

LISBURN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Child Protection Policy

Aim

The aim of this policy is to specify the procedures which are in place to protect and safeguard those children and vulnerable young adults who participate in our range of youth activities.

"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'" Matthew 19: 14 (NIV).

As we aim to follow biblical principles and recognise the value that Jesus gives to children, we in Lisburn Christian Fellowship (LCF) seek to ensure the physical, emotional and spiritual well being and development of each child and young person in all our work with them. Within this context, and being mindful of and compliant with child protection regulations, we are committed to the protection of children and young people from all forms of abuse, to treating children and young people with dignity and respect, to avoid and discourage put-downs, to have programmes which are age appropriate and well planned and to ensure adequate leadership in terms of child/adult ratios.

Each Children's or Youth Group needs to:

- Keep an updated list of names, addresses and contact details of group members - including leaders. This information will be held in accordance with data protection regulations.
- Have a copy of LCF's Child Protection Policy and be familiar with its contents. They should know who to contact if neglect or abuse is suspected and what basic disclosure procedures to follow.
- Formulate - in close association with the young people or children involved, a code of behaviour, a discipline policy and an anti bullying policy.
- Plan its programme with safety in mind to eliminate or minimise risk.
- Use the appropriate forms for any activities, weekends, outings and accidents.
- Have completed an information form on each volunteer worker, including Access NI check, which will be kept on file in the church. Formulate its own statement of aims and objectives and ensure each volunteer in the Group is familiar with this.

Supervision levels

Children should be supervised at all times by approved leaders. The younger the children, the more leaders should be present. Leaders should try to ensure that as far as possible they are not left alone in a closed room with a child or young person. If a situation arises where they have to speak with one child, they should keep in view of the others - do not take to another room. If there are insufficient leaders to run the group safely it is better to stop the group until new leaders are recruited and trained. Every effort should be made where possible to work within the following ratio guidelines:

0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children
2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children
3-7 years	1 adult to 8 children
8 years +	2 adults for up to 20 children

A minimum of 2 leaders should be present for any group who meet and in mixed groups there should be males and females present in the room. Where children meet in more than one room, a leader should be available for each room. When smaller children need to make visits to the bathroom, the leader should only enter a cubicle with a child in an emergency - generally wait outside.

When taking a group out on a special activity e.g. swimming, check there are people in charge or on hand with adequate safety training, and that the establishment is covered in case of accident or injury. Sometimes an extension of cover may be necessary. On trips out, leaders should have a list of children they are responsible for, should take responsibility for that group - know where they are at all times - and make sure they bring them all home! DO NOT attempt trips with inadequate leadership. Inform parents of all trips out or special activities the group may undertake. Parental consent is necessary to take children under the age of 16 anywhere. All final details of trips should be on an information sheet which should have a return slip for the parent/guardian to sign (see sample forms).

All activities must have adequate insurance cover to include:

- Personal accident
- Public liability
- Damage to property by fire, storm, flood etc.

Activities carried on by children or young people are insured under LCF's own insurance cover where it is an event or activity organised by LCF.

If high risk activities are planned, special consideration is needed. High risk activities include mountaineering, hill walking, rock climbing, abseiling, all water sports, karting and bouncy castles. If in doubt whether an activity is high risk, consult your insurance company.

Safety

Children should not be allowed to run in and out of church premises. Especially where younger children are concerned the outer doors need to be monitored by leaders at arrival and departure times.

Care should be taken that younger children (7 and under) are properly picked up from groups by the parents or someone authorised by the parents.

Special care should be taken when going to other locations outside the main building - order; safety and close supervision are essential.

When the church premises are used as accommodation for overnights or weekends: Outside doors should be locked when there is no one in that immediate area to prevent vandalism or theft, but keys should be positioned nearby so that doors can be opened in emergency situations.

Leaders should have a full list of all people in the building overnight and have them posted at the main exits so that a roll call can be taken in case of emergency. An assembly point should also be agreed and made known to all.

Where an area is being used for sleeping accommodation, there should be at least 2 separate routes leading out of the building.

Exit routes and doors should be clearly indicated and pointed out to the group.

