



# Creating a safer environment – activities<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This includes regular group or one-off activities, events and trips including those taking place overnight



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**1 Statement of Principles**

*“Being loved and kept safe go to the very heart of the Church’s ministry to children & vulnerable adults”* (Safeguarding with Confidence - The Cumberlege Commission Report, 2007).

Every human being has a value and dignity which we, as Catholics, recognise as coming directly from God’s creation of male and female in his own image and likeness. Our parishes and communities must be a place of welcome, where each person is respected and loved, and in which everyone receives and shares their unique gifts. Parishes must be communities where we support and protect each other and we must take care of those who may be vulnerable because of age, illness or disability or who may be vulnerable because of current or past life experiences.

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

When Church activities are organised well, with regard for the safety and wellbeing of all, we reduce the risk of avoidable harm to all participants and create spaces of true welcome in which relationships which are respectful and enriching can develop.

**2 Purpose of this Guidance**

This guidance is designed to help dioceses, parishes, religious congregations and other Catholic organizations consider their responsibility towards safeguarding the welfare of any person involved activities organised in the name of the Catholic Church.

Throughout the document, the term ‘activity’ is used to describe all activities, events, day-trips and overnight stays.

Areas to consider and, where appropriate, practical steps to be taken when organizing and running activities are set out but these are not exhaustive; the need for additional safeguards must always be considered.

It is expected that Safeguarding Commissions, Safeguarding Coordinators and Safeguarding Representatives will always work to their local diocesan or congregational policies and procedures in respect of health and safety, risk assessment and transportation for example.



If local policies and procedures are not available and the information is not contained in this document, you can contact CSSA for further advice.

### 3 Creating a safer environment for activities

#### **Planning and review**

Planning, with consultation, will help ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk in any activity that either takes place on or away from church premises. Before any activity takes place, the organisers or leaders should:

- have a clear sense of why the activity is taking place, its purpose and aims;
- have a clear sense of the form it will take and its schedule;
- have considered and have a plan for meeting the diverse needs of participants in terms of age, competence, maturity, behaviour, medical needs and any additional needs;
- consult with stakeholders e.g. participants, families and others involved in the event, incorporating suggestions where appropriate.

After the activity, understanding what was successful and what could have been better is a key part of learning that can be used to inform future planning. Evaluation activities should include everybody that was involved in the activity.

#### **Risk Assessment**

Risk Assessments are an integral part of creating safe environments. A risk assessment is a written evaluation of what might cause harm to people and the steps being taken to prevent harm.

When planning activities, a risk assessment for the activity should be completed and brought to the attention of all leaders, who should also be made aware of their areas of responsibility, relevant health and safety procedures and safeguarding procedures. If off-site, the risk assessment should travel with the group.

Risk Assessments should be completed by somebody with the requisite knowledge and skills, during the planning stage of an activity or event, and approved by the event leader. This list is not exhaustive but a risk assessment should address the:

- type of activity;
- venue/premises – health and safety; fire safety;
- equipment;
- transport;
- participants;
- staffing and ratios;
- procedures;
- health and medical needs; questions to ask include:
  - are the first aid facilities and training adequate and appropriate for the activity?
  - are arrangements in place for those with additional needs?
  - are arrangements in place for those with medical needs, including those needing to take regular medication, and those who have irregular sleep behaviours (such as sleepwalking)?
  - are arrangements in place for those with allergies or phobias, and those who suffer from travel sickness?



- are arrangements in place for those with additional dietary needs and requirements?
  - financial risk;
  - contingency and emergency planning.

In the absence of a diocesan or congregational risk assessment form, templates and further information can be obtained from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>

Risk assessments for regular or ongoing activities should be reviewed and updated in accordance with diocesan, congregational or organisational policy and procedure. In the absence of local policy and procedure, it is good practice to review and update risk assessments on an annual basis to ensure that they are up-to-date.

Environmental factors must be considered throughout the risk assessment such as whether the activity takes place indoors or outdoors, the time of day, the time of year, the weather, and other natural phenomena.

Any activities in or near water need to be particularly risk assessed and consider the competence of group leaders and other responsible adults. Ratios should be higher for these activities and at least one qualified lifesaver should be present during these activities.

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

For further information about carrying out a risk assessment, visit <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm>

### **Appointment to roles**

All appointments (paid or voluntary) must be undertaken following the national **safer recruitment policy and procedures**.

### **Leadership**

All activities should have a Designated Leader who is experienced, competent and appropriately trained to support and coordinate other leaders and helpers (responsible adults<sup>2</sup> and responsible persons<sup>3</sup>).

Leaders should organise and facilitate activities in accordance with this national Guidance and consult with their safeguarding representative or safeguarding coordinator at an early stage.

The following criteria should be applied to deciding on who should be the Designated Leader:

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<sup>2</sup> A 'responsible adult' is anyone, aged 18 years and above, who is involved in organizing, supporting, leading, teaching, facilitating or supervising a church-related activity.

<sup>3</sup> Within this guidance, young volunteers aged 16 and 17 years are referred to as 'responsible persons'.



- leaders should demonstrate effective group management and activity leadership, and possess the appropriate skills and knowledge to conduct a given activity;
- leaders must be able to apply high standards to those participating, irrespective of age, disability, gender (including reassignment), marital status, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation;
- leaders must be able to assess the competence and experience of responsible adults and responsible persons and assign tasks accordingly;
- leaders must be able to identify and address the specific needs of responsible adults and responsible persons;
- leaders must be able to put in place arrangements for supervision and monitoring of other roles e.g. responsible adults and responsible persons;
- leaders must be confident to take charge of a situation while remaining sensitive to the needs of individuals;
- leaders should understand their own limitations and know when to ask for support;
- leaders must be familiar with the national safeguarding policies and procedures in relation to managing concerns and allegations and know how to act.

Activity leaders might wish to consider appointing a responsible adult to support them with planning and running activities, undertaking risk assessments and liaising with the relevant person within the parish, diocese or religious congregation if they identify any risks or require any advice.

The activity leader will need to identify whether they or an appointed individual requires any specific training to support the role. A 'training needs' analysis can be carried out to identify who requires health and safety training, see the **National Standards for Induction, Supervision, Support, Training and Appraisal**.

#### **Responsible adults and responsible persons**

In addition to having an appointed leader, activities will rely on the involvement of other 'responsible adults' and 'responsible persons'.

A 'responsible adult' is anyone, aged 18 years and above, who is involved in organizing, supporting, leading, teaching, facilitating or supervising a church-related activity.

A responsible adult can be a member of clergy, religious, laity, a volunteer, an employee or a support worker.

Sometimes it is appropriate to include young volunteers aged 16+ in an activity. This should only take place following risk assessment and judgement of capability and competence for the tasks required<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Although young helpers are usually not in an employment situation there is a range of advice and a framework to support decision making about the use of young people under the age of 18 years in caring roles.

'Skills for care' advises that young people aged 16-18 can be employed in adult social care if they have completed or are undertaking an approved training programme in health and social care. The competence and confidence of the young helper to carry out all the tasks required of them, including where necessary intimate personal care must be assessed, risk managed, and overseen by an adult in a leadership or chaperone role. Appropriate support must be offered to the young helper and the consent of the person



Within this guidance, young volunteers aged 16 and 17 years are referred to as 'responsible persons'.

A responsible person will usually be a young person from a school associated with the parish or from a parish group.

Contact with children, young people and adults at risk should only be within the confines of the agreed role.

All responsible adults and responsible persons who are given responsibilities or tasks must receive training that is appropriate for their role and be familiar with the National Safeguarding Procedures in respect of responding appropriately and in a timely manner to concerns and allegations.

### **Health considerations for appointments**

When appointing a person, it might be appropriate to consider the applicant's physical and mental wellbeing as part of the assessment of their capability to fulfil the role. This should be explored, if appropriate, during interview or formal discussion which form part of the safer recruitment procedures. With the consent of the individual, leaders should be made aware of any needs that might impact on the running of an activity.

### **Supervision and adult: child ratios**

Supervision should be active and continuous for the duration of the activity, including during periods outside of structured activities as well as during the activities themselves. Participants might not need to be watched always but leaders should consider the types of supervision required according to the activity.

Providing an adequate ratio of adult supervisors to children contributes to the physical and emotional safety and wellbeing of children and young people and is essential to ensuring that appropriate and safe levels of supervision are maintained. Appropriate supervision ratios also serve to support those supervising.

