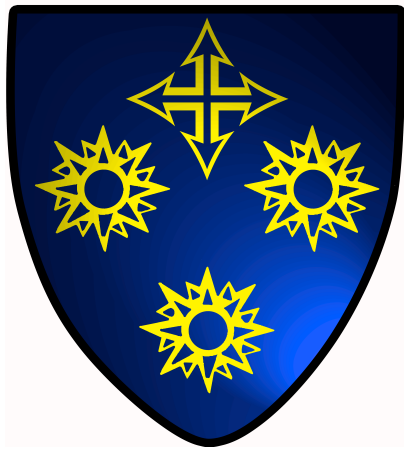


Safe Children Safe Church



*Pastoral and Procedural Policy for the
Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults*

*To be read by all Church Workers within the
Diocese of Brentwood*

Updated - 2006
Charity No. 234092

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**Bishop's House
Stock, Ingatestone
Essex CM4 9BU**

One of the most striking aspects about Our Lord's ministry was His special care for any group of people who were vulnerable.

It is very much our responsibility to ensure that our parishes are safe communities for children. This can only be achieved by raising awareness of best practice in our parish communities with regard to child protection.

It is standard practice for voluntary organisations which involve children to have established procedures to promote child protection. The Church has established comprehensive policies and procedures in such an important area.

There is a very great need for all of us who are engaged in pastoral activity involving children to implement what constitutes 'best practice' in our various ministries. These Guidelines set out our Diocesan policy and a code of best practice for those who are working with children and vulnerable adults in parish and Diocesan situations.

I am very grateful to all those who have co-operated in order to make these Guidelines possible. It is very important that all of us, priests and people, work together for the continued implementation of such procedures in order to create a safe and caring environment for all our children and young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas". The letter 'T' is stylized with a crossbar that loops back to the left. The 'h' has a curved top, and the 'o' is a simple circle. The 'm' and 'a' are also simple, and the 's' is a cursive flourish.

Bishop of Brentwood

Diocesan Officers
Diocesan Child Protection Co-Ordinator

Fr. Frank Jackson
Saint Augustine's Presbytery
Beardsley Drive
Springfield
Chelmsford CM1 6GQ
Tel: 07800 790217

Diocesan Child Protection Officer

Simon Moules
Childcare House
Little Wheatley Chase
Rayleigh
Essex SS6 9EH
Tel: 01268 784564

If you have a query or concern with regard to children or vulnerable adults then please contact one of the above on the telephone numbers provided.

This booklet was produced by the Brentwood Diocese Child Protection Commission and typeset by Fr. S. Myers. Cover image by Gunvor Edwards

Policy Statement

As Catholics we believe that human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative act of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with Him. Accordingly we recognise that each human being, irrespective of age or circumstance, should be accorded the dignity and respect due to a Child of God. The Church as a community has a duty to follow the command to love by valuing and protecting the vulnerable. Children are the most vulnerable and have the greatest entitlement to protection.

In order to assist in this the Bishop has appointed Fr. Frank Jackson as his Child Protection Co-Ordinator and Fr. Paul Fox as his Deputy to act on his behalf in these matters. Simon Moules, our Child Protection Officer, has also been appointed on a full time basis. He has experience of, and a Professional Qualification in, Social Work with children and families.

The Diocese confirms that in matters of the alleged abuse of children the 'Paramountcy Principle' will be maintained, that is, **the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in all matters concerning the protection of children.** *Legally someone is defined as a child up to his/her eighteenth birthday.*

Following an independent review, The *Nolan Report, A Programme for Action, September 2001*, sets out a series of 83 recommendations implementing child protection within the Catholic Church in England and Wales. These recommendations have largely been implemented and work continues to review existing policies and procedures.

As a Diocese, we need to be aware that children and vulnerable adults within our Parishes may be in need of support or at risk of significant harm. We must also promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in all matters concerning the protection of children.

As a Diocese, we need to be aware that children and vulnerable adults within our Parishes may be in need of support or at risk of significant harm.

A Child Protection Co-ordinator and a full time Child Protection Officer carry out child Protection work whilst providing advice and support within the Diocese.

Structure of Child Protection within the Church

Each Parish should have a Child Protection Representative who is the first point of contact for any child protection issues emanating from the Parish itself.

A Child Protection Co-ordinator and a full time Child Protection Officer carry out child protection work whilst providing advice and support within the Diocese.

A Child Protection Commission (consisting of clergy and professionals within the field of child protection) meets at least quarterly to consider all aspects of child protection and ensure that policies and procedures are being implemented.

