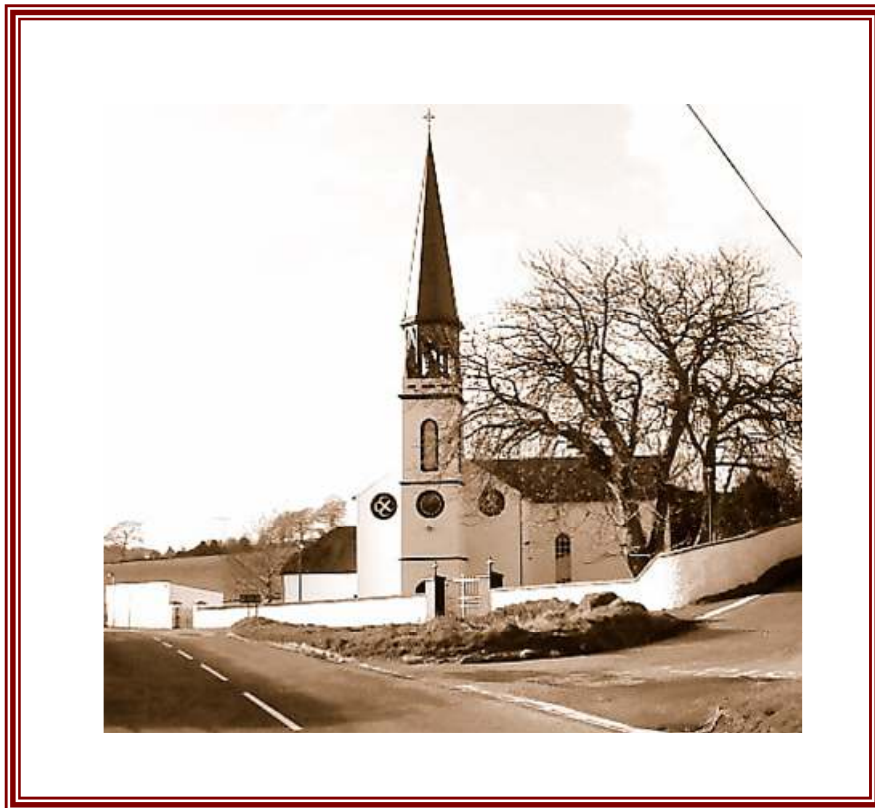


Child Protection Policy and Procedures



**Parish of Ardstraw East
Newtownstewart**

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Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Introduction

In recent years, all who work with children and/or young people under 18 years of age, and those who resume responsibility for the management of this work, have become increasingly aware of the demands upon them to ensure that children and/or young people are safe when they are involved in Parish activities.

The safety of our children and young people is of utmost importance and should not be abused in any form. Child Abuse is absolutely contrary to the Gospel values of care and concern that Jesus commands us to have for one another. "Anyone who welcomes one little child like this in my name welcomes me". (Matthew 18:5). Child Abuse is contrary to all that the Catholic Church believes about the dignity of the human person. It is never to be tolerated.

It is therefore timely that we as a Parish community do all we can to provide a welcoming and caring environment for all our children and young people. In this way, the love of Christ may be experienced and shared by everyone in the Parish. We want our Parish to be a place where children and young people thrive.

The Child Protection Policy and Procedures is comprehensive and incorporates additional sub-policies, procedures and guidelines, titled 1) Anti-Bullying Policy, 2) Altar Server Policy, and 3) Music Ministry Policy.

The terms children and/or young people under 18 years of age will herein be referred to as "children or child".

The policy and procedures outlined in this document seek to comply with the Child Protection Policy and Procedures of the Diocese of Derry.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this booklet is to document the principles that will be observed in the Parish of Ardstraw East (herein referred to as “the Parish”) for the purpose of securing the safety and protection of all children who are participating in Parish activities.

The described policy and procedures apply to all persons, including priests, employees and volunteers working for or in association with the Parish.

The Parish is committed to and will champion the protection of children. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principles enshrined in Key Directives and Guiding Documents.

Key Directives

In all decision-making and when responding to any situation of concern involving a child or young person the following two directives should be borne in mind and should create the context in which any decision is made or any action taken.

Paramountcy Principle

‘The welfare of the child is paramount’ means that the interest and welfare of the child are of primary consideration

Significant Harm

In the context of perceived ill treatment or impairment of the health and/ or development of a child, whether or not it is deemed significant, is determined by his/her health and development when compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age

Guiding Documents

The preparation of the Parish policy and Procedures has been informed primarily by:

“Our Children, Our Church – Child Protection Policies and Procedures for the Catholic Church in Ireland” – *The Irish Bishops’ Conference, The Conference of Religious Ireland and the Irish Missionary Union 2005.*

“Our Duty to Care” – *Dept of Health and Social Services, N. Ireland 2002*

Guiding Principles

Dignity

Each child is a person and his/her childhood is valuable in its own right.