Factors to take into consideration when considering supervision and child: adult ratios include:

- the gender, age and ability of the group;

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being supported, and/or their advocate should be obtained. Inexperienced helpers must not be left in charge or to work on their own in areas of personal care.

For additional advice, the care inspectorate Wales requires all staff aged under 18 years to be registered on a training programme leading to NVQ level 2 in care or a similar qualification approved by Social Care Wales. 17-year-old trainees who are supernumerary may work 1:1 if supervised by an adult care worker until aged 18 and can only be involved in personal care with the agreement of a service user. Please note therefore that training, appropriate supervision and consent from the helper and assisted pilgrim is required when risk managing young helpers in personal care situations.

'NHS Employers' (online) state that a person aged 16 or over who has left statutory education can work in a care setting and there is no legislation or ruling that says they cannot work in clinical settings. In 2008, changes to the regulations came into play which now allow 16-18 year olds to provide personal care as long as they are suitably, trained, competent and appropriately supervised.





- additional support or medical needs;
- the duration and nature of the activities;
- the experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- the type of any accommodation;
- the competence of staff;
- the requirements of the organisation or location to be visited;
- the competence and behaviour of participants.

Any meeting with children, young people or adults at risk should take place in an area which is either visually accessible or is frequented by other people and there must always be a minimum of two adults linked to every group for all activities. For specific guidance relating to the Sacrament of Reconciliation see 'Sacrament of Reconciliation' in the national safeguarding procedures manual.

A general guide for minimum supervision ratios provided by the Department for Education (DfE) is:

- one adult leader for every 3 children aged 0-2 years;
- one adult leader for every 4 children aged 2-3 years;
- one adult leader for every 6 children aged 4-8 years;
- one adult leader for every 8 children aged 9-12 years;
- one adult leader for every 10 children aged 13-18 years.

When children and young people are identified as having additional needs that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist care or support, this must be discussed with the child's parent or carer and the child if appropriate.

Following the discussions and risk assessment, the group leader should consider increasing the levels of supervision to meet the assessed needs.

There must always be enough leaders on duty to supervise the activity and appropriate cover available to supervise children and young people should the leaders on duty be called away in an emergency e.g. to take a child to hospital. Consideration must be given to unforeseen circumstances arising (e.g. an accident) whereby it is not always possible to maintain the presence of two adults. For this reason, care needs to be taken in the planning stage when selecting an adequate number of leaders and the venue for activity.

If a group is left with only one adult supervisor, the situation must be reported to another leader (where applicable the group leader) and be recorded to safeguard the interests of both the children and adults concerned.

Additional leaders should be assigned to assist with supervision on the first and last night and at other times as identified in the risk assessment.

Support ratios for adults should be based on the assessment of need. For example, the required level of support with mobility might necessitate a minimum ratio of one to one.

Young people under eighteen should be welcomed and encouraged to assist with activities but their involvement must be monitored so that they do not have the responsibility of a group leader or are used to meet the adult: child ratio requirements.

Depending on the overall size of the group participating, it should be considered as good practice for the main group to split into smaller sections to facilitate better group supervision. These sub groups should always remain near each other, to permit adult leaders being able to support each other while safeguarding the interests of all.



### ***Conduct of leaders, responsible adults and responsible persons***

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

Under no circumstances can a child or young person be invited to the home of a leader, responsible adult or responsible person or invited to accompany them anywhere, unless the reason for doing so has been agreed in advance with parents and carers.

A **Code of Conduct** should be used as the basis for an agreement about expectations from responsible adults and responsible persons.

### ***Dealing with bullying***

A zero-tolerance approach to bullying must be taken and bullying must always be reported within the Church, whomever the alleged bully and the person being bullied, wherever the bullying is taking place.

When setting up group activities, consideration should be given to producing a statement to say that bullying will not be tolerated, should be reported and that action will be taken. The following statement can be adapted for local use:

*“We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children and young people so that they can develop in a caring and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in this group/event. If bullying does occur, children, young people or adults should feel confident to tell the group leader or somebody else within the group and can expect action to be taken to prevent the bullying continuing”.*

### ***Responding to bullying***

- intervene immediately to stop the bullying taking place;
- report bullying to staff, event or activity leaders or organisers as appropriate and where appropriate notify the safeguarding representative;
- make a record of the behaviours and actions taken;
- determine who will investigate the bullying and act (this might include referring to the Police for investigation if a crime is thought to have been committed);
- consider the need to involve the parents and carers or person(s) responsible for those accused of bullying;
- attempt to help the instigators of bullying to understand the impact of their behaviour and effect change.

### ***Managing behaviour and conflict***

Children, young people and adults need to feel safe and be prevented from harming themselves or others, or getting into situations where this might happen. In any activity, situations may arise where it will be necessary to manage behaviours that are unacceptable and/or potentially emotionally, materially or physically harmful.

Creating an environment where people feel safe and cared for and establishing clear expectations and boundaries are key steps in the organization and running of Church activities.

Good planning and adequate support for any activities within church life can help to prevent behaviours that lead to conflict. Planning may include:



- setting and maintaining safe, consistent and understandable boundaries or overt agreement to abiding by a Code of Conduct;
- considering individual circumstances in managing behaviour and conflict (not all responses will be appropriate for all individuals);
- avoidance of triggers for disruptive behaviours;
- building in methods and opportunities for rewarding and praising good behaviour;
- agreeing preferred management of disruptive behaviour (e.g. reactive strategies to de-escalate a conflict);
- agreeing in advance the purpose and types of sanctions that will be enforced if necessary (e.g. short, specific to the incident, giving the message that it is the behaviour and not the person that is not welcome);
- using the process to help the person understand how they should be behaving and the potential consequences of their actions;
- ensuring participants are aware of understand how conflict will be managed;
- provision of specific training in conflict management;
- identification of additional support that can be summoned if appropriate.

The management of behaviour that is challenging requires honesty, humanity and respect for the rights of the individual for privacy and dignity.

It is always best to prevent escalation of behaviour that is challenging and to prevent conflict from arising.

Key techniques to de-escalate behaviour and conflict:

- remain calm and keep a low voice;
- let the person know that you are listening to them;
- physically de-escalate tensions – e.g., demonstrate positive body language, giving individuals the space they need and not taking a physically threatening stance;
- verbally acknowledge the behaviour;
- empathise with the feelings behind the behaviour;
- verbally state the boundary – e.g., what needs to happen such as stopping the behaviour and what will happen if the individual doesn't comply of their own accord;
- use the 'broken record' in which an instruction is repeated until the individual complies;
- use a distraction, such as a loud whistle, to interrupt the behaviour (such as a fight) long enough for other methods of verbal control to be effective;
- withdraw attention (audience) e.g. if an action such as damage to property is threatened;
- soothe and reassure the person.

If any individual requires medical attention, this must be sought without delay and with parental involvement in the case of children under 18 years of age.

#### **Inappropriate Interventions**

- it is never acceptable to name-call or label individuals;
- it is never acceptable and an offence to use physical reprimand or punishment of any kind;
- physical restraint should be avoided and Police support should be sought at the earliest possible opportunity, where warranted.



### Recording of incidents

Always keep a record of any need to intervene due to behaviour and conflict and the intervention used.

- if the incident involves a child or young person under 18 years old, their parents must be informed;
- if other children are affected by the incident, their parents must also be informed but the identity of the child causing the incident must not be shared;
- inform the Group Leader or responsible adult immediately;
- inform the Safeguarding Representative if appropriate;
- inform the Safeguarding Coordinator if physical restraint is used;
- inform the Safeguarding Coordinator when the incident raises any ongoing concerns.

### Missing children or young people

If there is a concern that a child or young person may be missing, the event leader must take prompt action and avoid panic.

The event leader should arrange an initial search to establish if the child is in the vicinity. This should only be conducted if it is safe to do so and will be dependent upon the circumstances. The event leader will need to be mindful of the circumstances - the time of year, location, weather conditions, time of day (dusk etc.), age and vulnerability of the child.

If an initial search is not the appropriate action or the concern remains, the event leader must:

- ensure the wellbeing of the remaining children; making sure that all are accounted for and adequately supervised;
- contact the Police without delay.

The responsibility for conducting enquiries and a proper search rests with the Police; they have the experience, knowledge and resources. Their involvement should be considered at the earliest opportunity as the first hour can be vitally important and a rapid response essential.