As outside doors have to be locked for security purposes, it is preferable to use bolts, but if key locks are necessary it is important that keys be left in the lock or hung near the door overnight, so that doors can be opened in an emergency.

While internal doors should be kept closed overnight to minimise the spread of fire and smoke, they should not be locked.

Leaders should have access to a telephone in the building and have torches in case of a power failure.

Leaders should know where fire alarms and appliances are located and how to operate them.

Portable heating appliances and all cooking appliances should be turned off when people are sleeping.

Guidelines for Praying with Children and Young People

In LCF we believe that in working with the children and young people we are not just "minding them" but helping to equip them. Prayer ministry in the Body of Christ is important - we want to be free to pray for them when appropriate in our groups and to encourage them to pray with each other. Please accept these guidelines not as a limit, but as part of fulfilling the Bible's requirement that "everything be done in a fitting and orderly way".

1. Make sure parents know that prayer, by the children, for the children and among the children, is part of your programme. If you are dealing with subjects where prayer ministry is definitely involved, e.g. the baptism of the Spirit, or spiritual gifts, parents should know this, and know that they are welcome to be present. They then have the option of keeping their children away that week if they don't feel it is appropriate for them.
2. Always pray in an open area with other children and leaders around.
3. Always have the child's permission to be specifically prayed for.
4. Have another leader with you when you pray for a child. It is also good to include one or two of the child's peers. This helps in the weighing up of any words or directions you might think you are receiving for the child.
5. Don't crowd the children when praying. Get down on their level - don't tower over them. It is often good to sit down on the floor together. Keep touch to a gentle touch of the hand on the child's head or shoulder.
6. Listen to what the child wants prayed for. If they have no specific needs or requests, simply ask the Holy Spirit to come and bless them. If you feel strongly that you have something specific you should pray, it is good to check that with another leader. If you are unsure about a prophecy or word of knowledge, quietly submit it to the other leader before you go ahead.
7. If you pray for a specific area, or if a leader or a child receives a word of knowledge, encouragement or prophecy, this should be written down so as the child can let their parents know (and remember themselves!).
8. Keep prayers simple and short and generally keep prayer times short too.
9. If a child becomes distressed, consult with the leader in charge before continuing to pray with them. Discernment is important - the child may be being touched by the Spirit and responding with tears of repentance or joy and relief - or they may be feeling confused and afraid. If you are unsure, stop, and talk to the parents later.

10. Never allow any leader or child to get into anything like "deliverance ministry"
- it is inappropriate in the context of a children's group.

For the purposes of this policy LCF accepts the working definitions of abuse detailed within "Co-operating to Protect Children", volume 6 of the Children (NI) Order Regulations and Guidance.

In line with guidelines given in the Children (NI) Order, LCF has appointed a member of staff, Melanie Hilary, as the Designated Officer. The Designated Officer will refer all incidents of concern, disclosures or allegations of abuse to the appropriate authorities and take responsibility for co-ordinating adherence to LCF's procedures should the disclosure of abuse or incidents of such abuse occur.

In order to carry out the above Policy, we endeavour to:

- (a) ensure that in all matters relating to decisions regarding children and young persons who may or may not have been abused, that the child or young person's welfare will be the paramount consideration. (The Children (NI) Order 1995)
- (b) ensure that all our staff and volunteers are made aware of and have accepted our policy and procedures on child protection prior to undertaking direct work with children or young people.
- (c) have fully developed child protection procedures for the prevention of and responding to incidents or disclosures of abuse.
- (d) follow carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- (e) provide context-appropriate training to enable volunteers and staff to acquire knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, and LCF's child protection policy and procedures. This will be at a level consistent with the responsibility held by each individual.
- (f) assist and co-operate fully with any police investigation or enquiries into any allegation of abuse involving staff, volunteers or children or young people involved with LCF
- (g) keep all information concerning an investigation or enquiry confidential, sharing information only on a "need to know" basis.
- (h) make our activities accessible to children and young people with special needs

- (i) support staff and volunteers and any other involved parties during the process of any child protection investigation or inquiry, as appropriate in each circumstance.
- (j) make available our Child Protection Policy to volunteers and parents involved in LCF activities.