Each child is affirmed as a gift of God with a right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which must be respected, nurtured and protected. These rights are inalienable by the very fact of their human dignity and integrity as 'Children of God'.

Nature

Children have a right to be heard and taken seriously, taking into account their age and level of understanding. They should be consulted and involved in relation to all matters and decisions that affect their lives.

Children have a right to care and support, and to be raised in environments free from abuse or neglect, with good role models whom they can fully trust and who will care for and nurture their spiritual maturity.

Protect

The Parish has a responsibility to operate effective systems to assure the protection of children. This includes having proper recruitment and training strategies in place and working cooperatively with other agencies in the best interests of children.

Child Protection is everyone's responsibility and the Parish accepts that all personnel, whether employees, volunteers or clergy, working with children and vulnerable adults in Parish activities, have a special duty of care towards them and must be aware of their duty both to prevent child abuse as well as report concerns.

All actions and procedures must consider the overall needs of the child. Actions taken to protect the child should not in themselves be abusive or cause unnecessary distress to the child.

A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and vulnerable adults and regarding the rights of Parish personnel. Where there is conflict, **the welfare of the children and vulnerable adult will always come first.**

Risk Evaluation

The Child Protection Policy will not be implemented in such a way as to limit normal, safe and appropriate activities. Thus, where adults, concerned for the well being of children in their care are unsure of whether or not they are adhering to the Parish policy, they will make their own assessment based on the Code of Behaviour. (For example, one adult alone with a large group of children, whether of one gender or mixed gender, would not normally assess such a situation as presenting any specific risk, and would be free to continue his/her activity). If in doubt, seek advice from the Parish Child Protection Representatives.

Policy Statement The Parish is committed to living God's word by welcoming all children into the Parish community to be cared for by people they can trust. The Parish values and encourages the participation of children in Parish Liturgies and activities that enhance their spiritual, emotional, social and physical development. The Parish community recognises and affirms the commitment of ensuring the protection and support of all children at all times, and especially when participating in any activity sponsored or arranged by the Parish.

Policy and Implementation

Aims of the Policy

To create and maintain safe environments for children in order to secure their protection from abuse, whether it is of a physical, sexual, emotional or neglectful nature and thus enables their full participation in the life of the Parish

To provide clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of children is revealed.

To inform all Parish personnel about Child Protection issues.

Implementation of the Policy

A Child Care committee has been set up in the Diocese of Derry. This committee has recruited and trained representatives from each Parish in the Diocese.

In the Parish, this is put into effect in accordance with the principles stated in "Our Children Our Church" whereby every Parish will appoint one or more Parish Child Protection Representatives.

The Child Protection Officers in the Parish of Ardstraw East are:

Mr Terence McNamee and Mrs Anne Flanagan

Contact Details: The Parish Office Tel 028 8166 1445

Procedures

Best Practice Approach

The Parish will foster and encourage best practice within its activities by setting standards for working with children, and/or vulnerable adults.

The Parish undertakes to have the following in place:

Signed parental/guardian consent for each child participating in any Parish activity, including Choirs and Altar Servers,

Appropriate supervision ratios of adults to children, while maintaining the practice of ensuring that no child is left alone with an adult.

A code of behaviour for all adult leaders

A separate code of behaviour for children

Adequate record keeping processes including:

Participant Forms

Incident/Accident Report Forms

Confidential Application Forms For Volunteers

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (POCVA) Declaration Forms for all adult leaders and volunteers

Attendance Records

Contact Information for Parents/Guardians

Procedures for the screening and recruitment of adults working with children, to ensure that no person with a prior history of inappropriate behaviour or criminal acts involving children will be permitted to work with the youth of the Parishes

An Anti-Bullying policy and procedures

Guidance on how to deal with disclosure, plus knowledge of procedures for reporting of concerns

Guidance on each activity on the advisability of administering First Aid and medication, including a prohibition against medication being given to a person under 18 without the written consent of a Parent/Guardian

Church premises will be safe environments, well maintained and free from hazards. They will be regularly inspected for safety of wiring and appliances and will be adequately heated and lit
An Accident and Emergency Plan
An annual review of procedures and practices or a review, as and when necessary

“BEST PRACTICE” means.....thinking about and understanding how best to create the conditions in which children and young people are respected and encouraged to reach their full potential according to Christian values.

“BEST PRACTICE” means..... putting practical measures in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, and the Parish volunteers who are working with them.