When the Police are contacted ensure that the parent and carer contact details are readily available as it is their responsibility to contact the parent or carer. Be prepared to assist with information that will help with the enquiries such as:

- the name, age and description of the child;
- when and where the child was last seen and by whom;
- any known reason for their absence;
- whether the absence is out of character;
- any known places to be searched and people to be contacted;
- any known medical conditions or medication required.

Further assistance should only be offered to the Police after the remaining children's welfare has been secured.

### Managing medication

The administration of medication to children or adults must be undertaken in accordance with diocesan or congregational policy and procedure.



Areas to consider include:

- keeping a medication log;
- written consent from parents/carers/person the medication is for;
- competence and training of those administering medication.

Although adults with full mental capacity are likely to be self-administering their own medicines, during the registration process for events/trips, participants should be asked to disclose relevant information about health needs that the group leader or other roles might need to be aware of for supporting the wellbeing of the person concerned and/or the protection and safety of others.

### **Managing drug related incidents**

Possession or use of illegal or unauthorised drugs during Church activities is unacceptable and should be dealt with firmly, promptly and fairly. Participants in activities should be informed about acceptable behaviour regarding drugs and how incidents will be managed.

In every case of an incident involving the use of illegal drugs, the Church must prioritise safety, meeting any medical emergencies with first aid and summoning medical help before addressing further issues. Activity leaders should take temporary possession of any substance suspected of being an illegal or unauthorised drug. The substance should be secured as safely as possible.

In any incident involving the use of drugs, the event leader must notify the parent or carer and explain how the incident was managed. An incident report form (see forms library) must be completed.

Dependent upon the nature of the incident a range of options are available to the activity leader. These include:

- re-emphasis on behavioural guidelines;
- awareness raising and education about drugs;
- closer supervision;
- referral to an external agency (in liaison with parent or carer);
- removal from part of the event, activity or trip;
- permanent removal from the event, activity or trip.

Responses should always aim to provide children and young people to learn from mistakes and to develop as individuals.

### **First Aid**

Before planning any activity, the event leader must determine whether a qualified first aider is required. If a qualified first aider is not required, the leader must designate an 'appointed person'.

The 'appointed person' will be responsible for issues relating to the health and wellbeing of all those participating and leading the event, and can be placed in charge of looking after the first-aid equipment and facilities and calling the emergency services when required. The 'appointed person' is also responsible for ensuring that the emergency contact numbers in the event of an incident are displayed around the venue.

To fulfil their role, appointed persons do not need first-aid training and should only attempt first aid for which they have received training.



Depending on the nature of the activity, for example, higher risk activities such as overnight stays or sporting activities, a trained first aider may be appointed who possesses a current certificate of competence to oversee medical issues.

Prior to the event, the first aid leader or appointed person must ensure that the First Aid Kit is maintained and accessible to leaders at all times (see **First-aid Box, Health and Safety Executive website** and that the accident books is accessible and maintained.

For more information about first aid responsibilities visit [www.HSE.Gov.uk](http://www.HSE.Gov.uk)

### **Minor Incidents - accident and illness**

To respond to accident or illness the leader responsible for overseeing medical issues must ensure that:

- there is prompt assessment of the illness or injury and appropriate action is taken (First Aid should be given, by qualified personnel if available);
- relevant staff at the event venue are informed as soon as possible;
- the relevant medical form(s) are be taken with the child or young person to the GP or hospital;
- parents and carers are contacted as soon as possible following the incident unless the circumstances require the intervention of the Police, in which case diocesan or congregational procedures for dealing with major incidents must be followed;
- any Health and Safety issues are recorded and reported to the person responsible for Health and Safety within the diocese or religious congregation so that remedial action can be taken as appropriate.

In the absence of a local form, an incident report form can be found in the Forms Library and a copy of this must be forwarded to the person responsible for health and safety within the diocese or religious congregation.

### **Dealing with major incidents**

The diocesan or religious congregation procedure for dealing with major incidents should be understood by leaders and communicated to responsible adults and responsible persons.

### **Dealing with concerns and allegations**

Every report must be taken seriously, even if it seems unlikely. No individual should be considered above suspicion. Leaders must respond to any safeguarding situation in line with National Safeguarding Policies and procedures.

All children young people and adults should be encouraged to talk to parents, carers or leaders if there is anything worrying them and children, young people and adults should be reassured that whatever is said will be listened to and taken seriously.

Leaders are responsible for ensuring that there is sufficient information available for children, young people and adults, encouraging them to share any concerns they may have. Such information may contain the contact details of safeguarding roles within the parish, diocese or of independent contacts such as Child Line or the NSPCC etc. It is important that this information is age appropriate and specific to their language, culture and learning needs.

All adults working with children, young people and adults should know the name of an individual or organisation with which they could refer a child, young person or adult to discuss their concerns.



For further information, see the national procedures on the CSSA website:

- Quick Guide – responding to allegations;
- Children – management of allegations and concerns;
- Adults – management of allegations and concerns.

### **Comments and complaints**

Those working with children, young people and adults must promote a culture where everyone is encouraged to talk about concerns and experiences.

Groups and organisations should have in place procedures for dealing with complaints from children, young people and adults who are involved in church activities.

### **4 Creating Safer Places for activities**

Church premises are likely to be used for a range of activities including preparation for the sacraments, children's liturgy, youth groups, prayer meetings, fundraising events, the sacrament of reconciliation and all services. It is expected that church premises should be welcoming places where those who use them feel safe, respected and loved.

#### **Church premises**

Responsibility for health and safety in church buildings is held by the Bishops, Religious Leaders and Trustees who are responsible for ensuring that premises and equipment are regularly inspected to assess their condition and suitability, and necessary maintenance carried out. Diocesan or congregational health and safety procedures should always be followed.

More information about health and safety can be obtained from [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

#### **Registration at on-site activities**

A register of those present at each activity should be taken and kept in accordance with diocesan or congregational record retention policies. Open access activities such as a Christmas Fair will not require a register.

The register for each activity should include:

- the date of the activity;
- details of the activity;
- adults present;
- children and young people present.

#### **Visitors to church premises**

For the purposes of safeguarding, visitors to church premises include but are not limited to the following:

- clergy and religious;
- parish/congregation staff (e.g. housekeeper, administrative, pastoral workers);
- lodgers and tenants;
- house-minders (when the Priest is away);
- volunteers;
- casual workers (e.g. cleaners, gardeners, maintenance);
- all groups that use church premises whether associated with the Church or not;
- professionals attending meetings;



- members of the public attending activities.

All visitors should be expected to comply with church safeguarding policies and the Code of Conduct for contact with children, young people and adults.

### **Visitors to the Presbytery or private residences which are used for public functions**

The Presbytery has a dual function. It is a private residence and it is used for public functions (e.g. meetings, interviews and pastoral work). Other private residences used by the church might also be used for public functions. These functions should be kept separate.

An up to date key register should be maintained detailing who has keys to the premises.

All those who work within the presbytery or a private residence should have clear job descriptions and be recruited in accordance diocesan/congregational recruitment procedures or for volunteers, the national safer recruitment procedures.

Diocesan or congregational policy on visitors to presbyteries/private residences must always be followed. Casual visitors should not be invited to stay at the presbytery/private residence. For lodgers, tenants, house minders and visitors staying for more than a short occasional visit e.g. a few days:

- suitable references should be obtained (in the case of a cleric or religious this should be a celebret or testimonial of suitability);
- a written agreement should be drawn up as to the expectations of their conduct which must be in accordance with the national or locally agreed codes of conduct;
- agreement must be given to adhere to the national safeguarding policies and procedures;
- the safeguarding office should be consulted as to whether a DBS check is required.

Please note these stipulations do not need to be applied to occasional visits from family and friends.

Visitors should not be permitted to invite other persons to stay and no minors should be permitted to stay at a presbytery/private residence without a parent or guardian.

### **Visitors attending church related meetings or activities**

Visitors to church premises should sign in and out and be escorted during the visit where there is potential for contact with children, young people or adults at risk.

### **Visiting entertainers**

In addition to any diocesan or congregational requirements in relation to visitors using church premises, when any adult (e.g. children's entertainer) has contact with children, young people and adults during an event organised by the church, the person responsible for organising the event must:

- ensure that the visitor does not have unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults at risk;
- provide the visitor with the Code of Conduct and explain that they are expected to comply with it.