Guidelines on Transport

Coaches and Minibuses

Generally coaches are a safer and more effective way of transporting large groups than using leaders or parents cars. A reputable company should be used and insurance cover checked. Overcrowding is dangerous and will invalidate insurance cover. All vehicles must be fitted with seat belts by law.

Cars

Voluntary workers, who are Access NI checked, can use cars to transport children and young people in connection with youth organisations **as long as hire or reward is not involved**.

Drivers should check that their passenger liability insurance is adequate and note that overcrowding invalidates any insurance cover. Normal saloon cars are not insured for more than 5 people.

Be very careful to be on the church side of the road when leaving children off so as they are not tempted to run across the road. Try to have all young children exit cars on the pavement side.

Care should be taken when driving close to church premises, and especially in and out of the car park. Leaders who use the car park should try to arrive well before any children. Exits from the building should not be obstructed by cars - especially the fire doors.

Definitions of Abuse

The following is taken from "Co-operating to Protect Children" volume 6 of the Children (NI) Order Regulations and Guidance.

Anyone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to provide proper care.

Children may be abused in many settings: in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger.

Disabled children may be particularly vulnerable to abuse.

There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one type of abuse.

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.

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 abuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

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.

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."

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 defined above. It may take many forms but the main types are:

- physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft);
- verbal (e.g. sectarian/racist remarks, name calling);
- indirect (e.g. spreading rumours)

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

GUIDELINES ON CHILD PROTECTION

LCF is fully committed to the welfare of the children and young people involved in all our activities. Volunteers are expected to do all they can to protect those in their care from abuse. They are also expected to behave in such a way that no possible allegation of abuse can be made against any of them.

LCF Youth and Children's Group Leaders are required to ensure that each of the adults involved in their groups, or in any residential activities organised by their groups, has been approved in accordance with the church policy on Child Protection and has received some basic training in child protection.

Each of the adults involved in an LCF youth or children's activity, or in any residential activity organised, is expected to be familiar with and to comply fully with the church's policy on Child Protection.

They are also expected to adhere to the following guidelines.

1. You should treat children, and encourage them to treat each other, with dignity and respect at all times. You should never allow inappropriate language or behaviour to go unchallenged.

2. Other than IN AN EMERGENCY, you should never be alone with a child in isolation without the consent of the Group Leader. Meetings with individual children should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other adults informed of the meeting.

3. You should never take children alone in a car on journeys, however short. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the Group Leader or the child's parents / guardians. Where a leader regularly does a transport run, he or she should try to have another leader present, or at least never leave the same child off last every week, and should ensure parents and other leaders are aware of the arrangement. Children should be in rear seats and strapped in wherever possible. No overloading or travelling with inadequate insurance is acceptable.

4. You should avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. There may be occasions when it is unavoidable, such as when providing comfort and reassurance for a distressed child. In such circumstances care should be taken to ensure that physical contact does not take place in any way that might be considered indecent or that might be misconstrued.

In extreme cases, it may be necessary to restrain a child physically to prevent injury or damage to property. In such circumstances no more than the minimum necessary force should be used.

5. Under no circumstances should you meet with a child or young person on your own.

6. You should respect the children's right to privacy. Do not invade their privacy, for example, when they are using the toilet, changing or showering. Be sensitive to children who may be shy about communal changing or showering and make allowances for them.

7. You should never:

- engage in rough physical games, including horseplay, other than sports activities which are properly organised and supervised;
- engage in sexually provocative games or activities;
- make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun;
- do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary for you to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or if they are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with another adult present. In such situations it is

important to ensure that you are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

8. You should avoid any situation that may be open to misinterpretation. If there is any situation with which you are uncomfortable, you should consult either the designated person responsible for child protection within the church or the Group Leader.

Responding To Abuse

1. It is not the role of leaders to seek for and to identify symptoms of abuse. Nevertheless it is vital that no child in need of help is ignored.

If you have any concerns about a child being abused, or if any such disclosures are made to you, you must report these immediately to the designated person responsible for child protection within the church. If your concerns relate either to incidents suspected or disclosed to have taken place during an LCF activity, or to a volunteer associated with the activity, you must also report them to the member of staff responsible for child protection within LCF. **Do not do anything by yourself.** Following the correct procedure can be vital to the child's best interests. A form should be filled in or notes made a.s.a.p. giving accurate details of anything a child has said, when and to whom. (See Form in Appendix).

