



PART 5:

WORKING SAFELY WITH CHILDREN

ADMINISTRATION OF ACTIVITIES

Clergy, staff and volunteers must ensure that all children who attend the group should have a membership registration form filled in by a parent or guardian giving: name, address, date of birth, special medical details, dietary needs, emergency telephone numbers, next of kin, and parental consent to attend the group. The name of the leaders in charge and relevant contact details should be clearly identified on the membership registration form.

An attendance register should be kept for each individual meeting and include all children and bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers present.

Accidents and incidents should be recorded on the accident and incident report forms/books.

Parental consent forms for all outings, etc., should be completed. Parental consent forms for photographs, text messaging, social media contact, etc., should be completed.

It is essential that written information sought from parents/guardians is provided by those with parental responsibility.

Parents/guardians should always be informed of the limits of confidentiality around their contact details and any information they provide to the organisation.

SUPERVISION LEVELS

Children are less likely to experience accidents or incidents if they are supervised properly. Activities should be organised to maximise participation, fun and learning in a way that minimises risk. Clergy, staff and volunteers should ensure that:

- Children are not left unattended.
- Adequate numbers of clergy, staff and volunteers are available to supervise the activities.
- When dealing with group members of mixed gender, it is recommended that there are sufficient clergy, staff and volunteers of both sexes to properly supervise activities and any premises in use.
- They know at all times where children are and what they are doing.
- Any activity involving dangerous equipment has constant adult supervision.
- Dangerous behaviour is never allowed.

The minimum adult to child ratio in any group is outlined below. More clergy/staff/volunteers or adults to children compared to the minimum ratio may be required due to local circumstances, the relationship with the group, the experience of clergy, staff and volunteers, safety, ability/disability of children and the nature and/or location of the activities being undertaken.



Minimum adult/child ratio:

- Children aged 0-4 years: minimum of two adults and ratio of 1:3
- Children aged 5 and above: minimum of two clergy/staff/volunteers and a ratio of 1:8

Therefore every group should have a minimum of two adults/clergy/staff/volunteers and allowing an additional adult/clergy/staff/volunteer every time the group goes over the adult to child ratio.

Example of minimum adult/child ratio:

No. of adults/staff/volunteers	0 - 4 years	5 - 12 years	12 years plus
2	1 - 3 children	1 - 8 children	1 - 10 children
3	4 - 6 children	9 - 16 children	11 - 20 children
4	7 - 9 children	17 - 24 children	21 - 30 children
5	10 - 12 children	25 - 32 children	31 - 40 children

Where a group is allowing under 18s to assist working with children, the under 18s can supplement the number of adults/clergy/staff/volunteers supervising the activity but should not be counted as part of the adult/clergy/staff/volunteer ratio.

Where an activity involves swimming and the children are under eight years of age then clergy, staff and volunteers should abide by the pool’s Child Admission Policy.

PRIVATE MEETINGS / CHATS

Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private meetings / chats with individual members. Another member of clergy, staff or volunteer must be informed of a private meeting. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential meetings must take place, but such meetings should be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area which is likely to be frequented by other people. Where possible another member or another adult should be present or nearby during the meeting.

Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should not arrange to have private meetings with members off premises as such meetings may be perceived as an abuse of authority or simply be misunderstood. If it is required to meet a child off church premises then the parent /guardian must be present.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

As a general principle bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children. Physical contact which may be misconstrued by the child, parent/ guardian or other casual observer should be avoided.



Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should use their discretion when a distressed child needs comfort and reassurance.

Some bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers are likely to come into physical contact with the children from time to time in the course of their activities, for example when showing a child how to use a piece of apparatus or equipment or while demonstrating a move or exercise during activities or sports. Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of such contact being misinterpreted.

Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should not engage in physical competitive games / sports with children.

Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers who have to administer first-aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present.

Following any incident where a bishop, cleric, member of staff or volunteer feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to the person to whom he/she is accountable /reports to and be included in the incident record book.

RELATIONSHIPS

Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers must not allow a romantic and / or intimate relationship to develop with an individual child.

Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should ensure that their relationships with members are appropriate, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to talk or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and particularly when staff or volunteers are dealing with adolescents.

When children seek advice on an individual basis the primary role of a bishop, cleric, staff member or volunteer is to listen to the child and refer him/her to qualified and competent sources of advice/counselling.

