

Child Protection Policy

Carryduff Presbyterian Church

Creating a safe environment for children, young people, leaders and staff.

Policy Statement

This policy statement is aimed at creating a safe environment where children and young people may enjoy social contact, personal and spiritual development and where they and the leaders and helpers working with them will be safe.

Adoption of Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) Child Protection Guidelines

The Kirk Session of **Carryduff Presbyterian Church** has adopted The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's child protection guidelines, Taking Care, approved by the General Assembly and revised 2011. All organisations must adhere to these guidelines, as agreed by the General Assembly in 2008. The Kirk Session will review the policy every three years and keep Taking Care on the agenda of the Kirk Session meetings.

1. Leadership

The Kirk Session believes that the recruitment and appointment process outlined in the Taking Care guidelines greatly assist the assessment of a person's suitability to work with children and young people. As a result of implementing such procedures, leaders and helpers within this congregation will be more assured of their position and of the confidence placed in them by the Kirk Session. Leaders are expected to encourage participation amongst children and young people, to be positive role models and to be consistent in their approach with all young people.

The following procedures must be followed for the appointment of leaders who are 18 years and over.

- i) All leaders will be required to complete an application form for leaders.
- ii) The application form includes the vetting process according to legislation and good practice.
- iii) The Kirk Session will appoint up to two interviewers to meet informally with the applicant. At the interview the child protection policy will be provided and explained. "We Care 4 U Too" will also be provided.
- iv) Applicants will be required to provide two references by persons who are not relatives.
- v) A letter of approval will be sent to the Designated Person from the Taking Care Office.

2. Training

Leaders and helpers who work with children and young people should attend Taking Care training once every 24 months (as church policy or legislation demands). Further in-house training will be provided on alternate years, and leaders are encouraged to attend these sessions to refresh themselves with what is required of a leader. Even those who have a good knowledge of child protection issues in another field should attend as Taking Care Training is the only training available that is specifically dealing with church activities within a church environment.

3. Reporting of Concerns

The leaders in each of our organisations will be fully conversant with the reporting procedure where there is concern about the welfare of a child, as outlined in the Taking Care Guidelines. Leaders must not hesitate to report a concern about a child if they are at any time worried about their welfare. Concerns should be handled in a confidential manner. (see Diagram 1)

Persons who might be approached to handle a problem in a confidential manner would be one of the following.

