

“KEEP THEM SAFE”

**THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
OF THE
ELIM
PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
IN IRELAND**

**NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF CHILD PROTECTION
CO-ORDINATORS AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS**

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ELIM PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IN IRELAND

Policy on Child Protection

The Elim Pentecostal Church in Ireland has thriving children's and young people's ministries. The Church leadership in each congregation takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care.

"The Elim Pentecostal Church in Ireland is committed to practice which protects children from harm.

All workers are legally obliged to place the welfare of children / young persons in their care above other considerations such as loyalty or personal preference.

We commit ourselves to co-operate fully with the appropriate statutory services when they are conducting an official investigation into the physical, emotional or sexual abuse of children or young persons by an adult or young person."

We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers

Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers

Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately;

Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;

Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals.

Anyone who has been convicted of a physical assault on a child, young person or vulnerable adult will not be permitted to work with such groups in any Elim Church or Nursing Home. Neither will anyone who has been convicted of a sexual assault or who has been placed on a register ever work with children, young people or vulnerable adult, or be party to the policy making or staff recruitment for any department of an Elim Church or Nursing Home in Ireland.

2. WHY HAVE A CHILD, VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY?

Experience has shown that children and vulnerable adults can be subjected to abuse by those who work with them in any and every setting.

All allegations of abuse of children and vulnerable adults by a professional, staff member, or volunteer should therefore be taken seriously and treated in accordance with local child and vulnerable adult protection procedures.

'...organisations which provide services for children (including day-care, leisure, churches, other places of worship and voluntary services) should have a procedure for handling such allegations' – Working Together to Safeguard Children (Home Office 1999).

The Children (NI) Order 1995 became law in March 1995; its main provisions were implemented in November 1996. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety produced guidance on how statutory and voluntary organisations should work together to protect children. The DHSS&PS recommend that all organisations undertake this 'duty of care' by implementing written child protection policies and procedures.

The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 (POCVA) commenced on 1st April 2005 (with the exception of Article 46) and enhanced the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable members of society by providing a legislative basis for pre-employment checking and for maintaining two lists:

- The ***Disqualification from Working with Children (DWC (NI)) List*** which is a list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children and;
- The ***Disqualification from Working with Vulnerable Adults (DWVA (NI)) List*** which is a list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults.

POCVA includes protective provisions over and above those available under corresponding legislation in other parts of the UK. It provides for the voluntary accreditation of non child care organisations as well as a whistle blowing facility when child care organisations fail to comply with the requirements of POCVA.

The Oversight at all Elim Pentecostal Churches in Ireland, by initiating and implementing this policy and procedures, are demonstrating the commitment of the church to effective child protection.

3. AREAS OF POLICY

The Elim Pentecostal Church in Ireland recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, the Church has adopted the policy contained in this document, (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against leaders or members of the church
- Appointing children / youth workers
- Supervision of activities and practical issues

These guidelines have been prepared following the printed guidance of Social Services, Child Care Policy Directorate DHSSPS, *Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)*, *NSPCC* and the *Volunteer Development Agency*.

A list of useful contacts, including the local Social Services team, is available at Appendix A.

The Church is committed to an on-going training programme for all those working with children / youth and this policy will form the basis of an annual seminar for all children / youth workers.

4. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

4.1 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include neglect of or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

4.2 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. For children with disabilities it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour.

4.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

4.4 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

4.5 Bullying

Bullying in itself is not a form of abuse, but a child who is bullied may be suffering any of the types of abuse mentioned above. It may take many forms but the main types are:

- Physical (eg hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (eg sectarian/racist remarks, name calling)
- Indirect (eg spreading rumours)

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm. In these circumstances bullying should be considered as child abuse and treated as such.

5. RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

5.1 Physical signs of abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse

5.2 Indicators of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia

5.3 Signs of emotional abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Note: It is normally only a combination of several of these which should raise concern

- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you a [REDACTED], then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

6.3.2 Helpful things you may say or show

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

6.3.3 Don't say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

6.3.4 Concluding

- Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- Contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator, or contact an agency such as CCPAS for advice, or go directly to Social Services/Police/NSPCC
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed

6.4 WHAT TO DO ONCE A CHILD HAS TALKED TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE

6.4.1 The Procedure

- 1 Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of being told), writing down exactly what the child said. Write what you said in reply to the child, when he/she said it and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand written notes securely, even if these have been typed subsequently.

See next page, and use the form [F 07]

- 2 You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than Social Services, Police, or CCPAS.
- 3 Once a child has talked about abuse the Co-ordinator should consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services and/or police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

6. PROCEDURES WHEN CHILD ABUSE IS SUSPECTED / ALLEGED

6.1 THE CO-ORDINATOR'S ACTIONS FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY OR NEGLECT

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Co-ordinator will:

- 1 Contact Social Services (or CCPAS) for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where there is concern about the child's safety. The parents should **not** be informed by the church / organisation in these circumstances.
- 2 Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Co-ordinator will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- 3 In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor (or health visitor) will then initiate further action, if necessary
- 4 If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department.
- 5 Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the church Co-ordinator should offer to go with them. If they still fail to act, the Co-ordinator should, in cases of real concern, contact Social Services for advice.
- 6 Where the Co-ordinator is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services, then advice from CCPAS can be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.

6.2 THE CO-ORDINATOR'S ACTIONS FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Co-ordinator will:

- 1 Contact the Social Services duty social worker for children and families or Police Child Abuse and Rape Enquiry Unit. The Co-ordinator must **NOT** speak to the parent (or anyone else).
- 2 If, for any reason, the Co-ordinator is unsure whether or not to follow the above, then advice from CCPAS can be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
- 3 Under no circumstances should the Co-ordinator attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the Co-ordinator is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to Social Services, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Article 66 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.
- 4 The Church Oversight will support the Co-ordinator or Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

6.3 HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE

6.3.1 General points

- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – **do not promise confidentiality**
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse

Reporting allegations or suspicions of abuse

Everyone in the children's and youth organisations in the church should be aware of the designated person in your church who should ALWAYS be informed of any concerns about a child being abused...

❖ Name

❖ Job / role / title

❖ Address

❖ Tel:

And of the appropriate contacts outside the organisation:

The Irish Superintendent: Elim Corporate Office
14 Charlestown Avenue
Portadown
BT63 5ZF

Telephone: 028 38335511 or

The Elim Church Regional Co-Ordinator Telephone **07872619762 or 028 91271800**

For professional immediate advice in an emergency when no-one else is available:

CCPAS (Independent Christian Adoption & Child care agency)

Telephone: 0845 120 4550 (24 hrs)
E-mail: info@ccpas.co.uk

Local Social Services Office

Local Police Station

7. APPOINTMENT OF WORKERS

The Elim Church takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults entrusted to the church's care.

7.1 THE SELECTION PROCESS

NO ONE IS NOW ALLOWED TO WORK WITH CHILDREN, OR YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES UNTIL THEY HAVE BEEN FIRST CLEARED BY ACCESS(NI), AND THE CHURCH CPO IS IN RECEIPT OF A CONFIRMATION LETTER THAT WILL BE SENT FROM ELIM'S CO-ORDINATOR.

- **All prospective workers with children and young people with "ELIM" must be a regular attendee of an "ELIM CHURCH".**
- All prospective workers with children and young people will be required to complete an **Application Form (online)** This information is strictly confidentially and will be securely stored and not disclosed to any other person except for the purpose for which it has been obtained, namely Child Protection.
- **An interview**, conducted by two persons, of the potential worker to find out about their past and ensuring that they are suitable and safe persons to be involved with children.
- **Taking up formal references and where necessary, talking to others** who may know the person, e.g. previous church leaders, friends, home group leader etc.
- **Discussing with the applicant in detail the church's policy on safeguarding children's welfare** and expectations in relation to practice issues e.g. supervision of children's activities and workers.etc
- Attaching the new appointee to a more experienced worker, or **supervisor**, for a period of time e.g. three months
- **Receiving feedback** from other workers on the progress during and at the end of this probationary period.
- Only **then confirming the appointment** – where necessary with regular reviews and support where there are particular concerns.
- Where a children/youth worker by the nature of the post held will involve any access to children / young people he/she will be required to undergo a check with **Access(NI)** as part of the selection process. An Access(NI) check includes protective provisions over and above those available under corresponding legislation in other parts of the UK. It provides for the voluntary accreditation of non child care organisations as well as a whistle blowing facility when child care organisations fail to comply with the legal requirements.