GENERAL SAFETY

Select Vestries, as people who have control of the parish premises, have a duty under The Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to ensure that the premises, means of access and any fabric and furnishings in the premises, are safe and without risk of harm. Select Vestries should ensure that a Health & Safety statement is in place and that an annual Health and Safety audit of the premises and a Health & Safety risk assessment of the activities is undertaken.

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. This is not only the responsibility of the leader-in-charge but of every bishop, member of clergy, staff or volunteer. Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should be aware of the following guidelines:



- Always have a quick initial look around the premises you are about to use to identify any possible dangers, e.g. a stack of chairs which could topple, an electric cable which could trip, etc.
- Be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that they are not obstructed. Regular fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all children know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire. Know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located. In the event of a fire, evacuating the building and saving life is much more important than fighting a fire. The assembly point should be clearly identified.
- It is imperative that where children's ministry activities are the only activity taking place in the parish premise that the front door is kept locked, with a relevant internal easy opening device, so that access is limited to those attending and those leading that group. If parents/guardians or others wish to gain access to the premises during these activities they should have to ring a door bell or use an intercom and clergy, staff member or volunteer should open the door to allow them access to the premises.
- Where a children's ministry activity is taking place at the same time as other activities not involving children, clergy/staff/volunteers should be aware of the other groups using the premises and the potential threats that this may raise. This may involve having extra clergy/staff/volunteers in place for these activities to monitor the door to the premises and supervise bathroom facilities.
- It is essential at the end of children's ministry activities that children are handed over to the parents/guardians or the adult authorised to collect the children by a member of the clergy/staff/volunteer.
- Know where the nearest accessible telephone is.
- If at all possible each group should have someone with a first-aid qualification. Where possible clergy, staff or volunteers should be aware of what medication children are currently taking and this should not be given without written consent from parents/guardians or doctors. Clergy, staff and volunteers should also seek to obtain information concerning allergies and reaction to foods, e.g. peanuts. Medication should be clearly marked, out of reach of children, and securely locked away.
- While in the kitchen area children must be supervised at all times or if children are not allowed in the kitchen area, it should be clearly marked as out of bounds to children.
- There should be adequate supervision of certain equipment, e.g. table tennis tables, snooker tables, etc.
- During games or 'icebreakers' be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these.
- Check that equipment is safe and do not use items that you believe are not fit for the purpose.
- When using special equipment for your programme, e.g. for 'one off' activities such as trampolining, bouncy castle, etc., ensure there is adequate supervision by trained staff or volunteers. You may also require special insurance to cover these higher risk activities. Be aware of the physical environment and remove/avoid items which may cause injury during the said activity. If the organisation is undertaking what is deemed to be high risk activities written permission from parents/guardians must be obtained in advance.



- Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used.
- Know where the first-aid provision is located.
- Know where the accident /incident report book is kept for recording details of accidents/ injuries/witnesses/date. Records of accidents/incidents should be kept in the Parish Panel records system.
- A plan for dealing with emergency situations should be drawn up for each group. This would include actions to be taken, records kept and local contact numbers for those who need to be informed.

HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

The Select Vestry are required to ensure that an annual health & safety audit of the premises and a health & safety risk assessment of the activities are undertaken. The Select Vestry shall determine the appropriate person/people to undertake the annual health & safety audit and shall ask the leaders of each group to undertake the health & safety risk assessment of the activities. Reports from both should be brought to a select vestry meeting.

Activities that would require a health & safety risk assessment include the following (This is no way an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the types of activities involved):

- Church services.
- Sunday clubs.
- Youth clubs.

Further health & safety risk assessments are required for one off events or outings e.g. a weekend camp, cinema trip.

Health & safety risk assessments for all activities must be completed in writing and retained with other relevant documents such as Safeguarding records and can be made available when required.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Panels should ensure that there are accident forms and incident forms available to all groups using premises. Clergy, staff and volunteers should be advised as to where these forms are available and the correct procedure for submitting to the Parish Panel if they have to complete a form.

In the event of an accident/incident, a clergy/staff member/volunteer should administer any necessary first aid in the presence of another person. It is good practice to check the membership registration form or activity consent form for any allergies the child might have.

Clergy/staff/volunteers should use their discretion as to whether to inform parents/guardians of the accident/incident, immediately after it has happened or when they return to collect their child from the group activity. No child should go home after an accident without their parents/guardians being informed of the accident.