On a National level, the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and vulnerable Adults (COPCA) has been set up to promote best practice across each of the 22 Diocese in England and Wales. COPCA provide National Policies and Procedures, monitor the implementation of the Nolan recommendations and provide advice and support.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is defined as “a child suffering, or being at risk of suffering, significant harm”. Harm is defined as meaning ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development.

The thought of children being abused is an uncomfortable and upsetting experience. However, any one of us may be confronted with a difficult situation in the future and a considered response will be of most benefit to the children concerned.

Child Abuse is difficult to define since there are many ways in which a child can be abused. This is not a new problem but we are now better informed and able to recognise and acknowledge that it happens. All children can potentially be abused.

Acknowledging national legislation and by far the most important reform of childcare law in the past 100 years, The Children Act 1989 defines child abuse as “**a child suffering, or being at risk of suffering, significant**

harm”. Harm is defined as meaning ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development.

These Guidelines are concerned with the abuse of children by people working for and on behalf of the Catholic Church. Child abuse can take many forms, but they are usually divided into four categories; Neglect, Physical, Sexual or Emotional abuse.

Whilst lists of signs and symptoms are useful indicators of possible abuse, they cannot be relied upon alone. Many injuries and behaviours can have an entirely innocent explanation. Further, one sign or symptom does not automatically suggest that abuse is happening. It is far more reliable to look for clusters of signs or a number of changes. ***Only the Statutory Agencies investigate abusive behaviour. This information is meant for an understanding and not to be used as part of an assessment of risk.***

Neglect is a persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Neglect can be difficult to determine although some possible indicators include poor growth, poor personal hygiene, constant hunger or overeating when food is available, untreated illnesses and injuries, lack of social responsiveness and frequent lateness or non-attendance at school.

Physical abuse relates to any physical injury (e.g. hitting, shaking or burning) sustained by a child and can be difficult to recognise since deliberate and accidental injury may look identical. Deliberate injury may be explained as having occurred accidentally. Physical abuse

One sign or symptom does not automatically suggest that abuse is happening. It is far more reliable to look for clusters of signs or a number of changes. Only the Statutory Agencies investigate abusive behaviour.

Physical abuse may be suspected where the nature of the injury is not consistent with the account of how it occurred.

may be suspected where the nature of the injury is not consistent with the account of how it occurred. Furthermore, there are a range of indicators which may help in deciding if an injury is accidental or inflicted deliberately.

All children incur bruising as part of play and development. However, some examples which should raise your concerns are:

Bruising to soft tissue (most accidental bruising occurs on bony parts of the body), multiple bruising, outline bruising showing hand prints or belts marks, linear bruising or fingertip bruising which may indicate grabbing or shaking.

Bite marks are crescent shaped and, if bigger than 3 cms across, may have been caused by an adult or older child. Burns are difficult to distinguish between accidental or deliberate but burns with outlines such as cigarette burns or splash marks above the main area or scald, could suggest liquid has been thrown. Broken bones may also be deliberate. Frequent breakages could indicate physical abuse.

Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child or adolescent in sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes any sexualised physical contact or non contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material.

Online abuse is becoming more prevalent. The impact of the internet and increased numbers of home computers make child abusive images a specific concern within the definition of sexual abuse. The dangers from 'chat rooms' on websites where adults may be able to 'groom' (or build up a relationship with) children is also of concern. Possession of child abusive images is a criminal offence.

Sexual abuse is more common than generally believed. Children are more likely to be sexually abused by someone they know. However, a stranger can very quickly become a friend to a child and his/her family.

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Signs of sexual abuse are not always apparent and abuse often comes to light through behavioural indicators or disclosure in later years. This is because children are likely to have been put under considerable pressure not to reveal what has happened or may feel responsible and guilty about their involvement. Some indicators of abuse include regressive behaviour (i.e. bedwetting), inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, eating problems, mood swings, running away from home or self harming.

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. This relates to children who are not usually physically hurt but who are brought up in an emotionally bruising environment. Their needs are met with hostility, rejection, indifference or verbal abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse is difficult to identify since there are no physical clues. Parental inability to meet a child's need for affection, attention and stimulation may result in some of the following behaviours: low self esteem, being anxious to please, self harm, being over ready to relate to anyone (even strangers) or being fearful and withdrawn.

Although divided into four categories for ease of description, these forms of abuse can often be found together.

If you have any concerns or suspicions regarding a child or vulnerable adult, carefully write down what is said or suspected and then consult with the Child Protection Representative in your organisation. If this is not possible, you should consult directly with the Diocesan Child Protection Co-ordinator or Child Protection Officer (contact details are on page 6 and in Appendix 'C').