### **Hiring of Church halls**





External groups hiring parish halls must have their own safeguarding policies or undertake to follow the national policies, where their work involves children or adults at risk or who are vulnerable. The parish should have a hiring agreement form which deals with health and safety, insurance indemnities and equality for example. A statement should be added to this agreement requiring, where appropriate, the hiring group to have its own safeguarding policies or to undertake to follow the national safeguarding procedures of the Catholic Church in England and Wales

## 5 Off-site activities

Off-site activities include retreats and pilgrimages. More detailed guidance for pilgrimages is available in the resources section on the CSSA website.

It is expected that Safeguarding Commissions, Safeguarding Coordinators and Safeguarding Representatives will always work to their local diocesan, congregational or organisational health and safety policies and procedures and use guidance in this section to support the organisation of Church activities where local policies and procedures are not available. For more health and safety information visit [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

### Planning off-site activities

Organisation of off-site activities such as outings and residential stays can be shared amongst a small group of people, however the group leader should have overall responsibility for the planning, supervision and conduct of the event. After due discussion and consultation with other team members, the group leader is responsible for ensuring that all reasonable preparation has been made for the event.

### Approval for the activity

Ensure approval for the activity has been obtained from the Parish Priest or his representative (see Form CASE1 in the Forms Library).

### Appointment to roles, training and support

- ensure that all roles have been appointed to in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Policies;
- identify the named person who has overall responsibility for the activity and ensure all participants are aware of who is in charge;
- appoint an event co-leader of the opposite sex for non-single sex outings;
- ensure that at least one leader is trained in first aid;
- ensure leaders and helpers in eligible roles have been DBS checked and are sufficiently trained and briefed for the activity;
- ensure regular and ongoing discussion and consultation takes place with other leaders and helpers.

### Supervision and adult: child ratios

- ensure that there is an appropriate ratio of adults to children. **See supervision and adult: child ratios in this guidance;**
- ensure that there is an appropriate gender balance of leaders to group members;
- draw up rotas to ensure that sufficient leaders and helpers are available so that participants are adequately supervised.

### Insurance, venue suitability, instructor suitability



- ensure that suitable insurance cover for the outing and activities (including high risk activities such as rock climbing or canoeing) are in place prior to leaving;
- ensure that any instructors or workshop leaders within the group or at the event venue are suitably qualified for specialised activities;
- check with the venue to ensure that their policies and procedures can be adhered to (for example, the capacity at the venue is compatible with the numbers attending);
- for visits involving an overnight stay, ensure that the residential venue has a current building and fire certificate;
- ensure that the residential venue can meet the needs of all group members.  
**(See Accessibility)**

### Accommodation

- accommodation must be gender specific;
- careful consideration should be given to individual needs when allocating;
- all participants, parents and carers should be informed about sleeping arrangements prior to the trip;
- the adults supervising the children, young people and adults must reflect the gender of the group;
- night time supervision must always involve at least two responsible adults and no adult should be alone with a child or young person;
- it is generally not appropriate for one leader to share a bedroom with children or young people;
- in the case of a child with a profound disability or a specific medical condition, whose parents think that it is necessary for a leader to share with the child in a twin room, specific permission for this arrangement must be given by the parents and a risk assessment carried out. In addition, the matter should be referred to the activity leader and the Safeguarding Representative. In cases of any doubt the Safeguarding Representative should refer the matter to the Safeguarding Office for advice;
- children and young people may be allocated bedrooms together. This includes year 13 pupils who have passed their 18th birthday;
- children within a similar age range should be grouped together, bearing in mind that a 2-year gap in young people can represent a significant power differential. An estimated 30% of child abuse is perpetrated by others under the age of 18 and this should be taken into consideration when groups of young people are sharing bedrooms without adult supervision;
- additional leaders should be assigned to assist with supervision on the first and last night and at other times as identified in the risk assessment;
- there must always be enough leaders on duty to supervise the activity and appropriate cover available to supervise the children, young people and adults should the leaders on duty be called away in an emergency e.g. to take a child to hospital.

### Specific considerations in relation to adults at risk

Leaders should not routinely share bedrooms with adults at risk. Adults at risk can appoint a person to share a room with them if they wish to do so but the arrangements should be clarified with the individuals concerned.

If there is a need for overnight care, this must be risk assessed and the person appointed with the consent of the adult or their representative.



For individuals who require overnight care but have not got a self-appointed carer, every effort must be made to ensure that the person needing overnight care will not have their dignity compromised by sharing a room or that the able sharer is not having their dignity/sleep disturbed by sharing.

### Programme of activities

- ensure that a programme of activities is prepared in advance;
- do not change the planned programme, or accept enforced changes, without good reason;
- consider the insurance implications of any change and your liability as leader.

### Communication with participants, parents and carers

Ensure that information about the activity has been communicated to parents, carers and participants and that there are arrangements for liaison between the relevant parties before and during the event.

Communications must include:

- the aims and purpose of the activity;
- details of staff/volunteers accompanying the activity;
- a payment schedule and amounts;
- details of what is, and what is not, covered by the cost;
- advice on appropriate clothing and spending money;
- advice on acceptable use of mobile phones/electronic devices during the activity;
- the itinerary including departure and arrival details;
- Arrangements for dropping off and collection of participants at the start, during and end of the event;
- accommodation details including address and contact telephone number;
- a clear statement concerning discipline and appropriate sanctions;
- details of travel arrangements, including any *en-route* accommodation;
- emergency contact name and number during the activity.

### Consent to participate and consent to photography and filming

- ensure written consent for participation in activities involving children and young people under 18 years, where parents are not present in a supervisory capacity, has been given by parents and carers and that the forms travel with the group. **See the Forms Library.**
- ensure the appropriate safeguards are in place if photographs are to be taken and consent forms have been signed **See Photography and Filming.**

### Registration and health information

- ensure there is a registration procedure for those who will be present at the event. **See Registration and Forms Library;**
- ensure registration forms include notification of any additional needs or requirements, including special medical and diet information and permission to take appropriate emergency measures;
- ensure parent and carer contact details are obtained in case of an emergency along with any additional contact details for participants during the event;



- leaders must ensure that they have immediate access to any medical records and parental consent form, which should be kept securely.

### Travel

- ensure that diocesan or congregational travel policies and procedures are understood and followed;
- ensure that suitable transport arrangements are in place. See **Transport**.
- ensure that leaders have access to a full list of all those attending the activity in case a roll call is required and that arrangements are in place, where appropriate, for leaders to complete regular head counts, particularly when getting on and off transport and leaving a venue. Always get another member of staff to double check;
- leaders must ensure that they have access to any medical records and parental consent form, which should be kept securely;
- before setting off for home from abroad ensure participants are aware of Customs and Excise regulations and any penalties for contravening regulations;
- on the way home ensure that, in the last stages of the journey, young people can contact home to give the expected time of arrival;
- on arrival at drop off location, leaders must stay with young people until they are collected; contact the parents and carers if arrival is going to be late.

### On arrival at the venue and accommodation

- on arrival update your risk assessment; consider whether you need to plan a fire practice and check exits and entries to rooms;
- arrange a daily meeting and use the first of these to reinforce the code of conduct, identify restricted areas, map out the programme for the week and agree on bedtimes;
- ensure that all participants are aware of who to contact in an emergency.

### During the activity

- ensure that the contact details of all participants are kept securely but are readily available in case of emergency;
- ensure that medical records and parental consent forms are kept securely but are readily available in case of emergency;
- ensure that there are contingency arrangements in place to make telephone calls in the event mobile phone networks are poor;
- ensure appropriate measures are in place if children, young people or adults are to have access to computers, other devices and WIFI as part of the activity. See **Safer use of technology**.
- Ensure the security of the venue is maintained and that unauthorised persons cannot gain access;
- Ensure children and young people do not leave without authorisation;
- Ensure that in the event of an accident or incident, an incident report form is completed within 24 hours by the relevant person(s);
- Ensure that areas are kept tidy and any equipment used by the group is stored away neatly or kept in a safe place when the premises are not being used by that group.



### **Recording**

A record of the activity must be maintained and kept on file. The record is to include those present (where practicable), the activities undertaken, outcomes and any other significant happenings during the event e.g. accidents or injuries. A sample recording sheet can be found in the Forms Library.

### **Post event**

Arrange a post-event evaluation meeting within two months of the event, compile a report on the event and make recommendations to aid learning and development.