All facts relating to any accident or incident, contact details of all concerned and medical/other intervention (if such was necessary) should be accurately recorded on the accident/incident report form. All incidents and accidents (no matter how minor) must be recorded in writing on the relevant report form.

If an accident/incident occurs off church premises (i.e. on a trip or outing) the accident/incident should also be reported to the management of that premises.

CONTENT OF ACTIVITIES

Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should ensure that activities being undertaken are suitable for the ages, abilities and experience levels of the participants. Individual children should not be excluded from any suitable activities.

Bishops, clergy, staff, volunteers and organisations should, as a matter of policy, consult parents/guardians and management committees when using materials in connection with sex education programmes. When using training materials of a sensitive nature a bishop, member of clergy, staff or volunteer should be aware of the danger that their application, either by members or by the bishop, member of clergy, staff or volunteer, might have after the event.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND RECORDED IMAGES

It is necessary for parishes and dioceses working with children to seek the consent of parents/guardians of children giving permission for their children to be present in photographs or on recorded images while attending a parochial or diocesan event and for publishing of these images. In addition, where photographs are published by the parish or diocese, (for example, in the parish/diocesan magazine or on the parish/diocesan website) the full name of children will not be given.

It is not practicable, however, on public occasions for the parish or diocese, the incumbent or bishop, or any staff or volunteer to regulate and oversee the use by every or any individual present of his or her camera, video recorder, camera on a mobile phone or smart phone, or any other such device. Hence, the following appropriate, realistic and albeit, limited safeguards should be in place to protect children as far as is possible from inappropriate use of their images.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR TAKING OF PHOTOGRAPHS OR RECORDED IMAGES

- Parental/guardian consent has been obtained in writing for the taking of and use of photographs and recorded images.
- No unsupervised access to children is permitted or appropriate. This includes for photographic and recording purposes.
- Suitable clothing must be worn. Photographing and recording of children should be permitted only when suitable clothing is worn.



Concerns about intrusive or inappropriate taking of photographs or recorded images, or the use of photographs or recorded images, should be reported directly to the Panel or to the leader in charge who should then inform the panel.

PHOTOGRAPHERS EMPLOYED AT EVENTS:

Check that the photographers have been vetted and issue identification to be worn at all times. Keep a record of accreditations of the photographer. Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour. Clearly outline to the photographer that all images taken will remain the property of the parish/diocese and cannot be used or sold for any other purpose except with the explicit consent of the parish/diocese.

PUBLISHING OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND RECORDED IMAGES

- Establish the type of image that appropriately represents the activity and the parish/diocese. Think carefully about any images you may wish to use in hardcopy, online or on social media.
- Never use the full name(s) of children along with the image(s). First names could be used if it is appropriate to name individuals. In group photos the first name should not be matched with their image in the photo in order e.g. L-R 'Jane, Tom, Jackie, Sally - prize-winners in the painting competition'.
- Only use images of children in suitable clothing. Parishes/dioceses can be involved in a range of activities; clearly some will pose a higher risk for potential misuse than others. Photos of these activities should focus on the activity rather than the individual child.

Only photographs or recorded images where consent has been given through the parish/diocese will be used for publicity purposes. Where consent is given for the use of photographs and recorded images of children, they may appear in a range of hardcopy, online publications and social media.

USE OF SOCIAL/DIGITAL MEDIA

When considering using social/digital media as a means of communication with children, bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers must consider the age profile of the members of the group and should not use or encourage children to use social/digital media under the age of 13. Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should always ensure that the means of communication being used with any group will not isolate or exclude any child who does not have access to that form of communication.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In all their contacts and communications with the children of their group, bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers must be seen to be open and transparent. This is the case whether communications are by traditional means or by electronic means.

Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should not communicate with children using their personal social media accounts, personal email or chat rooms (unless a familial relationships exists).



For a group/parish using / publishing a social networking site, such as What's App, Facebook, the following principles should be applied:

- The page/profile must be password-protected, and the password must be held by at least three people from the clergy, staff or volunteers of that group/parish.
- The site should be monitored by a designated supervisor. This person should have access to the login details of the site. This supervisor will be appointed by the Panel.
- Any inappropriate posts should be removed immediately by the designated supervisor. Reasons should then be explained to the person who posted the content. Where possible sites should be monitored before content is put up.
- The site should be kept 'private' or 'closed' i.e. only permitted members or 'friends' can see what is posted on the site.
- The use of personal addresses and telephone numbers, etc. should be avoided as, while sites are 'private' or 'closed', there is the potential for items to be copied and shared.
- Content of any postings should be consistent with the aims of the parish/group. In cases of doubt clergy, staff or volunteers should seek advice from the Parish Panel.

For bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers using a social networking site:

- Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should not 'Friend' or 'Follow' children on social media. (unless a familial relationships exists) (Children may 'Follow' bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers on social media so bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should make sure any content they post is appropriate.)
- Messages left to or from children on social network sites should be written on an open page e.g. A Facebook "wall", and not in a private message, or by using "chat" [one-on-one].
- Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should not network with members of their group via closed [one-on-one] chat rooms e.g. Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, etc. This should be done through 'Group Chats'
- Any events or activities run by the group/parish that are organised or publicised on the site should be a closed event so as non-members cannot access the event without suitable permission by the site administrators.
- Any emails sent to children via the site must be sent to at least one other member of clergy, staff or volunteer. (This can be done by 'bcc' if necessary.)
- Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should avoid communicating with children in their organisation/group via social/digital media late at night or during school hours.
- In signing off a post or an email bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should not do so in a way that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted by the recipient e.g.: "luv X"; "xoxoxo". Simply sign your name.



- Parents/guardians should be asked to give their consent for bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers to communicate with their child via social/digital media. Leaders-in-charge of groups must seek this consent in writing when they are communicating with parents/guardians at the commencement of each year. Once known, bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers must adhere to the wishes of the parents/guardians. Parents/guardians should also be encouraged to become members of any social networking site groups. For those parents/guardians who wish to become members of any social networking site group they should be asked beforehand to ensure that their own privacy settings are suitable and reminded that they should not accept any friend request from a child from the social networking site group other than their own.
- Parental consent is required before pictures or videos of children are posted online. When posting any pictures or videos, bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers should be careful to ensure that no unnecessary private details of that child are disclosed - e.g. surnames or photos/videos where the child is wearing a uniform and which would identify the school they attend.
- Any disclosures of abuse reported through a social networking site must be dealt with according to the reporting procedures.

MOBILE PHONES

Those who work with children need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of mobile phone and text messaging. While good use of such media can be beneficial we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and consequent harm that can result to children. Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers must also take care to protect themselves.

- Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers 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. (Such bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers might include those running a group for older teenagers, or a member of staff, clergy or a volunteer involved in co-ordinating youth work.)
- Written parental consent should be sought if the member of staff or volunteer in this role will be contacting children via mobile phone.
- A method of accountability should be arranged e.g. copies of texts could also be sent to other staff or volunteers or to parents/guardians.
- If a member of clergy, staff or volunteer has a child's phone number it should only be used for the purposes it has been given i.e. the cleric, staff member or volunteer should not share this information.
- It is recommended that bishops, clergy and staff have a separate phone for work purposes rather than using their personal phone for contacting children.

TEXTING - COMMUNICATION NOT CONVERSATION!

- Texts should be used for the purposes of reminding children about events which are forthcoming.
- Texts can also be used as a means to encourage children if it is appropriate e.g. 'hope exam goes ok'. This should not develop into a one to one conversation but remain as a group chat.



- If it turns into a conversation, communications should be ended. A member of staff, clergy or volunteer can suggest discussing the subject further at the next event or, if they are concerned about the child, arrange to meet up to talk further (within the approved safety guidelines).

CAMERA PHONES

Camera phones should be used safely and responsibly.

Pictures can be very powerful and stir up strong emotions. Camera phone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.

Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers and children should not send pictures that are obscene, indecent or menacing and should be sensitive about other people's gender, colour, religion, sexual orientation or personal background. Bishops, clergy, staff or volunteers and children should be made aware that it is a criminal offence to take, make, download, permit to be taken, distribute, show or possess an indecent or sexually explicit image of a child under 18.

Camera phones can be used to make children safer. Older children, for example using a taxi, can send a picture of the car's registration to a parent/guardian/friend before they begin the trip, or can simply use the phone to show parents/guardians where they are.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES ON ACTIVITIES

When developing a Code of Behaviour for Members, clergy/staff/volunteers should encourage the children to include what is acceptable and what is expected of them in relation to mobile phones whilst at activities.