Role of the Parish Child Protection Representatives

Identify the existing activities within the Parish where children and vulnerable adults are involved. This includes groups and individuals which use Parish premises and facilities

Organise information sessions within the Parish for all those working with children involved in Parish activities

Help promote awareness of the Diocese Child Protection policies in order that the Parish community has ready access to contact details for statutory agencies, and for the Diocese Child Protection Personnel

Arrange for those adults responsible for the activities of children and vulnerable adults to undergo training as part of ongoing care and support for Parish volunteers

Ensure that all staff and volunteers who work directly or indirectly with children/vulnerable adults are vetted, as required under current government legislation

Ensure that the code of “BEST PRACTICE” regarding children and vulnerable adults is implemented

Develop Codes of Behaviour for children, leaders and volunteers

Not to conduct any investigation whatsoever. In every instance, judgement about abuse will be left to the professionals.

Ensure that no actions taken by the Representatives will undermine any investigation being made by the Diocesan Designated Persons or the PSNI

Code of Behaviour for Parish Staff/Adult Volunteers

Children feel more secure when they know the limits and boundaries appropriate to their own behaviour and that of others. In recognition of this and in order to create an environment in which children feel valued, encouraged and affirmed, the Parish undertakes and requires, that when working or interacting with children, all those working with or on behalf of the Parish are committed to and will adhere to, the following code of behaviour:

General Conduct when working or inter-acting with children/vulnerable adults

Physical punishment of children is not permissible under any circumstance. Children should never be made to feel frightened or humiliated while involved in Parish activities.

Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, comparison or competition.

Verbal abuse of children or telling jokes of a sexual nature is never acceptable.

No adult should ever undertake any car journey alone with a child. In the absence of any parental/guardian consent, should only one adult be available, a minimum of three children should be present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a child, a record of this should be made and passed on to the Parish Representatives. The child's Parents/Guardians should be informed as soon as possible.

When transporting young people by car or minibus, the vehicle must comply with current government legislation on seat belt regulations.

Parish workers and volunteers should **avoid situations where they are alone with a child**

Parish workers and volunteers will not spend a disproportionate amount of time with any particular individual or group of individuals.

Children will not be permitted to remain on Church or Parish property unless they are under the supervision of at least two adults.

Children under 13 years of age will not be permitted to leave the church premises unsupervised. Children over 13 can do so with parental/guardian consent.

All children must be treated equally with respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy and consideration. Favouritism is not acceptable.

Always engage with children in an open manner.

Adults working with children must not engage in or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be seen as bullying or abusive.

Personnel while supervising or working must not use alcohol, tobacco or drugs with young people in Parish activities.

Alcohol, tobacco or drugs may not be given to children under any circumstances.
Age-appropriate language and material on media products and activities will be used when working with children.
All incidents/accidents must be recorded on Parish Forms, together with details on any First Aid given and by whom.
Following the guidelines for dealing with disclosure and procedures for reporting concerns.

Respect for Physical Integrity

The physical integrity of children must be respected at all times
Parish workers and volunteers must not engage in inappropriate physical contact – including rough play, slapping, smacking and horseplay (e.g., where a child is distressed or injured)

Respect for Privacy

The right to privacy of children must be respected at all times.
Tasks of a personal nature must not be done for children if they can undertake these tasks themselves, except in cases of medical necessity. A diary note should be made recording the date, time, location and reason for the task undertaken. Parents/Guardians should be informed as soon as possible.
Personal details of children will not be given to any individual except the named designated person for that activity, who will hold the personal details of children.
Permission must be obtained from Parents/Guardians for the taking/use of photographs of children

Touching

Touching will always be in response to the needs of the child and not the adult.
Touching will always be with the permission of the child.
At all times, touching the breasts, buttocks and groin will be avoided.
Any touching will be open and not secretive and will always be aware of the age and developmental stage of the child.

Meetings with Children

If the pastoral care of a child necessitates meeting alone with him/her, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment.
Being alone with a child may not always be a wise or appropriate practice. The times and designated locations for such meetings must allow for transparency and accountability (for example, they should be held in rooms with a clear glass panel or window, in buildings where other people are present, and with the door of the room left open). Thus each meeting will follow the principle that it is **observable and interruptible**.
A diary note should be made recording the date, time, location, duration and purpose of the meeting with the child.

When the need for a visit to the home of a child arises, professional **boundaries must be observed at all times.**

Children or Young People with Special Needs or Disabilities

A child with special needs or a disability may depend on adults more than other children for his/her care and safety, therefore sensitivity and clear communication between both parties are particularly important.

Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a child with special needs or disability, this should be done with the full understanding and consent of Parents/Guardians.

When carrying out personal care tasks, sensitivity must be shown to the child, and should be undertaken with the utmost discretion. Any care tasks of a personal nature, which a child can do for him/herself, should not be undertaken by an adult volunteer, parish worker or clergy.