Provocative behaviour by a child can never be an excuse for the development of an abusive relationship with an adult.

What is important is that we maintain the delicate balance between caution and caring relationships in our work with, and for the benefit of, young people.

Predisposing factors to sexual abuse

Children naturally seek warmth and affection from adults they trust. As they develop they become conscious of their own identity and sexuality. Behaviour perceived as provocative may be a normal part of growing up, whereas highly sexualised behaviour may be learnt or acquired through earlier abuse. Provocative behaviour by a child can never be an excuse for the development of an abusive relationship with an adult.

It is important that priests, religious, or other Church workers should not feel threatened or 'singled out' for scrutiny in matters of child abuse. Youth workers and others who have a close relationship with children will be asked to certify that they have read the Diocesan Guidelines, and people in senior and responsible positions must be prepared to give personal details for vetting. Education and Youth Services, the Caring Services under Social Services and staff of Playgroups are subject to stricter rules. All of these should be regarded as a protection rather than a threat. What is important is that we maintain the delicate balance between caution and caring relationships in our work with, and for the benefit of, young people.

If you are concerned about an adult's behaviour or have been made aware of possible abuse

- When someone discusses their suspicions or experiences it is important to remember that they are surrounded by fear and confusion. Both the person telling their story and the person receiving it will experience some of these feelings.
- ***Do not dismiss any concern.*** The Diocese of Brentwood has a Child Protection Co-Ordinator and a Child Protection Officer who are contactable for advice and support. Parishes will have a Priest and should also have a Child Protection Representative with whom you can also consult. Furthermore, Statutory Agencies

such as Schools, Police and Social Service Departments will also have qualified staff who can offer support and advice.

- You must contact the Child Protection Representative, Child Protection Co-ordinator or Child Protection Officer within 24 hours of becoming aware of any concerns.
- You must never confront or question the person against whom an allegation is made. Only Social Service Departments (SSD), Police or N.S.P.C.C. may do this, because of the requirements of the rules of evidence. Failure to comply with this instruction could lead to a potential legal case being thwarted.
- If a child wishes to disclose that he or she has been abused, listen to the child and gently ask only sufficient questions to establish clearly what has happened. Do not go into details or ask “leading questions”; write down exactly what has been said as soon as possible (and no later than 24 hours afterwards) including the date and time, and sign it. These notes should be retained. Then refer this to the relevant person (as above). **Do not investigate abuse** – only the Police, SSD or NSPCC have a legal duty to investigate. Your duty is to report abuse. Reassure the child and explain what you have to do next i.e. inform the appropriate personnel.
- If another adult informs you that a child has disclosed to him or her that he or she has been abused, advise them to write down exactly what was said immediately, including the date and time, sign it and advise them that they must refer this on to the Child Protection Representative as above. Follow up this advice with the person concerned in case they do not complete the referral and, if necessary, advise the CPO/CPC of the information you have obtained.
- If you suspect that another adult is abusing, or if you have been informed by another that they have suspi-

You must never confront or question the person against whom an allegation is made.

Write down exactly what has been said as soon as possible (and no later than 24 hours afterwards) including the date and time, and sign it.

cions of another adult abusing, share these suspicions with the Child Protection Representative in line as above. ***Do not discuss the matter with the suspected abuser.***

- If you are uncertain about what you should do or say consult either the Child Protection Representative, Police, Local Social Service department or the Diocesan Child Protection Co-ordinator or Officer. ***Doing nothing is not an option: always discuss the matter with the appropriate person.***
- If contacted by the Media, do not discuss the matter but refer the caller to the Diocesan Communications Officer, whose name and telephone number are at the back of this document in Appendix 'C'.

The Limits of Confidentiality

Do not promise confidentiality as we may never agree to keep a secret, barring the seal of the confessional. Withholding information about alleged abuse may place children or young people in danger. Such information ***must*** be shared with the competent authorities:- Social Services, Police or the Diocesan Child Protection Team, thus ensuring the safety of the child or young person.

However, shared secrets outside of the competent authorities may not only forewarn an alleged abuser but may also spread destructive and unjust rumours that damage the reputations of an unjustly alleged abuser, the person allegedly abused, who may bitterly resent it, and the informant. Anyone wanting to share information, whether it is a victim, a perpetrator or a third party, should be advised on the limits of confidentiality and that information will have to be passed on to the appropriate authorities.

An informant needs to know that the abuse will stop. This can only be ensured if the information is correctly passed on to the appropriate Statutory Authorities. Failure to do this may be a betrayal of both the children or young people and also the informant.