Only in a case where serious and recent physical or sexual abuse is talked of and you suspect the child is in immediate danger, and you cannot contact the designated person responsible for child protection within LCF, should you directly contact the local social services or police. Sexual abuse is a crime - where it may be possible to help situations of physical or emotional abuse or neglect in consultation with the family concerned, matters concerning sexual abuse must be dealt with differently. The designated person in your church will know who to contact in the social services so that such allegations can be dealt with properly.

2. If a child discloses to you that he / she has been abused in any way you should adhere to the following guidelines, which are adapted from those in the DHSS publication, 'Our Duty to Care.'

Do

Stay calm.

Listen and hear. Give the child time to say what he/she wants.

Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing in telling.

Record in writing what was said as soon as possible.

Report the matter as above.

Don't

Do not panic.

Do not ask leading questions.

Do not promise to keep secrets. Explain that you may have to talk to someone else in order to be able to help.

Do not inquire into the details of the abuse.

Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.

You may wish to involve your Group Leader in the conversation at an early stage but you should do so only with the consent of the child.

You should also adhere to the following guidelines.

- Maintain confidentiality at all times. Do not discuss the matter with anyone other than those to whom you have reported it, as above.

- Continue your relationship with the child from then on as normally as possible. Do not pursue the matter any further, or refer to it again unless the child initiates the discussion.

- Do not make any physical examination of the child.

Publications

Our Duty To Care (Volunteer Development Agency)

Away from Home and Safe - Getting Residential Right

Web Addresses

<http://www.ccpas.co.uk>

www.childline.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

Telephone Numbers (for use by LCF Designated Officers Only)

If contacting Social Services use the most appropriate phone number below. If calling the board's headquarters ask for the Principal Social Worker for Child Care. Otherwise ask for the Child Care Manager or Assistant Principal Social Worker for Child Care.

Down & Lisburn Health & Social Services Trust 028 9266 5181

Northern Board:

Craigavon & Banbridge Community Health & Social Services Trust 028 3883 1983

If contacting the NSPCC use their free 24-hour Child Protection Helpline. The number is 0800 800 500.

FORMS AND HOW TO USE THEM

- **AccessNI Disclosure Certificate Application Form**

This form must be completed by every adult volunteer/worker within LCF.

- **Information form for Child and Young Person**

To be filled in by parent or guardian of the child (i.e. under 16 year old). This form should be accompanied with a leaflet giving basic information about the group i.e. time and place, leader in charge and contact details of that leader.

- **Trip Information Form**

A form should be produced and sent to the parents/guardians for **any trip or outing** where the children are taken away from their usual meeting place, even if only for a few hours or if they are to be involved in a **special event** (e.g. day long programme/overnight). **Make sure consent forms (tear off slip) are returned!**

- **Health Form**

To be used when children will be away from their parents/guardians for more than 24 hours e.g. residential weeks or weekends. This form is confidential and should be filled in by the child's parent/guardian and returned to the group leader. The leader should make sure the forms are completed and returned for each child, that they are read through, notes taken, and the forms brought away with the group. A leader (preferably one with some first aid or medical training) should be made responsible for seeing that the various instructions are carried out, medicines taken etc. When taking groups of younger children it is usually best for medicines (other than asthma inhalers) to be taken into the care of a leader to avoid them becoming lost - or experimented with by other children!

Leaders should not dispense any medication - even Panadol - to any child without parental permission!

- **Accident Report Form**

To be completed by leaders and witnesses in the event of any accident or injury as early as possible. If an accident occurs where emergency treatment is necessary, take the child to the nearest casualty department (make sure you know where it is) or local surgery. Contact the parents asap and take the child's Health Form to the hospital/doctor with you. Try to have a leader with a first aid qualification on every residential trip.

- **Confidential Report Form**

To be completed whenever there is a complaint made, by another leader, by a child/young person, or by a parent, about any person involved in the Children's or Youth Work.

DESIGNATED CONTACT FOR CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

Melanie Hilary
95 Moira Road
LISBURN
Phone: 02892670100/07871245300
Email: hilaryfamily@btopenworld.com

