be contacted in order to pass on any concern;
* Obtain parental consent before access is provided to any child or young person;
* Keep a record of any inappropriate, threatening or offensive material and report to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

**DON’T**

* Accept as a friend any child or young person on social networking sites set up within the Church;
* Share your own personal details or social networking sites with any child or young person;
* Make contact with children or young people known through a Church social networking site outside the context of Church ministry or other social networking sites;
* Use internet or web based communication to send personal message not related to Church ministry to a child or young person;
* Engage in any personal communications, ‘banter’ or comments.

**Using Texts and Emails with Children & Young People**

**It is strongly recommended that texting should not be considered as a method of communication between adults involved in Church ministry and children or young people.**

If texts and emails are to be used in specific circumstances then:

**DO**

* Get signed consent from parents to allow use of these methods of communication.
* Explain to parents the purpose and method of this, who may communicate with their son or daughter and what that communication is restricted to.
* Only use group texts or emails and always copy parents in.
* Ensure that all such communications are strictly about specific aspects of Church related activity, such as change of date, time or venue.

**DON’T**

* Use texts or emails for personal conversation, sending pictures or jokes or other items of a personal nature;
* Respond to emails from young people other than those directly related to Church related activity. Advise the Parish Safeguarding Representative or Safeguarding Coordinator if you receive any inappropriate texts or emails.

**Access to Computers – Children and Young People**

Where children and young people have access to computers as part of Church activities, the event leader has a duty to ensure that:

1. Measures are in place to ensure that the likelihood of children and young people accessing inappropriate materials is reduced e.g. parental controls and software to filter out internet material;
2. Children and young people are aware that their personal details e.g. last name, address, school, passwords, e-mail address and telephone numbers are private and should not be disclosed unless approval is given by the event leader.
3. Children and young people know that they should never send photographs and should be wary of chat rooms;
4. Children and young people are aware that they should advise a leader about any e-mails or anything on line that makes them feel uncomfortable or bothers them;
5. Children and young people are aware that they should advise a leader and their parent/carer of a request to meet up with someone they have met on line and not to make plans to do so without alerting an adult and never go alone to such planned meetings;
6. Children and young people are advised of a code of conduct for using chat rooms.

A sample code is **CHAT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| C | = Careful - People online might not always be who they say they are. |
| H | = Hang - Hang on to your personal information. Never give out your home address or other information. |
| A | = Arranging - Arranging to meet can be dangerous. Never arrange to meet someone unless you are sure who they are. |
| T | = Tell - Tell your friends or an adult if you find something that makes you feel uncomfortable. |

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