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Protecting vulnerable adults

A vulnerable adult is defined by COPCA as A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against “significant harm” or “exploitation.”

Vulnerable adults will usually be people who are in receipt of or in need of community care services because of physical disability, sensory disability, mental health needs or learning difficulty.

Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons’. The abuse may be single or repeated acts by individuals, groups or organisations. Abuse can occur in almost any environment and circumstance.

Types and forms of abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate infliction of pain, physical harm or injury (e.g. hitting, slapping, hair pulling or use of inappropriate sanctions).

Sexual abuse is any sexual act carried out to which a vulnerable adult has not given consent, or could not consent, or was pressurised into consenting (e.g. rape or sexual assault, sexual innuendos, sexual or suggestive language, sexual activity or viewing sexually explicit materials).

Psychological and emotional abuse is any pattern of behaviour by another person that results in the psychological harm to a vulnerable adult (e.g. threats of harm or abandonment, insults, bullying, lack of privacy, humiliation, blaming, intimidation, verbal abuse or withdrawal of services).

Financial or material abuse is the misappropriation of the funds, theft or misuse of property of a vulnerable adult (e.g. theft of property or money, embezzlement, misuse or pressure in connection with wills, property or financial transactions).

Neglect and acts of omission may be deliberate or by default where the abuser is not able to provide the care

Vulnerable adults will usually be people who are in receipt of or in need of community care services because of physical disability, sensory disability, mental health needs or learning difficulty.

Financial or material abuse is the misappropriation of the funds, theft or misuse of property of a vulnerable adult

needed and may not recognise the need for that care to be given. Indicators could be a loss in weight, persistent hunger, inappropriate dress, lack of supervision, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services or denial of religious or cultural needs.

Discriminatory abuse can occur in many ways and frequently will include a combination of forms of abuse. What differentiates it from the other categories is that the abuse is motivated by prejudice and discrimination against because he or she is perceived to belong to a specific group or groups (e.g. age, gender, race, religion, cultural background or disability).

The Catholic Church in England and Wales recognises its duty to support adults, especially those within the faith community, who are vulnerable. It recognises its responsibility to ensure that appropriate action is taken and support is provided where vulnerable adults are at risk because it believes that all people have the right to live their lives free from violence and abuse.

If you are a Church worker who becomes aware of a vulnerable adult who is being, or has been abused or you suspect is being or has been abused then the following action should be taken:

- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained an injury, contact the emergency services, Police or Ambulance, by dialling 999. Anything that may be required by the Police or forensic team (e.g. physical evidence, clothing, blood, body tissue or fluid) should not be disturbed.
- Safeguard the vulnerable adult, if this is necessary. This may include making the person comfortable or ensuring a reliable person stays with the vulnerable adult until the emergency services arrive.
- If the vulnerable adult makes the disclosure of abuse directly to you, listen carefully to what the vulnerable adult is saying. Be sensitive to the fact that the person to whom you are speaking may be from a different

If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained an injury, contact the emergency services, Police or Ambulance, by dialling 999.

cultural, religious or language background or gender from yourself.

- Make a note of the words of the vulnerable adult, recording the details as fully as possible, including the time, date and location that the disclosure was made and similarly the nature of the abuse or alleged abuse. **Do this as soon as possible after the disclosure is made.**
- Only seek clarification about the details of what has occurred. Do not prompt the person or ask leading questions. Remember that you are only receiving information that the person feels is necessary to relate to you. **You are not the investigating officer.**
- Within one hour of receiving this information, contact the person to whom you are immediately responsible for your Church related work. This will be your Parish Priest (unless the allegations involve the Priest), Child Protection Officer (Simon Moules) or Child Protection Co-ordinator (Fr. Frank Jackson).
- You may have reason to feel that an allegation is unfounded or exaggerated. However, it remains your responsibility to report the allegation or suspicion as outlined above. You should record your misgivings.

Allegations against people working within and on behalf of the Church

Where an allegation of abuse has been made against a priest or any person working within or on behalf of the Church, the Bishop, in consultation with the Diocesan Child Protection Officer and such others as he may wish, will initiate a full enquiry. This is independent of, and in addition to, any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. If the allegation concerns the Bishop or Diocesan Child Protection Officer, independent Officers from a neighbouring Diocese in liaison with the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (COPCA) will initiate a full enquiry.

Subject to consultation with the Statutory Authorities, it may prove necessary to withdraw the person against whom an allegation has been made from any contact with the children involved and possibly from contact with any children within the Church's responsibility. This removes any risk to the children, allows the investigation to proceed, and also safeguards the rights of the accused.

