PART 4:
CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Codes of behaviour provide protection for everyone, including children, bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers. It is important that everyone involved has guidelines on what is expected, and what is not acceptable, with respect to their behaviour. The code of behaviour for bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers will help to create a supportive environment to provide a child-centred approach for the children involved in the Church. The code of behaviour for members will help to provide rules for the children to agree to and abide by.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR BISHOPS, CLERGY, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The code of behaviour for bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers has been categorised under five headings:

- Child-centred approach;
- Best practice;
- Inappropriate behaviour;
- Physical contact;
- Health & Safety.

All bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers must comply at all times with the Code of Behaviour, as set out below.

CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH

- Treat all children equally;
- Listen to and respect children;
- Involve children in decision-making, as appropriate;
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability);
- Use appropriate language (physical and verbal);
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere;
- Offer constructive criticism when needed;
- Treat all children as individuals;
- Respect a child's personal space;
- Discuss boundaries on behaviour and related sanctions, as appropriate, with children and theirparents/guardians;
- Agree a group code of behaviour at the beginning of each year/session;
- Encourage feedback from members;

- Use age-appropriate teaching aids and materials;
- Lead by example;
- Be aware of a child's other commitments when scheduling activities, e.g., school or exams;
- Be cognisant of a child's limitations, due to a medical condition for example;
- Create an atmosphere of trust;
- Respect differences of ability, culture, race and sexual orientation.

BEST PRACTICE

- Ensure that a membership registration form is completed for each child on an annual basis (name, address, phone, special requirements, attendance, emergency contact);
- Make parents/guardians, children, and visitors aware of *Safeguarding Trust*;
- Have emergency procedures in place and make all aware of these procedures;
- Be inclusive of children with special needs;
- Plan and be sufficiently prepared, both mentally and physically;
- Report any concerns to the panel and follow reporting procedures;
- Report to the panel any concerns that they may have about fellow staff or volunteer's practice which may cause harm to a child and complete an incident form;
- Report to the relevant person any concerns they may have about bishop or clergy's practice which may cause harm to a child and complete an incident form;
- Encourage children to report any bullying, concerns or worries and to be aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy and to be aware of the reporting procedures;
- Observe appropriate dress and behaviour;
- Evaluate work practices on a regular basis;
- Provide appropriate training for clergy, staff and volunteers;
- Report and record any incidents and accidents;
- Update and review policies and procedures regularly;
- Keep parents/guardians informed of any issues that concern their children;
- Ensure proper supervision based on adequate ratios according to age, abilities and activities involved;
- Observe appropriate gender balance for residentials;
- Don't be passive in relation to concerns, i.e., don't 'do nothing';
- Don't let a problem get out of control;
- Avoid, if at all possible, giving a lift to a child and if you do then make sure that parents/guardians are informed and provide prior approval;
- Maintain awareness around language and comments made, verbally, in any written communication and in any use of social/digital media. If you think that something you said may have caused offence or upset, then try to address it in an apologetic, conciliatory and sensitive manner.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children;
- Don't use or allow language that is offensive, abusive or sexually suggestive - physical and/or verbal;
- Don't single out a particular child for unfair favouritism, criticism, ridicule, unwelcome focus or attention;
- Don't allow/engage in inappropriate touching of any form;
- Don't hit or physically chastise children;
- Don't socialise inappropriately with children, e.g., outside of structured organisational activities.
- Don't allow an inappropriate relationship to develop with an individual child.
- Ensure that any contact with children through social/digital media is in line with the procedures outlined *(see part 5 - Working Safely with Children)*

PHYSICAL CONTACT

- Seek consent of child in relation to physical contact (except in an emergency or a dangerous situation);
- Avoid horseplay or inappropriate touch;
- Check with children about their level of comfort when doing activities that might involve physical contact.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Don't leave children unattended or unsupervised;
- Manage any dangerous materials;
- Provide a safe environment by abiding by the practices outlined in working safely with children section;
- Be aware of accident and incident procedures and follow accordingly.

BREACHING THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers should understand that:

- If they are unsure of their actions and feel they may have breached the Code of Behaviour or feel that their actions may have been misconstrued, a report should be written and submitted immediately to the leader-in-charge and / or the panel.
- Breaching the Code of Behaviour may be a serious issue that will be investigated.
- Breaching the Code of Behaviour may result in disciplinary action and ultimately dismissal.

It is important that if a staff member or volunteer has a concern about the behaviour of another staff member or volunteer they should report these concerns to the panel. Where the concern relates to a panel member, reports should be made to another panel member or incumbent. Where the concern relates to the incumbent or other member of the clergy, reports should be made to the bishop. Where the concern relates to a bishop, reports should be made to the to the Archbishop of the Province or in his or her absence the Archbishop of the other Province and Chief Officer in Church House. In the case of a complaint against an Archbishop it should be made to the Archbishop of the other Province or, in his or her absence, the next most senior bishop.

If the concern relates to a breach of the code of behaviour for bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers by a staff member or volunteer it shall be dealt with through complaints and disciplinary procedures *(see template in Part 8 - Appendices)*, if the concern relates to a breach of the code of behaviour for bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers by a bishop or member of the clergy, it shall be referred to the bishop of the diocese or the relevant Primate. However if the concern relates to suspected or witnessed abuse, the matter will be dealt with through the procedures for dealing with an allegation against a bishop, clergy, staff member or volunteer *(see Part 7 - Responding to and reporting Child Protection or Welfare concerns)*.

COMPLAINTS

Everyone has the right to complain or report a grievance or concern. Children, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers should be facilitated in raising a concern or complaint. Panels should put in place a written complaints and disciplinary procedures, have them adopted by the select vestry and communicate them to all staff, volunteers, children and parents/guardians. *(see template in Part 8 - Appendices)* Complaints involving child protection concerns must be dealt with in accordance with reporting procedures as set out in *(see Part 7 - Responding to and reporting child protection and Welfare concern)* and not through the complaints and disciplinary procedure. Certain child protection concerns will trigger mandatory reporting obligation, whereby the matters in question must be reported to the statutory authorities *(see Part 7 - Responding to and reporting Child Protection or Welfare concerns)*.

Any serious complaints regarding the conduct of bishops or clergy must be referred to the Complaints Administrator. This will then trigger the complaints procedure as laid out in Chapter VIII of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland. Should the complaint require further investigation the Complaints Committee will sit to consider the matter.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR MEMBERS

It is good practice to have a code of behaviour for the children who are attending the group's activities. This should be developed in consultation with the children themselves and can be done, for example, in a workshop situation. In this way the children within your group will know what is expected of them and will have a degree of ownership of the agreed code. There are several

elements which should form part of a Code of Behaviour for members and these are outlined in Part 8 - Appendices

It is important that when developing the code of behaviour with the children, clergy/staff/volunteers should also discuss and agree the sanctions for breaching the code of behaviour. When agreed the code of behaviour and sanctions should be made available to all the children and their parents/guardians.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 defines bullying as: *"Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression - whether it is verbal, psychological or physical - that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of identity abuse based on gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other devices."*[3]

It is therefore important that bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers do all in their power to tackle bullying occurring in any children's activities. The panel should develop an anti-bullying policy, which includes the definition of bullying and guidelines on how clergy, staff and volunteers should respond to any incidents of bullying. This should be adopted by the select vestry and circulated to all clergy, staff and volunteers. *(see template in Part 8 - Appendices)*

[3] Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017, Department of Children and Youth Affairs) Pg.12