### **Overseas activities**

Overseas activities will require additional considerations, for example:

- insurance requirements;
- appropriate travel documents and planned method of safekeeping; request nationality and passport details and E111 (European Health Insurance Card) if travelling to an EU country in advance;
- nationality or criminal record status may affect the ability of some people to travel to some countries;
- whether there are any restrictions of a child being taken abroad.

## **6 Financial Issues**

### **Adult Ministry**

Advice on financial matters should only be provided by individuals who are appropriately qualified and regulated. Parishioners should be signposted to independent financial service providers

If asked for assistance with understanding financial correspondence or to provide practical assistance with financial administration and/or benefits eligibility, the request should be raised at the earliest opportunity through their organisation's management or with the Safeguarding Representative or safeguarding office for advice on how to proceed.

### **Handling Money**

Any assistance provided in purchasing goods for others should include the provision of receipts. All accrued benefits from the activity must be handed to the person being assisted e.g. supermarket reward points, buy one get one free goods, lottery ticket winnings etc. Any such activity must be notified to the organisation's management or with the person to whom they are accountable or with the Safeguarding Representative or safeguarding office. A record must be kept of the financial transaction including the amount given, general product details (e.g. groceries, newspaper bill) and the change.

Special care should be taken when providing this service to somebody who may lack capacity; see **Mental Capacity**. It is advisable that additional permission is obtained from a family member, friend or advocate to ensure protection both for the person being assisted and the person visiting.



### **Financial Gain**

Gifts or offerings over and above the remuneration that Priests and Deacons are entitled to receive for their ministry must be handled in accordance with diocesan, congregational policy and procedure.

**Gifts to lay people and volunteers must be handled in accordance with diocesan, congregational or organisational policy and procedure.**

### **Children's/youth ministry**

Youth workers and Parish Priests should be aware of any young person being overly generous with their spending money. This might be innocent or typical generosity, but could be an example of other young people exercising undue influence.

### **Spending money**

On occasion, the youth worker and/or Parish Priest may be asked to look after spending money for a young person during an activity. Spending money must be handled in accordance with diocesan, congregational or organisational policy and procedure. It is good practice to ensure that in these cases a central record is maintained for all monies received, and a corresponding record card completed and held by the young person. The cash should be kept in a locked box; all transactions should be supervised by a 3rd party with withdrawals being made only on production of the record card, with the central record being simultaneously updated.

### **Key holding**

Ministry might involve befriending and assisting individuals and families who are in need and engaging with them on a person-to-person basis. This is achieved primarily through visits to people in their home or residential establishment where they live.

There will be occasions when either through age, infirmity or other reason that parishioners will want to entrust the visitor with keys to their home, to facilitate ease of contact. Before agreeing to undertake this responsibility, it must first be discussed with the organisation's management or Safeguarding Representative and with extended family members. Details of all discussions and correspondence undertaken must be recorded.

## **7 Consent and mental capacity – adults and children**

Decision making is an everyday activity for people of all ages. We value our personal autonomy and as Catholics we also recognise that many aspects of our choice making are guided by the Gospels and the teachings of the Church.

Decision making covers everyday choices such as what to wear or where to eat, as well as major decisions about medical treatment, financial affairs, keeping safe, where to live, who to marry and so on.

Some people because of age, disability or illness may be limited in their ability to make choices and this can expose them to potential exploitation, and abuse.

Safer environments are created when we are respectful of individuals and take a responsible and proportionate approach to safeguard their interests when decisions seem to be placing a person at risk of significant harm.



This is a complex area and the right course of action will depend on the unique characteristics and age of the person involved and their circumstances at a particular time.

If a person is thought to be at significant risk and there is reasonable belief that they do not understand the circumstances giving rise to the risk, then the matter should be raised with the Safeguarding Representative, your Parish Priest or Safeguarding Office for advice

### **Capacity & Consent - Children**

The definition of a child, for legal purposes is anyone who has yet to reach their 18th birthday. This is embodied within the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.

There are some activities within the Church in which children participate e.g. children's liturgy, where parents and carers are in the vicinity and exercise parental responsibility by virtue of that proximity.

In these situations, no consent from parents is required for the child to participate and the extent and level of that participation is determined by the parent or carer and their child.

In situations where a parent or carer is not present, the person with parental responsibility for the child should complete and sign a parental consent form to enable their child to take part (see Forms Library).

Some specialist or high-risk activities e.g. orienteering, kayaking, climbing etc. may require a more specific consent form dependent upon the risk assessment of the event.

Even when a consent form has been completed, event leaders and those supervising activities must be mindful of each child's ability in terms of level of participation. Consideration should always be given to age, gender, disability, race, language as well as any other factors including capacity of the child to identify and manage risks.

The purpose of these considerations is to enable the child to play as full and active a part as possible in any activity or event in a way which affords them the highest level of care, love, encouragement and respect.

### **Capacity and Consent - Young People**

Whilst anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday is legally defined as a child; young people develop autonomy and capacity to make a wider range of decisions about their own actions as they progress through their teenage years. This progression will take place at different rates and chronological age is not the only consideration in relation deciding whether young people can be given autonomy and make decisions for themselves.

Whilst balancing the need to safeguard and protect young people, event leaders and those supervising activities should also recognise young people's rights and capacity to make their own decisions. For example, does the young person consent to taking part in a planned event or activity, whether or not parents have completed a consent form? For more routine activities (e.g. attendance at a youth group) a signed parental consent form might be waived if the young person wishes to attend and verbal consent is given by a parent or carer.

Those responsible for supervising activities must be mindful of other aspects of a young person's ability and capacity to consent to participation which might include, depending on the event or activity, any drug or substance issues, risk taking behaviour and so on.



The purpose of the considerations is to enable the young person to play as full and active a part as possible in any activity or event in a way which affords them the highest level of care, love, encouragement and respect.

For some young people e.g., those with a significant learning disability the Mental Capacity Act may apply from 16-18 years.

### **Capacity and Consent - Adults**

The legal framework relevant to adults is the Mental Capacity Act 2005/2007 - see [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/497253/Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497253/Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf)

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 applies to adults and children who are 16 years and over. Mental capacity is present if a person can understand information given to them, retain the information given to them long enough to make a decision, can weigh up the advantages and disadvantages in order to make a decision, and can communicate their decision (this could be by talking, using sign language or even simple muscle movements such as blinking an eye or squeezing a hand).

Lack of capacity may not be a permanent condition and individuals might lack mental capacity for periods of time due to:

- a stroke or brain injury;
- a mental health problem;
- dementia;
- a learning disability;
- confusion, drowsiness or unconsciousness because of an illness, or the treatment of an illness;
- substance misuse.

Therefore, assessments of capacity should be decision-specific.

Although this list is not exclusive, there are certain key areas of risk when working with and for those with diminished capacity, including possible:

- misuse of power and control;
- risk aversion & paternalism;
- assumption of incapacity instead of assumption of capacity;
- abuse – including Financial, Domestic Abuse or Violence, Institutional, Sexual, Emotional, Discriminatory Abuse, Self-Neglect and Neglect.

Practice should be underpinned by the following five key principles:

- there should be a basic assumption that a person has capacity to make the decision;
- you must take all practicable steps to assist the person to make the decision before treating them as being unable to make a decision;
- unwise decisions do not mean a person lacks capacity to make decisions;
- any act or decision made under the Mental Capacity Act for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done or made in their best interests;





- before any action or decision is taken consideration must be given to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is least restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

### **Responding to Concerns**

If you have any concerns about an individual who may lack capacity, please report to the Safeguarding Representative who can inform the local authority in which the individual resides and the Safeguarding Coordinator.

## **8 Safer use of technology**

### **New technologies, new opportunities**

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

### **New technologies, new risks**

Along with the many benefits of modern communication technologies, there are risks. The anonymity and sense of distance inherent in online communication can make it easier for people to say things they would perhaps not say in the presence of somebody, and to feel less remorseful about online harm caused.

The online world makes it easier to engage in criminal offences and abuse. It enables easy creation of, access to, use and dissemination of pornographic and abusive images and videos, easy access to children and adults who are vulnerable for the purposes of grooming, ease of presenting as someone else and greater potential for online bullying and abuse.

### **The use of church computer equipment to store information**

Diocesan or congregational policy and procedure on the use of its own computer equipment and the storage of information on personal computer equipment must be followed. Electronic records, like paper records, should be kept in accordance with the record retention schedule.