Where a priest or a deacon is the subject of any allegations the canonical process will begin immediately and the Bishop will consult as to where the priest or deacon is to reside pending the outcome of the investigations. He should also appoint a priest to be responsible for his pastoral care.

If a lay person who is employed by the Diocese is the subject of any allegation, they will be required to take paid leave until the investigations are complete. This is a neutral statement and does not imply guilt.

If volunteers are subject to such allegations they will be required to withdraw from work with children or young persons until the investigations are completed.

Full pastoral care must be readily available to all concerned during and after the period of investigation if necessary.

It is vitally important that parishes identify clearly those organisations which are the specific responsibility of the Church. Some Playgroups, Day Nurseries, and Youth activities simply hire the facilities of a hall. It must be made clear to the hiring groups where legal, insurance and other responsibility rests.

Parish organisations, acting on behalf of the Church, must follow the Diocesan Guidelines and are the Church's responsibility. This is important in determining legal liability in the case of litigation. The Legal, Social and Insurance implications of child protection are considerable.

Full pastoral care must be readily available to all concerned during and after the period of investigation if necessary.

Parish organisations, acting on behalf of the Church, must follow the Diocesan Guidelines and are the Church's responsibility.

Guidelines for working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

Be Caring yet Careful

Working safely with children a checklist for 'best practice'

You Must....

- Tell the truth.
- Treat all persons with respect.
- Be an example of the good conduct you wish others to follow.
- Ensure that whenever possible there is more than one adult present during activities with children and vulnerable adults, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others.
- Respect a person's right to personal privacy.
- Encourage young people and vulnerable adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like.
- Operate within the Church's principles and guidance.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions no matter how well intentioned.
- Be aware that even physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted.
- Recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or vulnerable adults.
- Any physical contact should only take place in public.
- If a child or vulnerable adult makes an allegation, contact the Child Protection Officer or Child Protection Co-ordinator immediately or the local Social Services Department if you are clear that an allegation of child abuse has been made.
- Always take whatever the child is saying seriously.
- Tell the child it is not his/her fault and it was right to tell somebody.

You Must Not.....

- Show disbelief or shock if you are informed of an abusive situation.
- Say “are you sure?” during the sharing of any information.
- Make false promises.
- Discuss the matter with anyone except the correct people in authority.
- Form your own opinions and decide to do nothing.
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour.
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or vulnerable adults.
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts.
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Rely on your good name or that of the Church to protect you.
- Believe “It could never happen to me”.
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.
- If a child or vulnerable adult makes an allegation, do not question. Remember we are there to listen not to investigate.

Checklist for Good Practice

- All volunteers and paid workers should be appointed in accordance with the Diocesan Procedures:- *Safe Children – Safe Church*.
- For events away from the Parish ensure that parents/guardians have signed a consent form giving permission for Church workers to be *in loco parentis*.
- Keep a register of up-to-date information for each child; parents'/guardians' names, address, telephone number, special medications, doctor's name, address and telephone number.

- Where minibuses and /or private cars are used ensure that there is adequate insurance and any necessary permits.
- Ensure that any premises used are safe and well maintained. Know the location of first aid kit, fire extinguishers, emergency exits and emergency telephone.
- If working away from the normal meeting place ensure that someone knows where the group is.
- Ensure and encourage all workers to be involved in regular training (including First Aid).
- Ensure that all parish computers and wireless network have proper password protection to ensure that people do not have access to the computer or Internet without proper authorisation.

Guidelines

Most workers involved with children and young people are aware of the possibility and the effects of child abuse. Most are also aware of the possibility of misinterpretation of actions, the suspicions that can arise, and the effects this can have on all concerned.

The experiences of Education and Youth Services can be of great value in formulating the guidelines and principles that we should adopt. We should be caring yet careful, leaving open the opportunity of helping the abused while reducing the possibility of erroneous suspicion or allegation. If all generously share these principles nobody need feel over-anxious or threatened.

To some, part of the following Guidelines may seem to be tainted by being ‘over-careful’ but all will be grateful that they were in place if something should go wrong. They are also a valuable protection for workers, both paid and voluntary.

- All workers with young people should be aware of the Diocesan Policy concerning the care of children and

To some, part of the following Guidelines may seem to be tainted by being ‘over-careful’ but all will be grateful that they were in place if something should go wrong.

It is important to think and plan carefully in order to avoid situations that could lead to embarrassment, suspicions or temptations.

With older children or young people some workers of the same gender should be present. Ensure that two workers or volunteers are always present.