The Code of Behaviour for members should include sections to cover:

- Confirmation that when on activities a named member of clergy, staff or volunteer is the primary point of communication and is to be contacted if there is an emergency or change to previously agreed arrangements.
- That the usage of mobile phones including text messaging or playing games cannot be allowed to be a distraction from a safe awareness of the environment.
- That the usage of mobile phones including text messaging or playing games cannot be allowed to interfere with full participation in the activity.

When drawing up a Code of Behaviour for members for outings, camps and overnight activities, it should include sections to cover:

- Preferred time period when parents/guardians may make contact if they wish. Parents/guardians should be advised that contact outside of this time may not be possible due to the nature of the activities unless in an emergency situation.
- The use of phones while away can worsen rather than alleviate homesickness. In this context it can be good to encourage children sometimes to consider 'no news is good news'



USE OF COMPUTERS / TABLETS / WEB ENABLED GAMES CONSOLES / SMART TVS

Where bishop/clergy/staff/volunteers plan to use such electronic devices as part of their activities to engage in a relevant up-to-date medium, it is essential that a number of additional safety measures are undertaken.

Bishops/clergy/staff/volunteers should set out to the children clear boundaries as to what the electronic devices can be used for, the access limitation and the consequences of not abiding by these boundaries. The electronic devices being used should have, where possible, appropriate parental control software installed to ensure that the children do not gain access to inappropriate sites.

Bishops/clergy/staff/volunteers should supervise access to the electronic devices closely to ensure that they are not inappropriately used.

Bishops/clergy/staff/volunteers should ensure that whatever activity is planned using electronic devices will not, even inadvertently, expose children to inappropriate content.

TAKING CHILDREN ON OUTINGS / RESIDENTIALS

If planning an activity off parish premises or staying away from home overnight, bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should consider the following:

- Safe methods of transport.
- Adequate insurance to cover all aspects of the trip.
- Written parental consent (for each individual trip).
- Any information about the children which may be relevant as they may be in your care for longer or overnight, e.g. allergies, medical problems, special needs, etc.
- Number of clergy/staff/volunteers required to supervise children adequately at all times.
- Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements.
- Respect for privacy of children in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets.

The following guidance is for bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers who are involved in organising day trips away or residentials for children.

PLANNING AND DOCUMENTATION

- Ensure activity consent forms are signed and received from parents/guardians prior to departure.
- Ensure that activity consent forms have details of medical conditions, allergies and/or procedures that may need to be looked after during the trip.
- Ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for the trip and activities involved.



- Ensure that the selection process for choosing children for the trip is fair and transparent.
- Ensure that emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians are documented and available at all times.
- All bishops/clergy/staff/volunteers should be given clear roles and responsibilities for the trip.
- There should be one person appointed as the overall leader of the group who will have final decision making authority during the trip.
- Ensure that a health & safety assessment has been conducted.

ACCOMMODATION (FOR RESIDENTIAL TRIPS)

- In the planning stage check the proposed sleeping accommodation for children, bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers.
- Check health and safety issues relating to the accommodation such as emergency evacuation, accessibility of rooms and corridors for the mobility of the children, bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that single gender dormitories are used for children.
- Ensure that only children of similar age share sleeping accommodation.
- Ensure that all bishops/clergy/staff/volunteers have a list of all the children's accommodation allocation.
- Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should never enter children's rooms without knocking first.

PREPARING PARTICIPANTS AND PROGRAMME

- Prepare an information pack for children and parents/guardians including the programme of activities, emergency information, and a 'help me' card particular for foreign trips
- It is essential that the children are involved in every aspect of the process. This is an ideal opportunity for them to share the responsibility for the trip /activities that take place.
- A code of behaviour for the children, specific to the trip, should be drawn up / agreed and signed by the parents/guardians.
- Ensure that one person is appointed as the overall leader of the group, they will have various responsibilities including making a report following the trip.
- There should be a plan for communication with parent/guardians and children to inform them of travel and accommodation details, activities, special requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details. This can take the form of meetings or written correspondence.