If in doubt, contact George McMurtry at:

Bangor Elim Church, Balloo Crescent, Bangor BT19 7WP (Tel 02891 271 800).

7.2 IF CANDIDATES ARE UNSUITABLE

Where a decision has been taken not to appoint a potential worker the matter must be discussed with the applicant. This is particularly important where past offences have come to light which were not disclosed on application. **The church pastor/leader will be informed that the person is not suitable.**

Candidates for positions as children's workers need sensitive and honest feedback on both their interview and any references taken up, particularly where you decide not to appoint.

Where a person has been considered unsuitable, for whatever reason, the people may need help in directing their abilities into other areas of church life.

7.3 APPOINTMENT OF HELPERS

Once a young person is in receipt of his/her National Insurance Number an AccessNI check must be completed.

A young person under 16 can assist in order to gain experience, citizenship development, personal development, they will not be required to be checked with Access(NI). Please Note that they must never be left in charge of any group.

7.4 WORKERS FROM OVERSEAS

Where mission teams or individuals coming from abroad undertake teaching with children or young people in the church whatever possible checks must be carried out and information received from reliable sources e.g. church leaders in their home church. Individuals must not have unsupervised contact with children and young people and each individual will be required to work alongside an approved worker.

Procedures and policies may be different in the home church of any visiting individual or team and a copy of the Churches Child Protection Policy should be given to the visiting team leader.

8. SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN'S / GROUP ACTIVITIES

It is the Co-ordinator's responsibility to ensure that all departments and every children's worker are made familiar with the following aspects of "good practice".

This section contains guidelines in relation to and supervision of children and specific activities. It is easy to assume that everyone knows what is appropriate in the circumstances and is working to the same end. This is rarely the case when there is an absence of specific expectations. Clear guidance is required in order to protect children from abuse and workers from false accusation.

The official Guidelines leaflet should be given and explained to every children's worker when they apply for the work

8.1 PROTECTING CHILDREN AND WORKERS

In order to reduce likely situations of abuse and help prevent false accusations the department leader should ensure that workers should adhere to the following:

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- Avoid taking children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- Avoid taking children to their home

When it is unavoidable that these things do happen, they should only occur with the **full knowledge and consent** of someone in charge of the organisation and/or the child's parents.

Children/Youth workers should **never**:

- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay, apart from structured sports activities
- Engage in sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves

It may sometimes be necessary for workers to do things of a personal nature for very young children. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed as soon as it is reasonably possible.

In such circumstances it is important that workers ensure that they are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

8.2 SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Levels of supervision must be adequate whether carried out at the church or on a journey/visit. Children must be supervised at all times until they are released (with consent) or collected by a parent or guardian.

When deciding how many workers are required to supervise the following should be considered:

- The number of participants in the group
- The nature of the site/venue
- The activities to be undertaken
- Each individual supervisor must know the responsibility that he/she is expected to bear
- No journey should be undertaken without a minimum of two adults being present, one of whom must be a worker
- Where a party consists of children of both sexes, both male and female supervision must be provided unless otherwise agreed

The standard recommended ratios are:

0-2 years : 1 worker to 3 children

2-3 years : 1 worker to 4 Children

3-7 years : 1 worker to 8 children

8 years + : 2 workers (one of each gender) to 20 children and 1: 10 thereafter

Group Leaders and workers must ensure that: -

- An information / consent form (Parental Consent) has been completed for every child. (Mother & Toddlers, Children's Church and Crèche are exempt providing a parent remains on church premises)
- Where additional activities, other than those normally carried out by the group, are to be carried out (e.g. trips to centres/parks etc) an appropriate consent form must have been completed by the parent/guardian.
- Leaders must be satisfied that those workers who accompany group parties are fully competent to do so
- Children are supervised at all times
- Children are not left unsupervised at any venue whether it be indoors or out of doors
- Workers know at all times where children are and what they are doing
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should be constantly supervised
- Groups, where possible, should be supervised by at least two or more adults
- Dangerous behaviour is not permitted by any children

8.3 PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Guidelines on physical contact when working with children.

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors
- Physical contact should be initiated by the child rather than the worker
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child
- Workers should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything which could be misunderstood.

8.4 BOUNDARIES

The areas, which need to be considered, include the following:

- Only in exceptional circumstances should a worker change a baby's nappy or provide assistance to a young child at the toilet. (Parents of Crèche children should be informed that where children require assistance the parent will be called).
- Workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.
- Respect the privacy of children, avoid questionable activity.
- Ensure that arrangements for transporting children are with the knowledge of the group leader and have parental approval. In normal circumstances it is unwise to carry a particular child on their own (Appendix E).
- When transporting children workers should ensure that a seat is available for every child and where seat belts are available they must be worn (Appendix E).
- Make sure that the only people allowed into a children's activity (e.g. crèche, Sunday school, youth club) are the workers assigned to that group. You should not allow other adults to have free access.

8.5 SAFETY MATTERS

The following areas must be considered:

- Specific issues relating to the use of premises/equipment e.g. buildings well lit and maintained, and potentially dangerous activities properly supervised
- Internal and external to the building, fixtures, fittings and equipment should meet adequate safety standards. Report hazardous things to the church leadership.
- If food is being prepared ensure hygiene requirements are observed.
- Having if possible an experienced first-aider and an adequate first aid kit for them.
- Check that all drivers carry a full driving licence and valid insurance and that seat belt are worn at all times when available in all vehicles.
- Have an annual safety review to consider all aspects of safety for children and young people.

8.6 SUPPORTING/SUPERVISING WORKERS

Whilst Child Protection procedures are primarily about protecting children and young people, workers will be protected by following guidelines and procedures. Workers must feel valued and supported by the department leaders and the church oversight.

This can be done by:

- Encouraging teamwork and mutual accountability.
- By accepting that anyone seeing another worker acting in a way which could be misinterpreted should be able to speak to the individual or the supervisor about the concern
- Arranging meetings with group leaders to review procedures to ensure common approach, sharing of concerns and identifying other matters which may need clarification and guidance
- Placing an emphasis on following the church's guidelines and in circumstances where it is necessary to depart from agreed procedures, say in an emergency or for some valid reason (perhaps to protect a child), permission should be sought in advance from a leader or reported immediately afterwards where this is not possible
- Providing feedback about incidents during which the guidelines have not been adhered to. This provides protection to the individual and draws the leadership's attention to shortcomings and problem areas.
- Keeping a written record of issues/decisions discussed at meetings.

8.7 PHOTOGRAPHY / VIDEO / MOBILE PHONES / INTERNET.

Occasionally groups may wish to take photographs or video for use internally within the church or for publication in magazines / web site.

Prior to taking any photographs or video footage, **permission in writing must be sought from the parent/guardian of any child who is to be photographed or videoed. This permission letter must be kept on file. It is advisable to renew this permission each year as part of the departments planning.** The reason and purpose to which the images will be used must be fully communicated to the parent/guardian.

Images where children are unsuitably dressed e.g. swimming activities **must never** be used to reduce the risk of such images being inappropriately used.

Where images are displayed / published, the details or full names of any child **must never be used.**

Use the "Using Images of Children" Form.

REMEMBER NO PHOTOGRAPHS OR VIDEO FOOTAGE SHOULD BE TAKEN BY ANYONE WITH A MOBILE PHONE OR CAMERA ETC. UNLESS PRIOR PERMISSION HAS BEEN OBTAINED.