If a worker believes they may be compromised, the incident should be recorded and reported to their supervisor, parish priest or 'Responsible Person'.

young people in their care. This includes the policy concerning child abuse. They must be prepared to provide any personal details that may be necessary.

- If you run activities for under 8's for more than 2 hours on any one day or if you run a holiday club for 6 or more days in a year, you must register the activity with the local SSD and ask for the Day Care Advisor.
- It is important to think and plan carefully in order to avoid situations that could lead to embarrassment, suspicions or temptations. An example of this is one person being alone with a young person, whether it is for counselling, driving someone home in a car, or other situations where they are in private.
- With older children or young people some workers of the same gender should be present. Ensure that two workers or volunteers are always present.
- There should be a minimum of two recognised leaders and, in groups of more than 20, there should be one additional leader for every extra 10 (or part of 10) children and young people, maintaining the balance of gender. With activities away from the home base the ratio must **never** exceed 1-7.
- Where children under 8 are concerned, there is a local authority statutory ratio of 1 to 6 which must be complied with (the recommended ratio for under 5's is 1 to 3). More specifically, for ages 0-2 years – 1 leader to 3 children, 2-3 years – 1:4, 3 – 8 years – 1:8 and over 8's 1:8 and 1 to every further 12 children.
- Leaders should think and act carefully about putting themselves into positions and situations that could lead to difficulties or embarrassment, accusations or temptation. Workers need to ensure that another adult is aware of the details of when they expect to be alone with a child. If a worker believes they may be compromised, the incident should be recorded and reported to their supervisor, Parish Priest or 'Responsible Person'.

Leaders need to remember that it is good practice to protect themselves as well as children and young people.

- Systems should be introduced to make it easy for children and young people to seek help. As part of normal practice, all children and young people should be encouraged to talk to parents, leaders and priests if there is anything worrying them. Leaders need to make it clear that this is not disloyal, but helpful, and should respond positively when this happens.
- If a child or young person discloses abuse to you, or a colleague appears to be behaving suspiciously, the guidelines for dealing with abuse must be followed. Please refer to Appendix 'C'.
- The signed consent of parents should always be obtained for activities away from the usual place of meeting. If a child or vulnerable adult needs individual attention during the activity, discuss this clearly with the parents beforehand so as to avoid any later confusion or disagreement.
- An up-to-date information and incident book should be kept. This should include a record of any incident or injury, the names, addresses, and contact telephone numbers, details of special medications for the children or young people, and the name of the doctor. It is important to note incidents and accidents in their proper chronological order in case clarification is sought at a later date.
- Careful planning of activities pays dividends:

Objectives can be clarified to all.

Risks and safety factors can be considered.

Special needs can be identified.

- Every volunteer should have a job description; they should know in writing what responsibilities are expected of them. This need not be complicated. It may be in the form of a letter but should make clear the

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nature of the work the volunteer is offering to undertake. It should also refer to expected codes of conduct and emphasise the importance of behaving appropriately with all children and young people at all times. It should give brief details of training and support arrangements and, if possible, name an individual to whom concerns about any element of the work should be made known.

- For paid youth leaders, there should be a formal contract of employment that provides the same information and conditions as above; in addition management and supervision arrangements should be clearly set out.
- The person designated with responsibility for children and youth work in the parish should ensure that they meet leaders and volunteer assistants on a regular basis. The Parish Priest or his delegate could attend some of these meetings to demonstrate an interest, to listen, and to provide support and encouragement. Inexperienced workers and volunteers always benefit from clear guidelines and supervision.
- Visits should also be made to the group to see them in action, and to talk to children and young people, and to assess the work that is being done.
- Displaying photographs of children and young people in Church constitutes “personal data” and is therefore subject to the 1998 Data Protection Act. It is recommended that explicit written consent is always obtained from the parent and child where photographs are used. Names should not appear with individual images, but a list placed beside the display or, preferably, a simple label such as “Class of 2005”.

The following prayer is a good guide in our work:-

***God, grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the Courage to change the things I can,
and the Wisdom to know the difference.***

The person designated with responsibility for children and youth work in the parish should ensure that they meet leaders and volunteer assistants on a regular basis.

It is recommended that explicit written consent is always obtained from the parent and child where photographs are used.

Appendix 'A'

Choosing the Right Staff and Volunteers

Introduction

It is very important that the vetting procedures are observed.

If the Parish Priest discusses these matters openly with those who have care and responsibility for children, such discussion should make it easier for the guidelines and vetting procedures to be accepted.