In an emergency where help of a personal nature is required, Parents/Guardians should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible. A diary note should be made recording the date, time, location, etc,

Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable children may depend on adults, more than other children, for their care and safety, therefore sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance

All adults working with children must be aware that some vulnerable children may be more likely than others to be bullied or subjected to any forms of abuse. They may also be less clear about emotional and physical boundaries.

It is particularly important that vulnerable children be carefully listened to, in

The Parish activities, listed below, embrace a spirit of informality whose primary purpose is to call with people in their own homes. Often when these calls are being undertaken, there are children, young people and vulnerable adults present. Professional boundaries, as outlined in the Code of Behaviour, must be observed at all times.

recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty in expressing their concerns, and in order that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.

Vulnerable Adults

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is close to providing a definition for vulnerable adults.

Code of Behaviour for Specific Activities

Eucharistic Ministers + Parish Savings / Draw Collectors

Eucharistic Ministers and Collectors should not enter a household unless another adult is present in the same room.

If children come to the home of a Collector they must not enter unless two adults or other family members are present in the same room.

St Vincent de Paul (SVP)

SVP members must still observe the sensible rules and safeguards, which can be, expected of a registered charity whose primary purpose it is to visit people in their own homes.

The Parish Child Protection Representatives will ensure that:

Each volunteer involved in home visits will complete a Confidential Parish Application Form

Each volunteer will undergo an Access NI check.

Each volunteer will receive a copy of the Parish Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Each volunteer will have knowledge of reporting procedures and will know how to deal with disclosure

Each volunteer will sign a Parish Acknowledgement Form

Recruitment of Parish Staff / Volunteers

Recruitment Statement

The Parish will employ a variety of personnel, both full time and voluntary. To ensure their suitability we will endeavour to adhere to the following Procedures:

Safe practice starts with safe recruitment procedures. It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that the personnel who work within the parish are well motivated and suitable for the tasks involved.

Stage 1-Carried out by Parish Child Protection Representative

Applicants will be required to complete a Parish Application Form. This form will collect relevant information about the applicant including past and current experience of working with children. This information will be treated in **total confidence**.

Applicants will be required to provide the names of two referees. Referees must not be relatives of the applicant. Written references will be required.

The Application Form and references will be retained by the Parish Child Protection Representative.

Applicants will also be required to submit sufficient, acceptable ID. The Parish will retain no forms of anyone's personal ID.

The Parish Child Protection Representative will attach a Verification Form to the Application Form, which will be kept in a secure filing cabinet in the Parochial House. The Parish Child Protection Representative will be the sole key holder to this cabinet.

The Parish Child Protection Representative will adhere to Data Protection legislative guidelines, and to the Diocesan Policy of Keeping Records.

Stage 2 - Carried out by Access NI nominated Officer - Mrs Bernadette Brown

Applicants will be given an Access NI Form and an addressed envelop (*Access NI Officer*) by a Parish Child Protection Representative. The information is completely confidential and will not be seen by any Parish Personnel whatsoever.

The Applicant has **total responsibility** to return the sealed Access NI form to the Child Protection Representatives who will then forward it to the Diocesan Access NI Nominated Officer (Mrs Bernadette Brown) for vetting purposes.

The Nominated Officer will acknowledge receipt of the form.

The outcome of the vetting process will be sent to the individual applicant, and to the Diocesan Child Care Committee.

The applicant informs the Parish Child Protection Representatives that he/she has been cleared.

This result will be attached to the Parish Application Form.

Nominated Officer:

Mrs Bernadette Brown

Pilgrimages and Outings

Pilgrimages and outings are an important part of the Church's Pastoral and Spiritual engagement with children.

Those involved in the planning and delivery of pilgrimages and outings should adhere to the same guidelines as outlined for other activities with children within the Parish.

For this reason the Parish will ensure:

Advance planning for all trips, including adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities activities and emergencies.

Adequate and appropriate supervision provision for young people under 18 years

Adequate insurance is obtained

Written consent by Parents/Guardians will be obtained in advance of the special activity

A copy of the itinerary will be made available to Parents/Guardians.

Contact telephone numbers will be made available to Parents/Guardians.

Arrangements and procedures will be in place to ensure that guidelines and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of outings.

Adequate gender-appropriate supervision for male and female children.

A named, designated person within the activity will be appointed, with whom children can speak about their experiences.

Personal details of the children will be held only by the named designated person.

A specific code of behaviour for the pilgrimage or outing will be made known to the children.

Dealing with Disclosure by a Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult

Do's & Don'ts

Remember that children are vulnerable individuals who do not always communicate their anxieties or concerns in 'usual' ways.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult (herein referred to as the 'child') tells you something has happened:

Do remain calm and natural

Do remember you have been approached because you are trusted, approachable and possibly liked

Do be aware that disclosure can be very difficult for the child

Do remember the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time

Do listen to what the child has to say. Give the child the time and opportunity to tell as much as he/she is able and wishes to convey. Allow the child to finish.