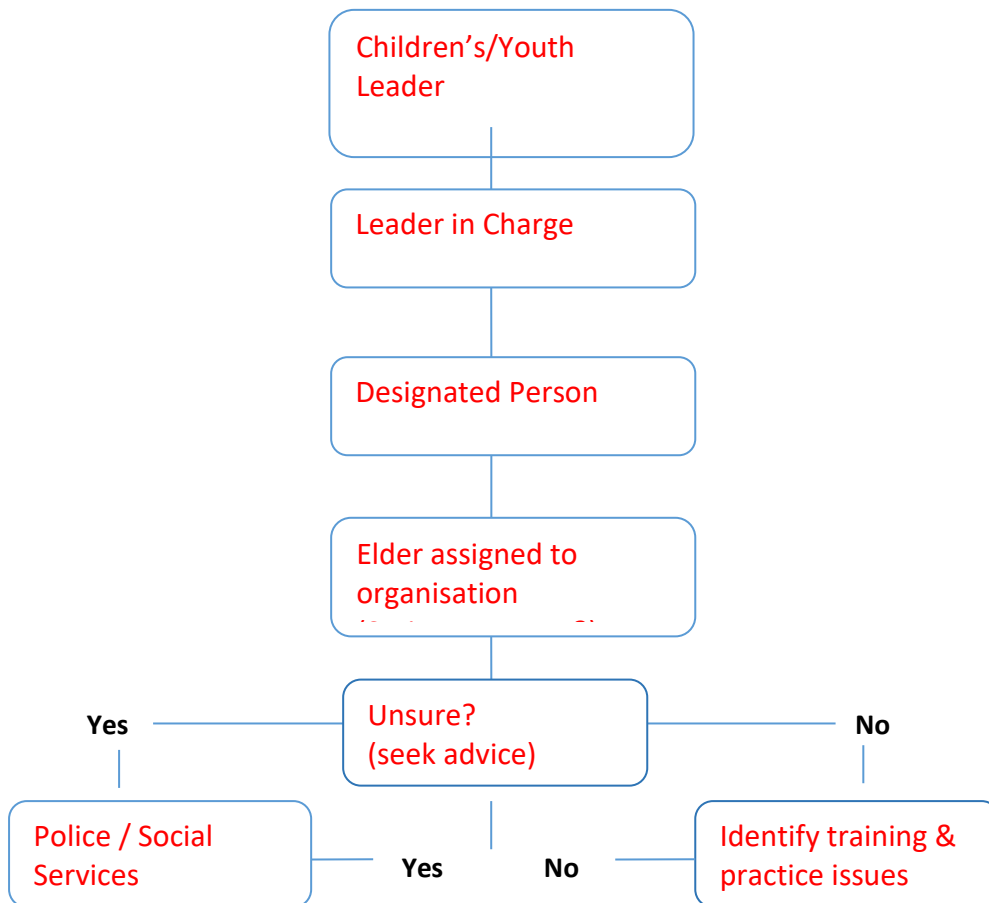


Diagram. 1

4. The Designated Person

The Kirk Session has appointed the following Designated Persons: - **Mrs Janet Avery**, assisted by **Miss Niomi McCullough**. The Designated Persons, will provide consultation, advice and support to organisations and to the Kirk Session on matters concerning the welfare of children and young people. The Kirk Session will keep organisational leaders updated with the name(s) of the Designated Person(s). Any matter brought to the attention of the Designated Person will be treated in strict confidence. Information will be divulged only where there is a legitimate need to know.

5. Parental Consent Forms

Organisational leaders must ensure that they have home contact numbers, parental consent and medical information regarding the children in the organisations they are working with. Special consent forms will be issued for any 'off the premises' activity and residential programmes. Parental consent is required for all young people under the age of 18 for any activity/event organised by Carryduff Presbyterian Church. Consent forms will be held in strict confidence in compliance with GDPR regulations.

6. Good Standards of Practice

Each organisation will be expected to comply with good standards of practice as outlined in the Taking Care guidelines. This includes physical contact, recommended ratios, transport, residential programmes and outings, church sleepovers, photographs and working with children who have special educational needs. Leaders are reminded that the safety and wellbeing of each individual young person is paramount. Leaders are expected to be positive influences to all children and young people and to lead by example.

- Be mindful of how and where you touch a child – the child must feel comfortable with the contact.
- Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is an appropriate way of expressing your concern and care. *However, this is only appropriate if it is meeting the need of the child/young person.*
- Children/young people should never be left unsupervised.
- Where privacy is required in meeting with a child/young person, the door should be left open and other leaders informed of the meeting.
- Leaders should not engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative comments or use inappropriate language. *Likewise, leaders should not let any inappropriate language or sexually suggestive comments made by young people go unchallenged.*
- On residential programmes or church sleepovers, adequate supervision should be provided ensuring that enough male/female leaders are in place. Specific areas should be provided for male/female sleeping arrangement, toilet and shower facilities. Leaders should not enter the bedrooms of children or young people on their own.
- Particular care and attention should be taken when working with children with special educational needs. Appropriate training will be provided and leaders are encouraged to attend. In circumstances where physical touch or restraint is required, parents should be informed and this should be recorded on an incident report form. Leaders should seek to work in partnership with the parents in these situations so as to best meet the needs of the child/young person.

7. Working Together

It is important that all leaders know the boundaries and rules of an organisation and that these are explained to children and parents. Within each organisation, a clearly defined line of accountability should be in place, whereby all leaders and helpers report to the appointed leader in charge. The leader in charge reports to the Kirk Session with which ultimate responsibility lies. All leaders should be aware of the specific programme and be aware of one another's responsibilities. A spirit of unity should be nurtured within each organisation as leaders serve using their various gifts and talents.