Leaders and Workers with children, both paid and voluntary, who have unsupervised contact with children, should accept the full vetting procedures. This protects everybody.

Other volunteers must study the Diocesan Guidelines on Child Protection and should sign a declaration that they have read and understood them.

In making a new appointment to vacated or newly established positions involving access to children or young people, whether paid or unpaid, whether permanent or temporary, whether full time or part time, a formal procedure must be followed. This applies regardless of the method of recruitment, by formal advertisement, by direct approach or by unsolicited volunteering.

Any worker who has significant unsupervised contact with children should be vetted and must disclose any offences that he or she may have committed against children or vulnerable adults. This can be done by the completion of the 'Green Form' by all workers. This not only protects the children but also protects the adult.

The procedure for paid staff involves the completion of an application form, the taking up of references and a personal interview. Similar, but informal, procedures should be applied to volunteers.

Leaders and Workers with children, both paid and voluntary, who have unsupervised contact with children, should accept the full vetting procedures. This protects everybody.

Applications for New Appointments

Application Forms

The application forms consist of a personal details form and a declaration form which requests details of any criminal offences including any 'spent' convictions under the "Rehabilitation of Offenders Act".

It also includes a request for permission to check with the Statutory Authorities for any previous offences. A refusal by the applicant to give permission should be regarded as significant in considering the application.

NB: Voluntary organisations including the Church now have access to the criminal background of applicants via the Criminal Records Bureau. Therefore it is vital that the wording on the application forms and the referees' letters concerning criminal background are not changed.

References

All applicants for work with the Statutory Authorities, including independent playgroups, are required to provide information concerning their suitability to undertake such work, to provide personal referees and to give consent for consultation with the statutory authorities.

The Bishops' Conference agreed that the Church should follow similar procedures to those required by Local Authorities, Youth Clubs and Play Groups for those who wish to work within and on behalf of the church with children and young people in both paid and voluntary capacities.

It should be the normal practice for parishes to seek and take up two references prior to the interview.

It should be normal practice for parishes to seek and take up two references prior to interview. One should be from someone who has had the most recent experience of the potential leader's work with children or young people. If the volunteer has never worked as a youth worker or children's worker before, a suitable referee would be someone who could vouch for how the applicant relates to children and young people. The second reference should be from someone who knows the applicant well – not a relative – and whose judgement can be relied on.

Interviews

It is assumed that applicants to paid positions would be interviewed as part of the normal selection process.

In the case of volunteers the interview could be conducted in a more informal way, based on the completed application forms.

Confidentiality

As we are asking for self-disclosure, and the referees for information about a person's past, including possible convictions, it is vital that documents are totally confidential, and seen only by the parish priest or his delegate and stored appropriately.

Existing Volunteers

It is essential to remember that the purpose of these guidelines is to provide a structure for sensible procedures in the protection of children, young people, vulnerable adults and youth workers. The approach to implementation may be phased if necessary to recognise the realities of implementation workload and the parish situation.

Special attention needs to be paid to adults who have a substantial level of access to children, which may be unsupervised and be regular or sustained.

The safety and well being of children are paramount; ***there must be no doubts about the suitability of volunteers.*** All existing volunteers must complete a Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure form (known as the CRB form).

Those working at residential events

These should complete the Green Form. A refusal by existing workers to do so should be regarded as grounds to terminate the appointment.

Other existing volunteers

These should complete a "Volunteer Commitment" which is a commitment to follow the codes of practice set out in this booklet and should receive a "Volunteer Contract".

It is vital that documents are totally confidential, and seen only by the parish priest or his delegate and stored appropriately.

The safety and well being of children are paramount; there must be no doubts about the suitability of volunteers.

Implementation of the guidelines

The introduction of this procedure must be undertaken with sensitivity and regard to the possibility of a perceived threat or criticism.

*It is very important that **all** current leaders complete the forms to avoid any difficulties when new leaders join. Everyone has to be treated similarly.*

It is very important that **all** current leaders complete the forms to avoid any difficulties when new leaders join. Everyone has to be treated similarly. It is well known that abusers target professions and voluntary positions which bring them into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. The Catholic Church relies heavily on voluntary support to carry out many duties and adheres to all policy and procedure which will help to safeguard everyone who is involved within the Church.

Diocesan policy in respect of the care of children and young people should be explained, and form the basis of the worker's commitment in their contact with them.

It should be explained to workers that the emphasis on establishing and maintaining comprehensive and uniform records is not only in accord with the responsibility of the Church to safeguard the interests of children and young people, but is also relevant to the protection of the interests of workers who may be the subject of unfounded or irresponsible accusations.