Do be careful when asking questions. Questions should be supportive and asked only for the purpose of clarification.

Do assure the child that you believe him/her. Remember, false disclosures are very rare.

Do differentiate in your own mind between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child, quite possibly, may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to him/her.

Do reassure the child that your feelings towards him/her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what he/her has disclosed.

Do undertake that any and every allegation, complaint or concern, voiced or otherwise made known to you by a child will be recorded and reported to a Parish Child Protection Representative.

Do tell the child what you are going to do.

Don't panic.

Don't investigate. Avoid leading questions such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse.

Don't promise to keep secrets. At the earliest opportunity tell the child that you acknowledge that he/she has come to you because he/she trusts you and that there are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if the child is to be helped and protected from further ongoing harm. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child, you do run the risk that he/she may not tell you everything or indeed anything, there and then. However, it is better to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the child will return to you at another time.

Don't make a promise to a child that cannot be kept.

Don't pressurise the child. Allow him/her to disclose at his/her own pace and in his/her own words.

Don't ask about intimate details or suggest that something else could have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate a later official investigation.

Don't express any judgement on the alleged perpetrator, while talking with the child.

Don't allow your own feelings (such as pity, anger or shock) to surface.

Don't interpret what you have been told, just record it.
Don't examine the child.

**Reporting Procedure in Respect of a Child or Young Person
Guidelines:**

Everyone involved in a Parish activity should be aware of **(i) the named person within the activity in charge of Child Protection issues**, who should always be informed of any concerns about a child being abused, and of **(ii) appropriate contacts outside the activity**.

All adults working with children who suspect that a child participating in a parish activity has been abused is obliged to pass on their concerns to one of the Parish Child Protection Representatives immediately and urgently. Failure to report suspected abuse is, according to the law, is a misdemeanour.

If a child has disclosed an allegation to an adult, then that adult must record in writing what the child has said, including in so far as it is possible, the exact words used by the child.

A child will never be interviewed by an adult working for the Parish regarding an allegation; however, all comments made by the child will be noted.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be in immediate and serious risk, the Parish Child Protection Representatives will contact the PSNI, or DHSS, or the Diocesan Designated Persons.

Under no circumstances will a child be left in a dangerous situation without intervention.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. The confidentiality of a child and family should be respected with due regard to DHSS Guidelines, "Children First", which state that, "giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality."

Parents/Guardians can obtain copies of the full Diocesan and Parish interim documentation, at any time, from the Parish Child Protection Representatives by contacting the Parish Office – Tel No: 028 81661445

In any case where an allegation is made or someone in a Parish activity has concerns, a record should be made. It is good practice to draw up a checklist of details to note and questions to ask oneself in making such a record which could include, for example:

Recording Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

Name of child/ young person/ vulnerable adult

Age of child

Any special factors

Name of Parents/Guardian

Home address

Phone number (if available)

Is the person making the report expressing his/her own concerns or passing on those of someone else?

What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times etc., of any specific incidents.

Identify if there are any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?

Has the child been spoken to? If so, by whom and what was said?

Have the Parents/Guardians been contacted? If so, by whom and what was said?

Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, record the details.

Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

The information recorded can be used as the basis of a report for contacting statutory authorities or the Diocesan Designated Persons.

Or

The report can be put into a sealed envelope and passed on to the Parish Child Protection Representatives who will contact one of the Diocesan Designated Persons.

At all times, an individual making a complaint or allegation has the right and is fully entitled to make a report directly to the statutory authorities (i.e., PSNI, the Dept. of Health and Social Services or to the Diocesan Designated Persons).

If anyone has a child protection concern or wishes to report an allegation directly to the statutory authorities, please contact the PSNI or the local DHSS and ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker.

The Parish undertakes that all concerns and complaints brought to the attention of the Parish personnel or to one of the Parish Child Protection Representatives will be communicated immediately to the Diocesan Designated Persons. The Diocese of Derry has committed to all Parishes that these Designated Persons will respond promptly to all concerns and liaise with the required civil and Church authorities. All concerns will be followed through in a timely and efficient manner.

If anyone has a child protection concern in relation to any member of Church personnel and wishes to report it to Church authorities, please contact one of the Diocesan Designated Persons.

Name: Rev John Farren

Phone No: 0035374 9384037

Name: Mary McCafferty

Phone No: 028 71362475

The Role and Responsibility of Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians have primary responsibility for the care, protection and formation of their children. As such, they have the right to expect that Parish Personnel will support them in this key role by ensuring 'Best Practice' when their family members are participating in Parish related events and activities.