### **Creating and managing church-related websites and social media pages**

Websites or social media profile pages are useful means to engage large groups of young people. The following are recommended guidelines to promote safety online. The development of websites should be in accordance with diocesan or congregational policy and procedure. In the absence of local guidance, the following good practice guidance can be followed:

- parish websites and social media profiles should be approved by the parish priest and should be disclosed to the diocese;
- where there is user-generated content, the site should be moderated/ administered by a minimum of two adults;
- personal sites should not be used for diocesan or parish programs; separate sites should be created for these;



- passwords and names of sites should be registered in an encrypted document in a central location in the parish and/or diocese as appropriate. More than one adult should have access to this information.

### **Accessibility of websites and social media pages**

Websites need to be accessible to all and adjustments could include functions that change, contrast, text size or offer an audible alternative when viewing web pages.

Examples of such adjustments can be found at the **DisabledGo website**;

### **Access to the internet**

Diocesan or congregational policy and procedure must always be followed. Where children, young people and adults have access to the internet using church computers, other electronic devices and WIFI as part of Church activities, the event leader has a duty to ensure that:

- use of the equipment and WIFI is supervised and/or monitored;
- measures are in place to ensure that the likelihood of accessing inappropriate materials is reduced e.g. firewalls, parental controls and software to filter out internet material.

### **Social media and social networking**

The internet has evolved to become an increasingly dynamic and interactive medium led by social networking services. The convergence of technical and communication platforms means that users can now interact with each other across multiple platforms and devices, such as mobile phones, games consoles, watches and PCs (laptops, notebooks, tablets etc.).

Social media includes any site or forum that enables sharing of any user-generated content. These services are very popular with children and young people and bring together pre-existing interactive technologies and tools (e.g. email, messaging, chat, blogs, photographs, music, videos, gaming, discussion forums) in a single service through for example Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat and live messaging services such as Facetime, Duo and Skype, and so on. It is the way in which these different technologies are used that makes them 'social'.

### **Good practice in relation to social networking:**

- government guidelines recommend children under 13 years should not be using social media;
- all users should be made aware that their personal details e.g. last name, address, school, passwords, e-mail address and telephone numbers are private and should not be disclosed unless approval is given by the event leader;
- all users should be made aware that they should never send images of themselves or others and should be wary of people misrepresenting themselves in chat rooms;
- all users should be aware that they should advise a leader about anything on line that makes them feel uncomfortable or concerns them;



- children and young people should be advised to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they have been asked to keep communication secret;
- children and young people should be made aware that they should advise a leader and their parent or carer of a request to meet up with someone they have met on line, not to make plans to do so without alerting an adult and never to go alone to such planned meetings;
- children and young people should be advised of a code of conduct for using chat rooms.

‘CHAT’ is a simple code that can be used for remembering some rules around the use of the internet and social media.

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

**The use of social networking for communication with children and young people**

The diocesan, congregational or organizational policy and procedure on the use of social networking for communication with children and young people must be followed.

In the absence of a local policy and procedure the following good practice guidance can be followed.

- if a group, parish or other body decides that the most effective way of communicating with children or young people is via a social networking site, it is advisable to set up a custom account in the name of that group, parish or body;
- how the media is used should be made explicit to children and young people, and permission for communicating directly with children and young people via social media must be sought from parents;
- social media sanctioned by church organisations or personnel should be moderated by at least one adult familiar with safeguarding procedures, and a minimum of two adults in total;
- parents should approve and have access to all sanctioned social networking that is directed at children and young people;
- children or young people should not be communicated with via social media for any other reason than the specific ministry for which parental consent was obtained;
- all communication, including online, between an adult and a child or young person should take place via the most public means of communication appropriate without jeopardising the prevailing data protection legislation;



- for matters that are sensitive or private, online communication should be avoided due to the possibility of misunderstanding and, if used, parents should be included.

### **Personal social networking accounts**

The diocesan, congregational or organizational policy and procedure on the use of personal social networking accounts must be followed.

In the absence of a local policy and procedure the following good practice guidance can be followed.

Many clergy, religious, lay persons, employed staff and volunteers have a personal online social networking presence via social media platforms, personal blogs and websites. As a member of the Church, personal social networking (e.g. Twitter or Facebook) should always reflect Catholic values and should contain content that is universally appropriate to any possible user. Whether public or private, all individuals should understand that they are witnessing to the faith through all their social networking and as such, personal views should be cited as such to avoid misunderstandings.

Although there may be reasonable overlap between the personal and spiritual realms in communications between adults (with full capacity) within the Church, this is never the case with children, young people or adults at risk.

It is never appropriate to use personal social media accounts, phone numbers or email addresses to contact children and young people without parental consent, or with adults who lack capacity to give their consent.

It is not appropriate to send or accept 'friend requests' from children, young people or adults who lack capacity to consent from personal social media accounts.

The strictest of privacy settings should be activated on all personal social media accounts and individuals must take personal responsibility to ensure that their content is appropriate to those that can see it e.g. language, jokes, opinions.

### **Church website and social media monitoring and reporting**

The diocesan, congregational or organizational policy and procedure in respect social media monitoring and reporting must be followed. The following is good practice guidance:

- suitably skilled adults should be appointed to monitor the content of websites and act to remove offending material;
- any discovery of inappropriate use (of a safeguarding nature) of social networking sites, computers, email or texting should be reported to the parish Safeguarding Representative or Safeguarding Coordinator who will report to the relevant person within the diocese, parish or religious congregation;
- unofficial sites that carry the diocesan, parish or religious congregation's crest or logo should be reported to the Diocesan Communications Office, Parish Priest or relevant person within the religious congregation. Any misinformation found on a site, such as Wikipedia, should also be reported to the Communications Officer or relevant role;
- any forum that includes user-generated content should be moderated on a regular basis to prevent libellous, rude or inappropriate remarks so that the information can be removed;



- consider adding the CEOP help button to your site. The CEOP help button gives access to help on viruses, hacking, online bullying and enables reporting of people acting inappropriately online [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk).

### **Administrators and Moderators**

The diocesan, congregational or organizational policy and procedure in respect of administration and moderation must be followed.

In the absence of a local policy and procedure the following good practice guidance can be followed.

Adults moderating sites and adding user-generated content should take care:

- to appreciate that even personal communication by church personnel reflects the Church;
- to write in the first person;
- not to claim to represent the official position of the organisation or the teachings of the Church, unless authorised to do so;
- to identify themselves with real, full names;
- not to divulge confidential information about others;
- to avoid posting personal, political or negative content online;
- to ensure that text and photographs posted are in the public domain and not subject to copyright infringement;
- to not cite others, post photographs or videos of them or link to their material without their explicit permission;
- to practice Catholic teaching and morals always;
- to always report any form of bullying, trolling or libel to the diocese, parish or religious congregation;
- to always report any concerns about any inappropriate behaviour online;
- to always report any suspected online grooming.

### **The use of email and texting (SMS)**

The diocesan, congregational or organizational policy and procedure on the use of email and texting must be followed.

In the absence of a local policy and procedure the following good practice guidance can be followed.

#### **The benefits of email and text messaging (Short Message Service - SMS)**

Emailing and SMS are a widely accepted and attractive means for communication that people of all ages rely upon. Benefits of communication by email and SMS include quick and easy communication without delays and reduced postage costs.

Email and SMS can be helpfully used in relation to Church activities to:

- send quick messages to individuals such as reminders about or changes of arrangements for activities;
- broadcast the same message to a wide-ranging audience such as promotion of an event.



### **Agreeing the use of SMS**

The need or benefit of using email and SMS and approval of its use should be agreed with the leader of the Church group or activity. The approval should be documented along with the following:

- identification of the need or justification for the use of email and SMS;
- identification of when email and SMS will be used;
- the agreement to the use of the service by its intended recipients;
- clear identification of the associated risks and of how these risks are managed;
- storage of messages sent and received.

### **Consent**

Written consent must be gained from adults at risk or the parents of a child or young person (up to 18 years of age) and for 16 and 17-year olds, the young person's consent should also be sought, prior to the commencement of email and SMS messaging taking place.

When written consent is being sought the potential benefits and risks should be explained before deciding on whether or not to receive email and SMS communication.

Consent to be contacted by email and SMS can be withdrawn at any time and must be implemented without delay.

### **Risks**

The following risks must always be considered:

- emails or SMS not reaching the intended recipient;
- content sent in haste that cannot be retracted;
- storage of content as 'records';
- information not being sent securely via the internet.