Probationary Period

When an appointment is offered and accepted its confirmation should be subject to the successful completion of a probationary period of at least three months.

The primary purpose of the probationary period is to ensure that the worker is confident and comfortable in the position and acts in accordance with our child protection guidelines. During this period the supervisor should hold regular meetings with the worker to discuss progress on the work being undertaken and to assess general attitudes.

Appendix 'B'

Safe from Harm:- *A Code of Practice for Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales.*

1. Adopt a Policy Statement on safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.
2. Plan the work of the Organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children and young people may occur.
3. Introduce a system to give children and young people easy access to an independent person.
4. Apply agreed guidelines for protecting children and young people to all paid staff and volunteers.
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles and responsibilities.
6. Use supervision of workers as a means of protecting children and young people.
7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children and young people.
8. Gain at least two references in writing – one from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children and young people.
9. Explore every applicant's experience of working or contact with children and young people in an interview before appointment.
10. Find out whether an applicant has any convictions for criminal offences against children and young people. This will be through the completion of a 'Criminal Record Bureau' disclosure form.
11. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.
12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their Line Managers or Supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

Appendix 'C'

Police Child Protection Unit

The telephone number for your local Police Child Protection Unit can be provided by your local Police station. However, two useful telephone numbers are:

Brentwood Police Child Protection Unit 01277 262412
Harlow Police Child Protection Unit 01279 641211

Social Services Child Protection Departments

Area	Address	Telephone
Braintree	Social Services	01376 555400
Maldon	Tabor House	
Chelmsford	5 Coggeshall Road Braintree CM7 6DB	
<i>Clacton</i>	<i>Social Services</i>	<i>01255 253300</i>
<i>Tendring</i>	<i>Magnet House</i>	
<i>Colchester</i>	<i>Jackson Road Clacton-on-Sea CO15 1JD</i>	
Basildon	Social Services	01268 643333
Brentwood	Ely House	
Castle Point	Ely Way	
Rochford	Basildon SS14 2BW	
<i>Harlow</i>	<i>Social Services</i>	<i>01279 434641</i>
<i>Epping Forest</i>	<i>Willowfield House</i>	
<i>Saffron Walden</i>	<i>Tendring Road</i>	
<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Harlow CM18 6SE</i>	
Southend	Social Services	01702 215000
	Queensway House	
	Essex Street	
	Southend-on-Sea SS2 5TB	
<i>Thurrock</i>	<i>Social Services</i>	<i>01375 652802</i>
	<i>P.O. Box 140</i>	
	<i>Civic Offices, New Road</i>	
	<i>Grays RM17 6TJ</i>	

<i>London Borough of Barking & Dagenham</i>	<i>Child Protection Manager Social Services Dept Civic Centre Dagenham RM10 7BW</i>	<i>0208 227 3853</i>
London Borough of Havering	Child Protection Manager Social Services Dept Whitworth Centre Noak Hill Road, Harold Hill Romford RM3 7YA	01708 773067
<i>London Borough of Newham</i>	<i>Child Protection Manager Social Services 250 Katherine Road London E7 8PN</i>	<i>0208 430 2000 extn 45627</i>
London Borough of Redbridge	Child Protection Manager Social Services Station Road Barkingside Ilford IG6 1NB	0208 708 5353
<i>London Borough of Waltham Forest</i>	<i>Child Protection Manager Social Services 17 Orford Road Walthamstow London E17 9LP</i>	<i>0208 496 3000</i>
NSPCC London Region including Essex	168-172 Old Street London	0171 366 7738 or Hot Line 0800 800 500

Contact details for Brentwood Diocesan Offices

Diocesan Child Protection Co-Ordinator

Fr. Frank Jackson
 Saint Augustine's Presbytery
 Beardsley Drive
 Springfield
 Chelmsford CM1 6GQ
 Tel: 07800 790217

Advice concerning Child Protection can be obtained from:

Simon Moules
Diocesan Child Protection Officer
Childcare House
Little Wheatley Chase
Rayleigh
Essex SS6 9EH
Tel: 01268 784564

Advice concerning Youth Groups can be obtained from:

Fr. Dominic Howarth
Youth Office
Cathedral House
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex CM15 8AT
Tel: 01277 265286

Administrative and General Advice:

Mrs Elisabeth Abbott,
Social Welfare Commission,
Cathedral House,
Ingrave Road,
Brentwood,
Essex. CM15 8AT
Tel: 01277 265292

Diocesan Communications Officer:

Fr. John Harvey
9 Trap's Hill
Loughton
Essex IG10 1SZ
Tel: 0208 508 3492