The Parish takes very seriously its' responsibilities and obligations with regard to ensuring, to the greatest extent possible, the safety and security of all children participating in Parish activities.

Notwithstanding this, succeeding in this goal requires the partnership of the Parish (through its volunteers, employees and clergy) and the Parents/Guardians of the children **working together** to live up to each one's individual responsibilities.

Thus, whereas the Parish will make every effort to ensure the safety and security of children, Parents/Guardians must similarly accept and discharge their responsibilities both to their children and to the Parish at large.

Parents/Guardians will:

Familiar themselves with the Parish Child Protection Policy and Codes of Behaviour to which Parish Personnel and Children must adhere.

Sign consent forms prior to the participation of their family members in a Parish activity.

Provide information on dietary requirements, medical conditions or other special needs for individuals

Give permission for medical treatment where necessary.

Encourage their family to understand the purpose of their activity in the Parish.

Encourage appropriate and responsible behaviour.

Deliver and collect family members punctually from activities, as appropriate, or make suitable alternative arrangements for pick-up.

Report inappropriate behaviour and tricky situations.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater authority or power than a child abuses that power and causes harm and hurt. Abuse constitutes a betrayal of trust by an adult over a child.

Recognising Child Abuse

It is not always easy to acknowledge that child abuse may take place within families or in Parish related activities. The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on knowledge and information.

The common denominator of all child abuse is that it makes children feel diminished or threatened.

Be aware of the different types of abuse

Be able to understand what is meant by abuse

Become familiar with signs and systems of abuse

Be aware that child abuse is not always readily visible, and may not be as clearly observable as the 'textbook' scenarios below suggest

Be aware that, even for 'experts', it is often very hard to decide if a child has been abused

Some facts about abuse

Most children are abused by adults they know and trust.

Children very seldom make false accusations that they have been abused and in fact frequently deny the abuse or take back an accusation after they have made it.

Children who talk about the abuse fear the consequences of telling.

Children who are abused can be very good at hiding their unhappiness and distress.

Abuse has serious long term harm effects on children.

Child sexual abuse is equally common among all social classes, professions and culture.

It is not only men who sexually abuse children A child is never to blame for sexual abuse A child may suffer more than one type of abuse.

Definitions of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four types (As outlined in Church and Statutory guidelines)

Neglect

Emotional Abuse

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

NEGLECT is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve in depriving a child of: Food, Clothing, Warmth, Hygiene, Intellectual stimulation, Supervision, Safety, Attachment to and affection from adults, Medical care.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE occurs when an individual suffers harm as a result of being intimidated, being exposed to constant degradation, verbal attacks or when the need for affection, approval, consistency and security go unmet.

Examples of emotional abuse are as follows: Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming. Conveying to a child that he/she is worthless. Unsupported, unrealistic and/or inappropriate expectations of a child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control him/herself in a certain way

Conditional parenting

Emotional unavailability.

Premature imposition of responsibility on a child.

Unresponsiveness.

Under or over protection of a child.

Exposure to domestic violence.

Children show signs of emotional abuse by their behaviour or their development

PHYSICAL ABUSE is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child or injury that results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.

Examples of physical abuse are:

Shaking; Use of excessive force in handling; Hitting; Kicking; Burning; Scalding; Deliberate poisoning; Suffocation; Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

SEXUAL ABUSE occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

Examples of sexual abuse are:

Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child.

Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child by a person or object.

Sexual intercourse with a child.

Sexual exploitation of a child.

Involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic materials.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Statement

The aim of the Anti-Bullying policy is to ensure that all children can participate in Parish activities in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is hurtful, anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. It is unacceptable, nor will it be tolerated and it is wrong for whatever reason.

Leaders and volunteers in Parish related activities should create an environment in which all children are valued as individuals with rights and they are encouraged and affirmed.

Parish Obligation

The Child Protection Representatives have an obligation to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among children participating in Parish activities and to bring those procedures to the attention of volunteers, Parents/Guardians and children. The objective is to alert Parish personnel to the signs of bullying and give guidance on how to act promptly and firmly against it.

Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

The incidence of bullying and the method of bullying are forever evolving into new forms.

The following, whilst not exhaustive, is a list of some examples of bullying. Name calling. Fighting/kicking/punching. Making suggestive comments. Intimidation. Threatening. Ignoring/Excluding. Damaging property. Spreading rumours. Sending abusive text messages. Stealing property. Making racist comments

Anti-Bullying Procedures

Activities

The following steps may be taken when dealing with bullying incidents:

If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the volunteer who has been approached. A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the person in charge of Child Protection matters for that activity. That person will interview all concerned and will record the incident. Parents/Guardians will be informed. Disciplinary steps will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.