Expectations for children and young people should be outline at the commencement of the year's activities in each organisation. These expectations will help create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children feel they can relate to the leaders and helpers. Children/young people are expected to :- respect the authority of leaders, respect the views and feelings of other young people at activities and to refrain from foul/abusive language, the consumption of alcohol, smoking or drugs on the premises of Carryduff Presbyterian Church and the wilful destruction of property.

All leaders must abide by the discipline guidelines as set out in Taking Care. Inappropriate or harmful behaviours should not go unchallenged. Leaders should not shout at or roughly handle a child/young person, nor should they permit dangerous behaviour amongst children/young people.

8. Technology

Leaders should limit the direct Internet communication they have with individual children and young people in the organisation in which they are leaders. All such communication with children and young people should, as far as possible, be within an open forum, in order to protect both young people and leaders. Leaders should be wise as to how they use this form of communication. Leaders should not contact young people under the age of 14 by phone, text or social media unless parental consent is given. The use of inappropriate images or language on mobile phones is not tolerated at Carryduff Presbyterian Church.

Social Media is widely used amongst young people and can be a great tool for organisations to share information. Leaders should be mindful about adding young people as friends on various forums such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat. Leaders are expected to be a good example to young people both in person and when using social media. Leaders should not post photographs of young people from the organisation in which they are leaders, on a social networking site or anywhere on the Internet, unless they have written parental consent. Under no circumstances should a leader post pictures of children or young people to their own personal profile. Group photographs are advised at all times and can only be taken with parental consent. Leaders should pay careful attention to children/young people taking pictures of each other without consent.

Leaders involved in Youth and Children's work should only have children's mobile numbers if the nature of their involvement requires them to phone or text children and if this is the case, contacting children through the use of mobile phones should be done in line with the Taking Care guidelines. Group texts are advisable where possible.

9. Bullying

All kinds of bullying are wrong and should not be tolerated within organisations of the Carryduff Presbyterian Church. Our organisations should be a safe and welcoming place, inclusive of all children. All organisations should develop an environment of openness where children and leaders feel able to say if they or their friends are being bullied.

The government defines bullying as, "*deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated often over a period of time*". Bullying can happen anywhere to anyone; anyone has the potential to bully others. Leaders should try to prevent bullying by adequately supervising children and young people, addressing issues before they fester, taking young people seriously when allegations are made. If bullying does occur, leaders should deal with it and not ignore it. Be mindful of cyber bullying (the use of the internet to hurt, harass or embarrass another individual).

10. Transportation

Leaders in charge should exercise discretion as to who is permitted to drive cars or a minibus carrying children/young people. The following factors should be considered at all times:

- The driver should be sufficiently aware of their responsibility towards passengers
- Seatbelts should be worn at all times
- Speed limits should never be exceeded
- Car Insurance cover should be adequate and up to date. The driver must be a church member or employed person belonging to Carryduff Presbyterian Church acting as drivers in their own cars.
- Under no circumstances should an 'R' driver carry an under 18

- The driver should know what to do in the event of a breakdown or accident
- Avoid carrying a young person on a one to one basis in your car where possible. If this is required, parental consent should be provided and the young person should be seated in the back seat.

11. Health and Safety

The Kirk Session expects organisations to adhere to the guidance on safety matters outlined in the Taking Care guidelines. A Risk Assessment form should be completed for each organisation as well as for any outings or occasional events. Leaders will be informed of the Fire Safety and First Aid procedures. A Basic First Aider will be trained for each organisation.

12. Implementation and Review

The Kirk Session is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, and will review it every three years.

Signed: _____ (Minister) _____ (Clerk of Session)

Rev Alistair S Smyth

Ian Montgomery

Designated Persons _____ Date: _____

Mrs Janet Avery

Miss Niomi McCullough

This document was approved by Session on 17th September 2019 and signed by above persons.