Additional Guidance advice.

Workers should not contact children by email or text messages, unless written consent has been obtained from the parent/guardian. This consent form must be held by the church CPO and renewed each year.

With the increased usage of the internet by everyone i.e. Twitter, Facebook, and other social media etc. It is most strongly advised for good practice that leaders do not contact a minor via these means. This means anyone under the age of consent.

List of Useful Contacts

Child Protection Co-ordinator

Name

Tel.

.....

Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator

Name

Tel.

.....

Social Services

Duty Social Worker

At your local Social Services dept

PSNI Child Abuse & Rape Enquiry Unit

Contact through your local PSNI Station

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service

CCPAS

P O Box 133

Swanley

Kent, BR8 7UQ

Tel: 0845 120 4550

Helpline: 0845 120 4551

Volunteer Development Agency

129, Ormeau Road

Belfast

BT7 1SH

Tel: 028 9023 6100

NSPCC

Jennymount Court

North Derby Street

Belfast

Tel:028 9035 1135

0808 800 5000 (Child Protection Helpline)

Child Line (Northern Ireland)

Tel: 0800 1111

WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY

The following information is intended to supplement the church child protection policy.

VISITING CHILDREN AT HOME

Children's workers and leaders will need to visit children and their families at home from time to time. The parents may or may not be church attendees. The following guidelines are recommended:

- If possible take another worker along with you.
- Inform your group leader of the proposed visit.
- Never go into a child's home if a parent is absent.
- Keep a record of the visit, noting date and purpose (eg in a record card system, register etc).
- If the parent/carer is absent when you call, leave some means of identification/explanation that can be handed to them if the child is at home alone/with other children.
- Provide information about your group to the parent/carer – to include contact telephone numbers etc.

In appropriate circumstances you may wish to consider maintaining a more detailed written record of the visit, giving such details as:

- Purpose of visit
- Time and length of visit
- Who was present
- Record of discussion

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Sometimes children playing outside or wandering the streets with no adult supervision will join in church organised activities (eg children's clubs, Sunday schools) without the knowledge of their parents. We recommend the following:

- On arrival, welcome the child/children and attempt to gain some factual information about them, i.e. *name, age, where they live, telephone number*, and record in a register.
- Enquire if the child's parents are aware of where they are, and whether they are expected home at any particular time. If they are and this is before the end of your group you would, of course, encourage the child to return home, suggesting that their parent might be willing for them to come to the group the following week (or ring to check with parents that it's OK for them to stay).
- Link the child with another child to introduce the visitor to the group and the routines etc.
- On leaving, give the child a leaflet about the group with contact telephone numbers etc with perhaps a standard letter to parents inviting them to make contact if they wish.

Additionally, you will need to consider the following:

Without quizzing the child, you will need to find out as soon as you can whether the child has any special needs, *eg is the child on any medication*, so that you can respond appropriately in any emergency.

WORKING WITH DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN

The following information is intended to supplement the church child protection policy.

Sometimes children and young people can become very upset and disruptive and occasionally their behaviour may be assessed as possibly dangerous to themselves or others.

Some guidelines to consider:

If a child/young person has disruptive behaviour, an attempt should be made to speak to the individual to:

1. Request that the behaviour stops;
 2. Speak with the child to find out the cause(s) of upset;
 3. Warn the child that they will be asked to leave if the behaviour continues;
 4. Warn the child that continued disruptive behaviour might result in longer term exclusion from the activity.
- If a child/young person is harming him/herself or another person or property other children/young people should be escorted to vacate the place/area where the disruption is occurring. **At the same time**, and with a second worker present, request the child/young person to STOP.
 - If your request is ignored, you might need to warn that you might have to call for additional help, e.g. Police.
 - In exceptional circumstances and with the help of another, whilst police help is awaited, you might need to prevent the child/young person from harming themselves.

In all circumstances, workers involved should record as soon as possible, i.e. once the situation is resolved/or immediately after the activity, details of:

- What activity was taking place;
- What might have caused the disruptive behaviour;
- The child's/young person's behaviour;
- What you said/how you responded
- Others present who might have witnessed the event.