A Child who has been bullied will be supported by:

Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a volunteer of his/her choice

Reassurance

Offering continuous support

Suggesting coping strategies

Restoring self-esteem and confidence

Children who have bullied will be helped by:

Discussing what happened
Discovering why they became involved
Establishing the wrong doing and need to change
Informing Parents/Guardians to help change the attitude of the bully

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

Official warning to cease offending/bullying others
Permanent exclusion from activity

What can you do if a child tells you that he/she is being bullied?

Listen.....

Calmly and accept what is said. If possible two adults should be present (but this should be determined by the needs of the child). If not leave the door open so passers-by can see the adult but not the child.

Take notes following the conversation.....

Keep on file as this forms the basis of a bullying report. Notes should include nature of incident, date, location, names of those involved, witnesses and adult's response to the victim.

Reassure.....

That help is available, action will be taken, the child was right to tell, it is not his/her fault and it could happen to anyone.

Negotiate confidentiality.....

Be clear you'll only tell people who need to know

Ensure the child's safety.....

Adults should be aware that the safety of the child is paramount. Liaise with Parents/Guardians in relation to solutions and possible actions.

Tell the child you'll keep him/her informed.....

And how you intend to proceed.

Make an intervention.....

All actions should be guided by the needs of the child:

Decide who to consult with: Parents/Guardians, Parish Child Protection Representatives.....

Decide who to interview: witnesses and alleged bullies.

Find out: what, where, when, who, why, how the bullying occurred. Act in a non-confrontational manner.

Resolve the problem: Approach the victim and the bully (explain why the bully's behaviour is wrong, how it makes the victim feel and request an apology); Parents/Guardians (if sanctions linked to the behaviour are to be used, request the Parents/Guardians to reinforce these).

8. Make a record.....
Of facts rather than opinions.

Policy for Altar Service Ministry

Policy Statement:

In the Parish of Ardstraw East, children and young people take part in the very special ministry of serving at the Table of the Lord. Our altar servers are most important to the celebration of the Eucharist and in our Parish community. Recognising the value and right of children to actively participate in the life of the Parish, the Parish community is committed to ensuring that their safety and well being is upheld. Above all, the Parish community recognises the need to protect children in a way that promotes their human dignity, integrity, and unquestionable worth as children of God.

The Parish recognises that all involved in working with Altar servers have a special duty of care towards them and has committed to engaging in a process to work towards putting procedures in place through which this care is put into effect.

In accordance with the new Child Protection Policies introduced into the Diocese of Derry and the Parish of Ardstraw East:

No altar server is to enter the area of the sacristy until instructed by the Sacristan or Priest.

If only one server arrives, that server will not enter the sacristy but may serve Mass from the sanctuary and return to their accompanying adult after Mass.

Specific arrangements for Altar Servers to assist at Mass during a school day:

If altar servers are requested to assist at Mass during a school day, they will be accompanied to the church by a parent/guardian or a person appointed by them.

After Mass, altar servers will be returned to the school by the parent/guardian or their representative.

The school principal will be informed in advance regarding who will be responsible for the child during their time out of school.

General Good Practice Procedures for altar Service Ministry:

The Parish will ensure that it will:

Obtain signed Parent/Guardian consent for each altar server to assist at Mass and other liturgical ceremonies.

Have appropriate supervision ratio of adults to children, while maintaining the practice of ensuring that no child is left alone with an adult.

Maintain adequate records including:

Participant forms
Altar Server Covenant forms
Sign in sheets
Adult Volunteer Application form
Incident/Accident Report forms

Properly recruit and oversee volunteers working with altar servers
Have a named contact who can be called in relation to any query about the good practice procedures for altar servers
Maintain an Anti-Bullying Policy

General Information:

The Parish welcomes altar servers of both sexes
Altar servers are trained by the priest and sacristan
Training is conducted periodically during the year to cover the duties of an altar server, before, during and after Mass and to provide the necessary understanding of the altar server's responsibilities during the Mass and other liturgical ceremonies.
Following training and in order to assist new servers to become familiar with their ministry, new servers will be assigned to serve with experienced servers.

Altar servers make a commitment to serve weekday, weekend Masses and special liturgies as assigned for a full year, which begins in September of one year and ends in August of the following year
Parents/Guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from altar server duties.
Each altar server has a guidebook. He/she should be encouraged to study it often.

Altar Server Covenant Agreement

I wish to serve the faith community of the Parish of Ardstraw East at Mass and other Liturgical celebrations by assisting the Priest.