### **Safer practice**

Using Emails and SMS to communicate with children, young people and adults at risk should be done using an organisational account and organisational equipment. It is not recommended that personal telephones or accounts be used for communicating with children and young people or adults at risk.

A generic email address or telephone number associated with the role in question (voluntary or not) maintains appropriate boundaries.

Where more than one leader or helper needs to communicate with group members, it might be appropriate to set up a generic shared email account and have a shared mobile telephone. The benefits of this are that:

- communications can be easily reviewed by other leaders or helpers in the event of enquiries;
- the need for action on any matter can be easily shared and delegated;
- communications can be picked up in the event of sickness or other absence;
- all correspondence and data is stored securely in one place.

Email and SMS should not be used to transmit person identifiable information, confidential or other sensitive information.



Those to be included on group email addresses must give their consent to be included in group communications.

The BCC field should be used for group emails to avoid recipients receiving the contact details of other recipients.

When sending messages, emails or texts to young people, parents another group leader or helper should be copied into all communication. All communications should be strictly regarding a specific Church activity and not be personal conversations, contain pictures, jokes or anything of a personal nature.

Emails or texts from young people, other than those directly related to your role within the Church or the activity you are concerned with should not be responded to.

The Safeguarding Representative or Safeguarding Coordinator should be advised if somebody receives any inappropriate texts, images or emails.

Copies of all texts, WhatsApp chats, personal messages and emails should be kept on file.

### **Newsletter Mailing Clients**

A potential way of managing bulk communications and protecting personal data is to use a newsletter mailing client. The issuing of newsletters should be in accordance with diocesan or congregational policy and procedure.

### **Useful links and resources for internet safety**

The [UK Council for Child Internet Safety \(UKCCIS\)](#) is a voluntary organisation chaired by Ministers from the Department for Education and the Home Office. [UKCCIS](#) brings together over 180 organisations and individuals from government, industry, law enforcement, academia, charities and parenting groups. Some of the organisations [UKCCIS](#) works with include: Cisco, Apple, Sony, Research in Motion, the four largest internet service providers, Facebook and Microsoft.

The [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEOP\)](#) has numerous resources for parents and carers and children using the internet; there are several video tutorials on the [THINKUKNOW site](#) which is part of [CEOP](#).

[Lucy Faithful Foundation](#) is a registered child protection charity which works to prevent child sexual abuse. It runs '[Stop It Now!](#)' and '[Parents Protect](#)'.

[Stop It Now!](#) reaches out to adults concerned about their own behaviour towards children, or that of someone they know, as well as professionals, survivors and protective adults. [Stop It Now!](#) runs a Freephone confidential helpline.

'[Parents Protect](#)' is a site to help parents, carers and other protective adults with information and advice to help them prevent child sexual abuse.

[Catholic Youth Work](#) has detailed guidelines on the use of social networking sites.

[Internet Matters](#) gives advice on parental controls and is a great way of preventing children accessing unsuitable content online.

[Childnet](#) International is a multi-lingual resource site which has a guide on protecting your privacy on 'Facebook'.

The [NSPCC](#) has useful resources for keeping children safe online including sections on Cyberbullying and Sexting. Reporting and Monitoring.



## 9 Photography and filming

The diocesan, congregational or organisational policy and procedure on the use of photography and filming must be followed, taking into account data protection requirements.

In the absence of a local policy and procedure the following good practice guidance can be followed.

### The General Data Protection Regulation 2016 ("GDPR")

Whenever a person's image is captured, be it by camera, video, web camera, mobile phone, or CCTV, and that person can be identified, the image is likely to be considered personal data. This means that the image must be processed in line with the data protection principles. Processing means anything that is done to the image for example recording it, using it or sharing it.

For the Church to use images of people that enable those people to be identified, they need a lawful basis (see Article 6 of the GDPR):

- The person (or parent) has provided their consent to the processing of his or her personal data for one or more specific purpose;
- the processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller (e.g. preventing or detecting a crime or catching an offender (this is relevant when using CCTV cameras)).
- the photographs are necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller (e.g. educational purposes) or by a third party, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the person which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child or vulnerable adult.

### Data subjects' rights

Individuals have several rights under the GDPR in relation to how their information is processed. These rights include the right to:

- Request a copy of the personal data (including images) held about them; this is known as a Subject Access Request (Article 15 of the GDPR);
- Prevent their personal data being used in a way which causes them unwarranted damage or distress (Article 21 of the GDPR);
- Prevent their personal data being used for direct marketing purposes (Article 21 of the GDPR);
- Compensation if they have suffered material or non-material damage as a result of their personal data not being processed in accordance with the DPA (Article 82 of the GDPR);
- Have inaccurate or misleading information held about them corrected or destroyed (Article 16 and 17 of the GDPR).





Dioceses and Religious Congregations should identify a member of staff who will be able to deal with these situations as they arise.

More information can be obtained from the [Information Commissioner's Office](#).

### Privacy Notices

The GDPR states that personal data must be processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner. To comply with this, if the Church wants to take an image (e.g. photograph) of someone or to record their activity, they need to tell the person:

- That photography and/or filming will take place;
- Why they will be taken;
- What will be done with them;
- Who may see them;
- Any non-obvious consequences; for example, if the photograph and/or film is going to be used on a website, in a newsletter, or on a televised programme.

This is known as a privacy notice. Privacy notices must be concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible in terms of language used. Privacy notices must be issued at the time the images are collected and always before they are used.

If photography or filming is going to take place, people should be told beforehand and given the opportunity to object or simply move out of the picture. This is particularly important if the images are to be used by a journalist or a media company.

It will not be considered fair or lawful if images are collected for one reason and then later are used for something completely unconnected, without going back and gaining consent for the additional use or being able to rely on another processing ground in the GDPR for that additional use.

Issuing a privacy notice is not the same as asking for consent.

### Consent to the use of images

Consent must be gained from the data subject. Individuals must be informed that photography or filming is taking place and the specific contexts in which the image will be used, as described above

If an existing image is to be used for a different purpose than the original intention, the individuals should be notified of its re-use and the purpose for which it is going to be used again.

If an image is to be used on a website or for commercial purposes, this should be explained to the individuals and consent from those in the image must be obtained if they can clearly be identified.

### Informed consent



The person giving consent must understand why their image is being used, who may see it and any implications that may result from using or disclosing the image. Consent must be clearly given. Consent is good practice and can be expressed either verbally or in writing but consent in writing is recommended. Written consent is preferable because it reduces the scope for subsequent dispute.

Individuals have the right to withdraw or limit consent at any time.

#### Consent for images of children and young people

Consent for children and young people under the age of 16 must be sought from parents (this includes those with legal responsibility for the child). Young people over 16 years of age are usually considered to be competent to give consent and so consent must be sought from them directly, and if felt to be necessary, also from parents/carers.

A template consent form is located in the **Forms Library**.

If an image is published without the consent of the individual or parent when consent should have been obtained, a complaint can be made to the Information Commissioner's Office. In some cases, this could result in a fine, enforcement action and damages being awarded to the complainant.

#### Consent for images of groups

General images taken of groups, where individuals cannot clearly be identified, do not require organisations to obtain consent from every person featured in the image. However, the fact that such images may or will be taken at any particular event should be made clear to people attending the event.

#### Photography and filming at activities

The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the GDPR do not prevent parents or other family members from photographing their children at activities. Settings are entitled to decide whether or not they allow photography to take place on their premises, however, it should not be banned for fear of breaching the DPA. The DPA and GDPR do not apply to parents or other family members taking pictures of their children for their own personal use, for example to go in a family photograph album. When taking photographs, parents do not need to obtain the permission of the other parents in case their child appears in the picture.

#### Inappropriate photography and filming

When taking photographs or filming children and young people, the photographer must make sure that the children and young people are appropriately dressed. Photography of children in PE or swimming costumes should be avoided except in appropriate circumstances, for example a swimming performance review. Attention should also be paid to using appropriate camera angles and the use of zoom and cropping for all types of photography or filming.

If someone is suspected of taking inappropriate or unauthorised images, they should be asked to stop and leave the site. The incident should be recorded and, if appropriate, reported to the Police.



### Storing images safely

Personal equipment (phones, cameras, laptops) should not be used to take or store images. Church equipment must be used for this purpose.

Church equipment should be stored securely in a locked cabinet and a log should be kept of who has used the equipment, on which date and, for which purposes.