The incident should be recorded in the incident book and signed by the group leader. If the matter is a serious one it should be brought to the attention of the Co-ordinator who in turn will notify the Church Oversight.

TALKING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN

The following information is intended to supplement the church child protection policy.

Children and Young People will often decide with whom they will talk and share. They might test someone out beforehand. Because of this, all workers and adults in a church/organisation need to understand the importance of listening to children and responding appropriately.

How to advertise the listener's role

It is important to identify ways by which you can communicate to children/young people that they are valued, that what they say is important and that there are individuals who are happy to listen to them.

Points to note:

- A child/young person may not be talking about an abusive situation;
- Remember not to promise confidentiality;
- Offer the child/young person privacy but remember their and your safety;
- Suggest where you might meet;
- Be aware of how to respond if a child/young person does disclose abuse;
- Should you make public the "listener's" phone number and/or address? Is it more appropriate to provide an alternative such as CCPAS/ChildLine for children/young people to contact?

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

The following information is intended to supplement the church child protection policy.

These guidelines should apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children and young people, which is organised by or on behalf of your church/organisation. Private arrangements for transport made directly between those with parental responsibility and others should not be covered by these guidelines.

Our advice on transporting children is as follows:

- Only those who have gone through the church/organisation recruitment procedures for workers should transport children.
- All drivers should have read the child protection policy of the church/organisation and agree to abide by this.
- Parental consent should be given and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the leadership.
- Seat belts should be worn, the driver should have adequate insurance and the vehicle should be road worthy.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited till other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk. The driver should inform the church CPO. (Remember a child / young person may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- Having checked drivers (application form, interview, references etc) it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Ensure a discussion takes place as to the most suitable child to be dropped off last and plan routes accordingly.
- At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by an appropriate adult.
- Consider instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a child e.g. where they have had a disagreement that evening, where a child / young person has a 'crush' on a driver etc., and arrange for someone else to transport the child / young person.

In addition to the above, consider the following arrangements when using mini buses:

- Ensure that the driver is insured to drive that vehicle – and has the proper license.
- **If a driver has had penalty points added to their licence, check that they have informed their insurance company as it could affect the cover or prohibit the driver from driving.**
- Ensure that you have adequate supervision. As well as a driver, another responsible adult sitting with the children/ young people will be needed.
- Ensure the responsible adult has also undergone appropriate recruitment and selection in accordance with the church/organisation's procedures.

SWIMMING TRIPS

SWIMMING IN THE SEA OR OTHER NATURAL WATERS

Swimming in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities.

This should only be allowed as formal and supervised activities, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance e.g. where there is a qualified life guard present.

Even with life guard cover all children and young people should always be in the sight of the group leader and team.

One person should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

Ideally the group leader should hold a relevant life saving award, even where there is life guard cover.

Increase ratios of adults to children and young people.

SWIMMING POOLS

Ascertain before any visit to a swimming pool:

- The level of supervision provided by the pool staff, are they qualified in life saving? Is there constant pool supervision?
- Are there signs indicating the depth – eg shallow end. (Depending on the age of the group you are taking is the shallow end shallow enough?)
- Does the deep end allow for safe diving? (if the depth is less than 1.5 metres diving should not be permitted)
- Is there a changing room for each sex?
- Are the changing and showering facilities safe and hygienic?

**(By only using council run swimming pools the above can be assumed.
If using e.g. a school swimming pool, you need to check these points)**

- Have the children and young people been instructed on how to behave in and around water?
- Ensure that children and young people have not eaten (at least half an hour) before swimming

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy is based on the following child protection guidelines:-

- "Choosing to protect" [POC(NI)]
- CCPAS Guidance to Churches, 10th edition issued by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (disk version for N.I.)
- Our Duty to Care edition issued by the Volunteer Development Agency

This policy must not be copied by anyone.

That includes other churches/organisations or individuals without the written agreement of CCPAS and the Eilim Pentecostal Church in Ireland.