I understand good standards of behaviour are expected of me at all times which are governed by the following guidelines:

- I must remember that I am in a sacred place
- I must respect the purpose of altar server ministry, which is to worship God.
- I must cooperate with other people
- I must show respect for others in my words and actions. This involves adults and children.
- I will not deliberately hurt any other person

- I will not bully any other person
 - I will not enter the sacristy until instructed to do so by the Sacristan or Priest
 - I will sign in with the Sacristan
 - I will wait in the Church after Mass until my Parents/Guardians come to collect me.
 - I will look after my Altar server guidebook and read it often
- I understand I must not be alone with an adult.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

I, as an altar server, understand that I have the right to:

Self protection

Be safe – no one should take away my right to be safe.

Say ‘No’ to any person who tries to do or say something that I feel is wrong.

Get help against bullies – I should enlist the help of friends or say no without fighting

Tell an adult of any incident that frightens or confuses me or makes me unhappy

Not to be made to keep secrets

Be believed and supported.

Policy for Music Ministry

Policy Statement:

In the Parish, young people under 18 years of age have been called to serve the community through voice and song. Recognising the value and right of the youth to actively participate in the life of the Parish, the Parish community is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of those involved in music ministry is upheld. Above all, the Parish community recognises the need to protect young people in a way that promotes their human dignity, integrity and unquestionable worth as children of God.

With this in mind, the Parish community will:

Seek to carry out this responsibility in a caring, nurturing, supportive, affirming and safe environment free from the risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Value young people as individuals, with unique gifts and talents.

Foster the personal, social and spiritual development of each young person involved in music ministry.

General Good Practice Procedures for Music Ministry:

The Parish will ensure that it will:

Obtain signed Parental/Guardian consent for each choir member under 18

The primary purpose of music ministry in the Parish of Ardstraw East is to assist the Proclamation of the Word, to lead the congregation in prayerful song and to sing music that both praises God and provides an atmosphere which enables the congregation to worship and praise God.

A secondary purpose of the music ministry is to provide an opportunity for the choir to express their love of God in song, to use their musical talent and to enjoy each other's company as they serve God.

Your safety and well-being are of primary consideration at all times. As a choir member, you will feel more secure when you know the limits and boundaries appropriate to your own behaviour and that of others.

years.

Maintain adequate records including:

Participant Form; Attendance records; Adult volunteer Application Form; Declaration Form (Access NI); Incident/Accident Report Form.

Maintain Child Protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for choir leaders

Share information about child protection and good practice with young people, Parents/Guardians and volunteers.

Have appropriate supervision ratios of adults to young people, while maintaining the practice of ensuring that no young person is left alone with an adult.

Properly recruit and oversee volunteers working with choir members under 18.

Have a named contact person who can be called in relation to any query about the good practice procedures for young choir members.

Maintain a code of behaviour for choir members under 18 years of age.

Maintain an Anti-bullying policy.

Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Young people involved in Music Ministry

Thank you for answering the call to serve the Ardstraw East community through voice and song

Music Ministry is a faith journey that you have taken in believing that you can help others walk with God. By lifting up praise to God, the music ministry enhances the liturgical experience for all.

In using the talents and gifts God has blessed you with, you aim to please Him and feel His presence.

As a choir member you are showing admirable, strong, personal qualities of commitment, devotion, reverence and a willingness to volunteer.

Being a choir member is like being on any other team – your effort counts in creating a prayerful spirit of worship for the congregation. St. Augustine put it beautifully – “To sing is to pray twice”

I, as a choir member, understand that I have the right to:

Self protection

Be safe – no one should take away my right to be safe.

Say ‘No’ to any person who tries to do or say something that I feel is wrong.

Get help against bullies – I should enlist the help of friends or say no without fighting

Tell an adult of any incident that frightens or confuses me or makes me unhappy

Not keep secrets

Be believed and supported.

The Parish community expects good standards of behaviour at all times which are governed by the following guidelines:

You must always remember that you are in a sacred place

You must respect the purpose of music ministry, which is to worship God.

During the celebration of the Eucharist and the liturgical ceremonies you should try to remain focussed and reverent.

Everyone has a right to be respected. You must always show respect and courtesy, in word and deed, to adults and other young people.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

You must not enter the choir practice area unless another young person accompanies you or two adults are present.

You must not be alone with an adult at any time.

You must sign in.

Inappropriate language will not be tolerated.

You must not smoke while participating in choir related activities.

You must not consume or purchase alcohol while participating in choir related activities.

You are responsible for your own music folder and hymnal.

The words of the hymns are very special and meaningful. Try to take a quiet moment to reflect upon and understand the words.

General Information:

Parents/Guardians are responsible for leaving you to and collecting you from choir activities

Parents/Guardians will be contacted if choir practices finish earlier or later than regularly scheduled.

You must not leave the Church until your Parents/Guardians have arrived to collect you.

If Parents/Guardians are late, you will be supervised by two adults until they arrive.