Images, especially of children and young people, should not be stored on un-encrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.

Storing personal information on these devices is not considered secure. The Information Commissioner does not look favourably on organisations which permit personal data to be downloaded onto unencrypted equipment.

Photographs and films should be downloaded onto a secure electronic location and deleted from the device at the soonest opportunity available.

Electronic images should be held in a protected folder with restricted access, to make sure that only authorised individuals can access them.

Non-electronic photographs and videos must be stored securely in locked drawer or cabinet and destroyed in accordance with the record retention schedule.

### Timescales for use

There is no official guidance on retention periods for images, so it is up to each individual church to decide how long they need to keep images and how they are going to securely destroy them when they are no longer needed. If a church decides the images are required for historical purposes, for example in the archives, these can be retained for as long as is considered reasonable and necessary.

Subjects should be informed about the length of time that a given image or film will be kept and used. A typical period is between 3-5 years.

If the Church wishes to prolong the period of use of the image or film, they will need to request the permission of the subject or parent as appropriate to do so.

If the church wishes to use the image or film, for a different purpose and in a different manner than originally stated, they will need to request the permission of the subject or parent as appropriate to do so if the further use was not compatible with the original processing notified to the individuals.

For this reason, secure logs should be kept in relation to each image on file complete with:

- Contact details;
- Expiry dates for use;
- How and where they are being used;
- Where to locate them if they are being used online (i.e., the relevant urls).



Files should be checked regularly for the purpose of destroying images that have expired, and ensuring that they are removed from circulation.

### Sexting

It is illegal to take, store or disseminate a sexually explicit images and videos of a child under the age of 18 (Sexual Offences Act, 2003).

A young person or an adult is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit image or video of themselves or a friend;
- Share an explicit image or video of a child (anyone under 18), even if it is shared between children of the same age;
- Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child (anyone under 18), even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

It is also an offence where a person above the age of 18 intentionally communicates a sexual communication with an individual they do not reasonably believe to be over 16, for the purposes of sexual gratification, or, alternatively, where the communication is intended to elicit a sexual communication from the recipient.

There are many reasons why a young person might share a nude or semi-nude picture of themselves. They may want to 'belong' to a social group, interact with others and explore sexual feelings and get attention on social media. They may also find it difficult to refuse if someone asks them to send them one.

Once images are passed on electronically, control is lost over what happens to them, where they are posted and who sees them. Other people may use sexually explicit images of a minor to bully them, to blackmail them and to cause harm to them.

### Response to sexting

If you become aware that children or young people may be engaged in sexting, seek to ensure that the behaviour ceases immediately, inform the young people involved and their parents of the legal status of the activity and refer to the Safeguarding Coordinator to assess whether it ought to be reported to the police and children's social care.

If an adult is involved in sexting with a young person, the matter must be immediately reported to the police.

If someone sends an unsolicited and unwanted sext, whatever their age, report it to the Safeguarding Coordinator in the first instance so that consideration can be given as to whether the matter should be reported to the police.

### Closed Circuit TV (CCTV)

The DPA and GDPR apply to the use of CCTV where the images identify individuals. The Information Commissioner's Office has produced a Code of Practice <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1542/cctv-code-of-practice.pdf> for organisations and businesses that use CCTV. The Surveillance Camera Commissioner has also produced a Code of Practice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/surveillance-camera-code-of-practice> (However, both codes require to be updated in light of the GDPR).



All churches and diocese should endeavour to comply with these codes to make sure they do not breach the DPA when setting up cameras or when using or disclosing the images recorded. The Codes of Practice covers areas such as, positioning cameras, storing and viewing the images, disclosure, retention and responsibilities. It also includes information about an individual's right to see the images, under the DPA, GDPR and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### Live streaming of church services

The live streaming of Mass and other services allows the Church to reach a congregation that is not able to attend Church in person. In addition to being able to reach a wider audience than that in a physical location, live streaming can give people support and companionship and help them feel more connected to their church community. To address potential safeguarding issues, the following steps should be taken:

- Congregations should be told in advance (notice board, announcements, pew sheets) which services are streamed and which parts of the church or building are visible on the streaming;
- Children and adults at risk should only be filmed with their consent and/or the consent of parents (for children);
- Parents should be informed in writing of the intention to stream including what will be filmed, why the filming is taking place and how it will be used. This should include any intention to retain a copy of the filming for future editing or use;
- Parents should be given the option of withholding consent to their child participating in parts of a service where they will be filmed;
- Where consent is withheld, every effort should be made for the child or adult at risk to participate and be out of the view of the cameras.

Where a recording is made and kept, you will need to consider how it is intended to be used and the purpose; recordings will need to be stored and retained in accordance with the record retention schedule.

## **10 Transport**

The provision of any transport on behalf of the Church group must meet the needs of the individuals requiring it and the group leader must ensure that it complies with diocesan or congregation policy and procedure.

### **Accessibility and transport**

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

Further information can be found on the **Accessible Transport Policy - GOV.UK website**.

### **Supervision on Journeys**

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



- the group leader is responsible for ensuring the group is properly supervised while travelling on whatever vehicle;
- the driver must not be responsible for supervision of children or adults in the vehicle;
- the driver must ensure all passengers are wearing seatbelts before setting off and that they are worn for the duration of the journey;
- if the driver considers the behaviour of any passenger is jeopardising the safety of others, he or she should stop as soon as is practicable.

### **Use of Private Cars**

Parents and volunteers who are driving on behalf of a church organised event or trip must be made aware that they have a legal responsibility for the safety of children, young people or adults in their cars.

- parental agreement must be obtained for their children to be carried in other parents and volunteer's cars;
- the driver is responsible for making sure any passengers wear their seatbelts always throughout the journey;
- all efforts should be made to avoid parents and volunteers transporting children being in the position of being alone with them;
- central dropping off points should be considered rather than individual home drops;
- if a situation arises where it is unavoidable for an adult to transport a single child, young person or an adult who lacks capacity to consent, the passenger should always travel in the back seat and the event should be reported to the event or group leader and recorded.

### **Private transport arrangements**

Where transport is arranged privately between families and friends it is the responsibility of the person arranging and/or using the transport to ensure that it is suitable for their needs.

### **Hiring Vehicles**

Where it is necessary to hire vehicles, diocesan or congregational policy and procedure must be followed.

### **Transport Abroad**

Information about legal requirements for travel abroad can be obtained from the **Department for Transport, GOV.UK website**.

## **11 Insurance**

Each diocese or religious congregation will have its own insurance arrangements which should be checked before any activities are arranged.

## **12 Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Children, young people and adults at risk should be able to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a way that is both in accordance with the nature of Sacramental Confession



and offers protection to both themselves and the confessor. It must afford both protection and privacy.

A variety of means can be adopted to achieve this goal. These are:

- use of the traditional confessional box where there is a fixed grill or a separate entrance for the Priest and penitent;
- an area where either the penitent or the Priest is within sight, although not within hearing of others;
- behind a "frosted" screen. It should be in a location where other adults are present, although these adults should not be behind the screen with the penitent and the Priest. This will be required when a deaf child is celebrating the Sacrament so that their conversation cannot be observed.

When deciding which approach is adopted, consideration should be given to the child's needs, wishes and feelings; e.g. older children may wish to use a traditional confessional box as opposed to celebrating the sacrament face-to-face. The penitent is free to exercise his personal choice. Whatever the choice, it must be in accordance with the principle of taking all reasonable steps to create a safe environment.

A Priest hearing a Confession must take care that he does not exacerbate the sense of shame in an individual who has experienced abuse or the sense of complicity that abuse victims experience.

The advice given in canon 979 should be kept in mind, namely that the confessor should act with prudence and discretion when asking questions. He must consider the age and the condition of the penitent.

### **Privacy and Confidence**

The penitent is entitled to the absolute confidence of a Priest through the seal of the confessional: "The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore, it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason." (983 §1)

The Priest should also be aware that the disclosure of maltreatment and/or abuse during the Sacrament of Reconciliation raises safeguarding issues and the child or young person should be encouraged to speak outside of the confessional so that appropriate help can be sought.

In preparation for the sacrament of penance, parents may be reminded not to enquire into the nature of the child's confession for the sake of the child's own freedom of spiritual expression. However, a child may freely disclose what occurred in the confessional should they wish to do so. No child should be told to keep anything secret with any adult, even with a Priest in the confessional.