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- Have clear emergency procedures should you need to curtail the trip, have an emergency fund and know where the children, bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers are at all times.
- Children should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission.
- Have a back-up plan if the programme changes for any reason.
- Bring a medical/first aid kit with you.
- Bishops/clergy/staff/volunteers should ensure they have the contact details of the Panel with them while on the trip.
- For foreign trips, in particular, it is advisable to have an agreed contact person in the parish/diocese that will be able to respond to emergencies if they occur at any time of the day or night. This may involve liaising with parents/guardians in difficult situations that can be hard to do over the phone. This person should have the full contact details of the group and the full itinerary for the trip.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

To put an effective monitoring and evaluation of how well the trip fulfills its aims and objectives, each of the following should be addressed:

- Systems for monitoring and evaluation should be developed prior to the trip and agreed among the organisers.
- Monitoring and evaluation should be carried out with the children, bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers.
- There should be daily evaluations with the children, bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers for longer trips.
- Carry out a full and final evaluation which should be a real exercise to learn from. Review your safety assessment from the planning process to see if there are any areas that need to be addressed.
- Make sure there is a system for keeping records and reports during the trip.

TRANSPORT

Children should not, where at all possible, be transported by a bishop, member of the clergy, staff or volunteer on their own. Try to ensure another member of clergy, staff or volunteer or other children are present in the vehicle. If a situation occurs when a child has to be transported alone, ensure other clergy, staff and volunteers and if possible the parents/guardians know this is happening and that the child is in the rear seat. **Current seat belt and child seat legislation must be adhered to.**



Those bishops, clergy and staff members transporting children must have a relevant driving licence and business insurance as part of their insurance policy.

When using public transport to bring children to activities, bishops/clergy/staff/volunteers should complete a head count when embarking and disembarking the mode of transport. Always have a back-up plan in case the particular mode of public transport is not available.

When hiring a coach or minibus to transport children to activities, ask for confirmation of insurance and public service vehicle licence for the firm and that an Access NI vetted driver will be supplied to drive the bus on the day. Ensure that bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers are seated by all emergency exits and interspersed throughout the coach. Ensure that everyone wears the seat belts supplied.

DIVERSITY

Everyone within the parish needs to take into consideration diversity in the needs and practices of those who attend activities in the parish. The Church of Ireland does not discriminate against children who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Groups should ensure bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers are open to and aware of diversity in the beliefs and practices of children. They need to ask about cultural needs and be aware of the difficulties posed by any language barriers or other communication difficulties. Anti-discriminatory practice is at the core of the Church of Ireland and a zero tolerance towards discriminatory practice is expected. Groups have a responsibility to ensure that any children with additional needs are treated with equality and a policy of inclusion needs to be underlined with robust procedures which all bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers agree to and are aware of.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Parenting a child with additional needs can be overwhelming at times. Parents/guardians can sometimes feel anger, fear, grief and fatigue while struggling to help their child. The Church should strive to be a place of sanctuary for parents / guardians and members should seek to understand difficulties faced by families.

Talk with the parents/guardians who will know what the child's needs are. Not only will this demonstrate to the child's family that the church is welcoming to children with additional needs, but you may also be able to offer the family support if required. Having consulted with the parents/guardians and child consider how your group can meet the child's needs. Some children with additional needs may require one-to-one help in church or a children's group, ensure that your group have the appropriate number of clergy, staff or volunteers to provide this support.

ACTION POINTS

Dos and Don'ts - general advice for all working with children with additional needs.

Do:

- Include (not just by enrolling a child into your programme or activity, but by including them in every aspect of what you say or do).



- Treat the child as you would any other child.
- Always speak directly to the child.
- Always ask the child if you can help him or her in any way.
- Integrate the child into the group.
- Be aware that inclusion in your group may be a child's first experience of being in a mixed group - make it a positive experience.
- Try to be aware of a child's hidden disability or condition, such as epilepsy, which may require assistance.
- When planning an event, ask advice from the children and their parents/guardians, and advertise accessibility.
- Be aware of the use of language that may be hurtful, insensitive or derogatory.
- Assume nothing - always ask! Talk to the parents/guardians and communicate with the child too!

Don't:

- Exclude (this is demonstrated by your commitment to the child).
- Use negative terms such as 'crippled' or 'victim'.
- Use language that promotes pity or charity.
- Use emotionally loaded language such as 'suffers from', 'afflicted with', 'bound' or 'confined'.
- Consider a parent/guardian to be a conversational go-between.
- Segregate.
- Pretend that you know what children are saying when you cannot understand them - ask them to repeat themselves or try another method of communication.
- Be embarrassed about using common expressions, for example saying 'see you later' when speaking to a child who is blind.